



World Health Organization

Lebanon

WHO Lebanon Country Office is the directing and coordinating authority for international health work within the United Nations. We work closely and in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and other ministries as well as sister UN agencies operating in Lebanon.

We work on improving health outcomes by providing technical support and assistance in scaling up essential prevention, treatment and care services throughout the health sector.

NEWSLETTER

December 2019 - Issue 4

Kuwait Fund donates \$4.6million to vaccinate almost one million child against measles



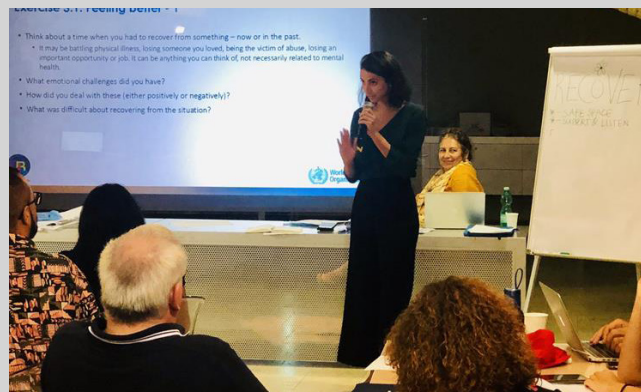
Nearly one million children to be vaccinated against measles in Lebanon through funds by the Kuwait Fund for Development. The project National #Measles Immunization Campaign launched by the MOPH in partnership with WHO and UNICEF acts to combat an outbreak of measles in Lebanon. The first phase of the campaign will cover Baalbeck Hermel, Akkar and the North including refugees who fall under the age bracket 6 months to less than 10 years.



Mental health services in Lebanon: an approach focused on recovery

"In September 2018 I was admitted to hospital following a manic episode," says Thurayya Zreik, from Lebanon. "This was my third admission. It was the first time, however, that I left with something other than the clothes I arrived in and a doctor's prescription. I left with a recovery plan."

Thurayya was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2010. The support she received during her third stay in the hospital was in stark contrast to her previous visits. Thurayya's recovery plan, developed during her most recent hospital visit, with the support of a team of medical staff, is one of the central components of WHO's Quality Rights programme for mental health. WHO Lebanon and the National Mental Health Programme at the MOPH are implementing the Quality Rights initiative that aims at improving human rights aspects at facilities providing mental health care. Watch full video report <http://bit.ly/2rsdfkC>



WHO Lebanon team member wins global WALK THE TALK challenge



WHO Lebanon is proud that one of its team members Nada Al Andary was among the first three winners in the global challenge Walk The Talk. Results showed that the most active team was from the regional office. Three WHO staffers were selected for their highest activity during the 100 day challenge. Two of the winners are from the regional office and one from a country office – Lebanon the

CEDARS team! Nada who is camera shy (obvious from the photo) enjoys the outdoors and spends a lot of her free time with her family in Lebanon's beautiful nature.

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National measles vaccination campaign starts in vulnerable hard-to-reach areas



The national vaccination campaign was launched on 6 December 2019 covering the areas of Akkar, North, and Baalbeck-Hermel governorates carried out by the Ministry of Public Health with the support of WHO and UNICEF.

The campaign targets all children between the ages of six months and less than 10 years. The vaccines are given free of charge at schools, nurseries, dispensaries, healthcare centers and mobile clinics.

Meanwhile, the teams on the field are vaccinating children reaching out to remote areas before the weather became an obstacle.

This campaign is made possible by donations from the Kuwait Fund for Development which aims to halt measles transmission and to ensure the protection of children's health in Lebanon.

The first phase ends on 31 December 2019 and would have covered immunization for over 300,000 kids out of more than 900,000 that will be covered nationwide in the upcoming second phase.



WHO and SANAD bring palliative care to the forefront of patient support



WHO Lebanon supported the implementation of a Palliative Care (PC) project in collaboration with SANAD the Home Hospice Care Organization as implementing partner. The project encompassed three components; finalizing the establishment of a hospital-based PC service at Rafic Hariri University Hospital (RHUH) in Beirut, establishing a home-based palliative care service at Ain Wazein Medical Village (AWMV) a hospital in Mount Lebanon, and supporting the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon (CCCL) team in conducting support groups.

The project was successful in finalizing the establishment of a palliative care service at the RHUH through different training and shadowing stages. A noticeable culture change was witnessed where many of the oncologists are now readily referring patients who are benefiting from the services of the well-trained multidisciplinary PC team.

At AWMV, the palliative care team has been trained by SANAD on home-based palliative care, and a system has been established to manage the newly developed service. The PC team started conducting home visits for their palliative care patients in the Chouf area of Mount Lebanon.

