



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

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## WHO Lebanon team conducts a field visit to Tyre



“Our team conducts regular field visits to interact with beneficiaries and service providers to promote UHC,” stated Dr. Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative during her field visit to Tyre in the South of Lebanon on the 3rd of October. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Shankiti visited an informal settlement where a Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) was offering healthcare services to Syrian refugees and host community. Dr. Shankiti and her team also visited a Primary Healthcare Center (PHC) that is part of the MOPH network. The PHC and the MMU are both supported by Amel Association. The visit was a chance to reiterate WHO’s support to primary healthcare on the road towards universal health coverage (UHC) where high quality and people-centered healthcare should be accessible to all.

## HAZMAT drill conducted in the South of Lebanon

On the 8th of October, as part of the MOPH Hazard Preparedness Project, the Ministry with the support of WHO Lebanon conducted a HAZMAT drill in the South of Lebanon led by the HAZMAT team of the South and Nabatieh governorates. At the opening of the event, His Excellency Minister of Health Dr. Jamil Jabak expressed the Ministry’s commitment to work with all concerned sectors on improving Lebanon’s readiness in responding to all hazards. With the support of WHO Lebanon, HAZMAT teams have been trained in all regions in Lebanon and drills are a chance for the teams to apply the learned knowledge and skills in an exercise that simulates reality. In her speech, Dr Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative reiterated WHO’s support to the MOPH in enhancing country preparedness in Lebanon.



WALK  
the TALK

### ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to the current situation in the country, The Beirut Marathon Association has postponed the 17th edition of BLOM BANK BEIRUT MARATHON 2019 which was set for November 10. In line with this development, WHO Lebanon will keep on hold all registrations until further updates.



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## Implementation of the Point Prevalence Survey on Antibiotic Use in Hospitals

In order to implement the Point Prevalence Survey on Antibiotic Use in Hospitals, WHO Lebanon in collaboration with the MOPH implemented on the 9th, 11th and 12th of September a training workshop for 22 medical supervisors and 44 data collectors from 22 hospitals across Lebanon. Experts from WHO EMRO visited Lebanon and conducted the training. More than 2250 questionnaires were filled by the hospitals and sent for analysis at WHO EMRO. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), caused by excessive and inappropriate use of antibiotics, reduces the effectiveness and number of options for antibiotic treatment, leading to increased morbidity, mortality, and health care expenditures. Collection of data on antibiotic use and hospital-acquired infection are among the main targets of the Lebanese AMR National Action Plan. The data generated from the Point Prevalence Survey will inform country health officials and decision makers to develop national policies to promote appropriate use of antimicrobials and strengthen national and facility level infection prevention and control programs.



## WHO conducts emergency preparedness activities at the Rafic Hariri University Hospital



In order to enhance country preparedness and emergency coordination, WHO implemented a number of emergency preparedness activities and projects. In 2007, WHO supported the MOPH in establishing a Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) at the Rafic Hariri University Hospital. In 2014, information and communications technology (ICT) infra-structure upgraded. The PHEOC is functional and adequately equipped, but needed to be fully operationalized and tested during a real-life event. In 2018, WHO supported a number of emergency preparedness activities and projects in order to operationalize and enhance the functions of the PHEOC. The activities included an study tour visit to Cairo and Muscat, the implementation of the Strategic Tool for Assessing Risk tool, and the participation in the WHO Global Emergency Operations Centre Exercise. In 2019 WHO supported the development of the EOC action plan and its roll out; ICT equipment were procured to

enhance the functionality of the PHEOC and support was provided for the recruit of a consultant to develop the national PHEOC guidebook. WHO is currently working closely with the Prime Minister Office to establish a connection between the PHEOC and the National EOC at the PMO. The software that will be developed will enhance information exchange during emergencies.

## Strengthening staff knowledge on medications



With funding from the European Union, WHO was able to train 420 staff from primary health care centres and dispensaries on how to properly manage medications and how to communicate with beneficiaries about their medications. Training sessions covered all Lebanon and were in collaboration with the MOPH. The staff who participated were in charge of managing and dispensing the medications at the health facilities. This is part of a wider project, the EU-MA-DAD, supported by the European Union, on ensuring access to medications for chronic diseases and strengthening the health system.

## Improving quality of mental health services



Al-Fanar mental hospital in Lebanon was closed in February 2019 following allegations of serious human rights violations against beneficiaries such as inadequate standards of living, lack of hygiene, and suboptimal treatment amongst other things. Following these allegations, the Ministry of Public Health issued a decision (No. 270/1) concerning assessment of the quality of care and human rights in the field of mental health, using the WHO Quality Rights toolkit. This tool allows assessing the quality and human rights aspects of the mental health services and developing plans for improvement. WHO Lebanon and the National Mental Health Programme at the Ministry of Public Health started training on this toolkit since 2017. The last training was conducted in September 2019 for 26 participants from different backgrounds including persons with mental disorders. The next phase is to start assessing the facilities that provide mental health services.

## WHO carries out hospital death certification workshop



As part of the ongoing work on quality of causes of death, the Statistics Department at the Ministry of Public Health has organized a training of trainers (ToT) workshop on the identification and coding of causes of death in collaboration with the World Health Organization and in cooperation with the Syndicate of Hospitals. The ToT was conducted for medical doctors over a period of 3 days (26-28 August 2019). 157 hospitals were invited and 112 attended the workshop. In total, during this phase of the training, 103 doctors were trained on how to properly certify the cause of death, and they will receive certificates of participation in the workshop. This activity is part of the WHO support to strengthening civil registration and vital statistics system in the country.

## WHO FCTC Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking Knowledge Hub Conducts activities to curb tobacco use

The WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking (KH-WTS) which was launched on November 2017 at the American University of Beirut (AUB), has been conducting several activities to fulfill the objectives of its mandate in promoting and strengthening the global efforts of WHO and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to curb the epidemic of tobacco use including that of waterpipe smoking.

As a sequence to last year series of webinars, the KH-WTS organized this year a series of four webinars on contemporary issues related to waterpipe use. The topics include: waterpipe health warning labels, toxicant contents of waterpipe smoke, health effects of waterpipe tobacco smoking, and its economics.

The WTS-KH and the Tobacco Free Initiative of Lebanon (TFI) in collaboration with the World Health Organization Country Office, observed 2019 World No Tobacco Day at the American University of Beirut (AUB) on June 1. The Minister of Public Health, Dr. Jamil Jabak, was the keynote speaker and shared his perspectives on tobacco control and reinforcement of Lebanon's Law 174 on Tobacco Control that was enacted in 2011.

The WTS-KH reviewed with the Chair of the Lebanese Parliament Health Committee the possible action plans to strengthen the national Tobacco law 174. It is also working on updating the WTS-KH library research database found at:

<https://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/references/>



## Upcoming events....

- National measles campaign in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health
- A Healthy City Program on community-based solid waste management in Tripoli and related cleaning campaign in collaboration with the municipality of Tripoli.
- National awareness raising campaign on Antimicrobial Resistance is being developed by WHO in collaboration of the MOPH for the occasion of the World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW) taking place from the 18th till the 24th of November.