Conflict and Health workstream
Updates from Lebanon and UK

Research Associates: Gemma Bowsher, Kristen Meagher, Abdulkarim Ekzayez, Nassim El Achi

Principal Investigators: Preeti Patel, Ghassan S. Abu-Sittah

London’s EB meeting: September 1, 2020 (online by Zoom)
Peer-reviewed Publications: published

**Peer-reviewed Publications: under review**

13. Weeam Hammoudeh, Hanna Kienzler, Kristen Meagher, Rita Giacaman, The social and political determinants of health in the Occupied Palestine Territory (oPt) during COVID-19 – who is responsible?, *BMJ Global Health*, in press
Presentations/ webinars


Blogs

Taught Courses and Trainings

1. **Conflict and health course** at KCL as part of the MSc in Global Health and intercalated BSc in Global Health (all research associates)
2. “Health Systems in Conflict settings” at UCL as Health in Urban Development MSc program (Abdulkarim Ekzayez)
3. “Health and Security” at KCL as part of the Science and Security MSc program (Abdulkarim Ekzayez & Gemma Bowsher)
4. “Medical Humanitarianism in conflict settings” at QMUL as part of the International Relations MSc program (Abdulkarim Ekzayez)

Trainings

1. Abdulkarim Ekzayez delivered more than 15 online training courses on C19 preventative and curative measures in conflict affected countries: Syria, Yemen, Nigeria and Pakistan.
Ongoing Activities-Lebanon

Responding to Crisis in Gaza: A series of C19-related clinical training seminars

- For the Ministry of Public Health, Gaza
- In collaboration with MSF (to be advertised by MSF-Lebanon)

Possible speakers:
- Dr. Souha Kanj (infectious diseases-AUBMC)
- ICU at RFUH (TBC)
- Physiotherapist (TBC)
- Dr. Firas Abiad (RHUH)
Ongoing Activities-Lebanon

Certificate in Conflict Medicine

Core (3 × 30 h):
1. Introduction to conflict medicine (content being prepared and uploaded on RISE)
2. Health research in conflict (content currently being uploaded on RISE)
3. Clinical knowledge (updating content uploaded on RISE)

Specialization (1 × 30h)
1. War surgery (updating content uploaded on RISE)
2. Cancer in conflict (preparing content)
3. Infectious diseases in conflict (preparing content)
Ongoing Activities-Lebanon

Conceptual Framework paper

Plan

- Organize a Focus Group Discussion including the various stakeholders in health research for feedback
  - Location: Beirut
- Write a paper based on their recommendations

Postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic

A conceptual framework for capacity strengthening of health research in conflict: the case of the Middle East and North Africa region

Nassim El Achi, Andreas Papanichalou, Anthony Rob, Helen Lindsay, Marilyne Menassa, Rima A. Abdul-Khalek, Abdulkarim Ekzayez, Omar Dewachi, and Preeti Patel

Abstract

Background: In conflict settings, research capacities have often been de-prioritized as resources are diverted to emergency needs, such as addressing elevated morbidity, mortality and health system challenges directly and/or indirectly associated to war. This has had an adverse long-term impact in such protracted conflicts such as those found in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), where research knowledge and skills have often been compromised. In this paper, we propose a conceptual framework for health research capacity strengthening that adapts existing models and frameworks in low- and middle-income countries and uses our knowledge of the MENA context to contextualize them for conflict settings.

Methods: The framework was synthesized using “best fit” framework synthesis methodology. Relevant literature, available in English and Arabic, was collected through PubMed, Google Scholar and Google using the keywords:
Ongoing Activities – AUB and KCL

Workshop in Ethical conduct in conflict settings

Previous conference and workshop on conducting ethical health research in conflict settings
June 2019 (KCL) and December 2019 (KHCC)

Results of needs assessment with local Lebanese NGOs (in collaboration with NGOi-GHI)
- 89 responses
- 84% have contact with vulnerable population
  - 81% haven’t had a training related to ethics
  - 94% would attend a training if available

Next Steps
- In the process for preparing for an online workshop (December 2020 ?)
  - Dr. Thalia Arawi, Bioethics
  - Member of IRB-AUB
  - Member of IRB-MSF

Things to consider and discuss
- Limited to NGOs in Lebanon ?
  - Other NGOs in R4HC-MENA countries ?
Future direction

• Successful NIHR grant for £4m on health system strengthening in northern Syria, with UOSSM, David Nott Foundation and KCL. This will start 1 September 2020 for 4 years and includes two PhDs – Elly Nott and Kristen Meagher.
  – *Syria Health Research Conference 29-30 October*

• Successful King’s Together grant: Multi & Interdisciplinary Research Scheme. Developing a framework for Africa-wide response to mental health challenges in communities affected by Violent Extremism for £40,000. In collaboration with the Neem Foundation, Nigeria.

• Submitted a proposal (April 2020) to the Norwegian Government for £300,000. Rebel Orders: Non-State Armed Group Responses to COVID-19 with the Conflict, Security & Development Research Group (CSDRG) at KCL.

• Submitted a proposal in July 2020 on Harnessing memories to eradicate stigma during health crises in fragile contexts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Kenya with partners from African Leadership Centre (KCL), Angaza Institute of Research, USIU – Africa. Funder: UKRI GCRF/Newton Fund Agile Response to address Covid19.
Thank you