In the third component of the project, SANAD built the capacity of CCCL's team members in running and leading support group discussions for their staff in order to alleviate the stressors of their work that usually cause staff burnout. Palliative care has been explicitly recognized under the human right to health, for this reason WHO Lebanon will continue its support to palliative care projects in order to make this service available and accessible to all those who need it in Lebanon.

Integration of HIV & sexual health services in people-centered healthcare centers

Health services are now under unprecedented strain, particularly with the influx of refugees and their influence on the socioeconomic situation of the country. The existing stigmatization of key populations and the lack of comprehensive integration of services are now taking a considerable focus at international and regional levels.

WHO redirected its regional strategy towards the integration of HIV and sexual health services in people-centered comprehensive health services. The benefits of this integration are considerable, notably the access to quality, comprehensive and timely services, as well as the engagement and empowerment of individuals and communities to make decisions for their own health. In turn, this would minimize missed opportunities of diagnosis and linkage to care, minimize duplication, and save health system costs.



Survey shows relation between high drug habit with low condom use

The recently conducted national study determined *Neisseria Gonorrhoea*, *Condylomas*, and *Chlamydia Trachomatis* as the three most commonly diagnosed Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in Lebanon. STI knowledge rates including transmission and associated risks were found to be very low, whereas the prevalence of risky sexual behaviors was found to be high. In fact, participants reported low condom usage (52.2%), high number of sexual partners (10.6 ± 17.9), low discussion rates about HIV/STI risks with partners (43.8%), high alcohol consumption (85.6%), as well as considerable drug (26.4%) and commercial sex (10.9%) use. This was paralleled with a very timid 32.3% knowledge about STI prevention. This survey detected a significant correlation between high drug consumption and low condom use. These findings reaffirm the necessity to increase targeted preventive measures among MSM.

WHO mission to identify requirements needed to establish the national drug quality control lab

A WHO scoping mission to identify the technical requirements and resources needed to establish the National drug quality control laboratory mission was conducted at the end of November 2019. A technical expert team from WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region regional office and headquarters visited Lebanon with the objective of re-establishing of the National Pharmaceutical Central Lab which is part of the Lebanese Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL). This was based on following a decision by the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) to resume the work of the lab. The field visits included inspection of the physical structure proposed for the pharmaceutical quality control lab.

The WHO mission recommended short track intervention including:

- Reestablish as a priority the CPHL lab component for pharmaceutical products quality control.
- Reestablish the component for food and water safety control;
- Reestablish the microbiology/medical lab component with focus on its coordination and quality control functions.

The mission also suggested the premises rehabilitation as well as the required equipment and staffing profiles.

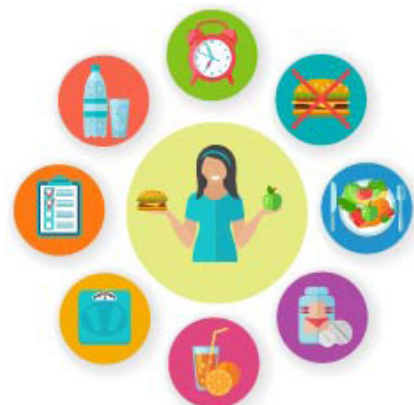
The longer term recommendations included:

- Revisit the legislative framework for establishing a National Drugs Control Authority
- Assess the economic model for financial sustainability of the CPHL.

How to make health literacy a reality

Health literacy is the ability and skills to get and understand health information to take informed decisions about health care. Many people accessing health care have limited health literacy even if they have completed a school or university diploma. Limited health literacy is associated with medication errors, inadequate use of health care, increased health care costs, and inadequate management of acute and chronic health conditions.

The way health personnel organize their practice and communicate with patients can improve their health literacy, leading to better health outcomes. It is recommended to assume that everyone may have difficulty and challenges in understanding and to create a conducive environment where patients of all literacy levels can thrive. Research suggests that adopting clear communication practices and getting rid of literacy-related barriers will lead to improved care for all patients regardless of their level of health literacy. For that, it is important to improve: 1-spoken communication, such as establishing empathic contact with the patient and using teach-back techniques (i.e. asking the patient or caregiver to tell what they are going to do when they are back home), 2-written communication, such as using easy-to-understand material when needed, 3-self-management such as encouraging questions and developing care plan to be used by the patient, 4-supportive system such as making needed linkages with available resources



WHO is currently working with the MOPH on integrating the people-centred primary care approach including improving health literacy within the national primary healthcare centers network, with the ultimate aim of improving health outcomes and quality of life for people, and reducing avoidable demand for health and care services. This project is funded by the European Union.