

## Editorial



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Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is one of the cradles of urban culture and civilisation. In this region, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam arose. MENA's influence extends beyond its vast oil reserves. It occupies a strategically vital position between Asia, Africa, and Europe. As the Region reaches the third millennium, its issues will be exacerbated by its rapid population expansion. Therefore, by the end of the century, there will be more people in the MENA region than in China, whose population is projected to continue to decline to just over one billion, and more than in Europe, whose population is projected to decline by roughly 10 percent by 2100.

Geriatrics & Gerontology is still a relatively new profession for medical school graduates in the Middle East, and other specialties have no interest in it. Six nations, including Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and the Syrian Arab Republic, have acknowledged geriatrics as an independent specialty. Even though there are only two licensed geriatric physicians in Jordan, geriatrics is recognized as a specialty.

In a significant number of Arab nations, geriatricians are genuinely scarce. Except for Bahrain (one geriatrician for every 8,250 people 65 and older) and Lebanon (one geriatrician for every 20,000 people 65 and older), the number of geriatricians in most Arab countries does not surpass one for every 100,000 older people. This is in contrast to the United States, where there is one geriatrician for every 5,000 to 7,000 senior citizens. Due to a dearth of skilled experts, older patients are often treated by general internists or general practitioners who lack the knowledge and training to address the unique issues and needs of senior patients.

The following questions are time-sensitive: Are the health professions in the region capable of meeting the current and future health care needs of the elderly? Are health profession faculties prepared to instruct geriatrics and gerontology? Does the subject of aging appear in the curriculum of elementary and post-secondary education? Was specialized research on aging being conducted? Do health professionals in the region choose to care for the elderly? Are appropriate professional and financial benefits supplied to those who care for the elderly?

Geriatric medicine education has historically been underrepresented in the medical colleges of the region. Significant deficiencies exist in terms of what is taught, when it is taught, and how it is taught. As such, it is appropriate that the Middle Academy for Ageing Medicine (MEAMA) was established in 2002 to promote the growth of health care services for the region's elderly inhabitants. It was founded by a consortium of Middle Eastern and European academics and instructors. MEAMA is modeled after the European Academy of Ageing Medicine and aims to build a center for teaching and training in the field of aging in the Middle East.

The Abyad Medical Center and the Middle East Longevity Institute were instrumental in the development of the inaugural course of the MEAMA. Several official federal, regional, and international organizations of renown have contributed to the establishment of the school over the years. Recent collaboration between MEAMA and the International Institute on Aging-United Nations-Malta. This intense study course commenced with four sessions, each of which addressed vital health-related themes in aging. It is designed for physicians, nurses, social workers, and other health care professionals responsible for the treatment of older individuals. The overall program aims to improve the scientific, clinical, educational, and administrative capacities of medical gerontology. To date, seven postgraduate cycles have been completed, resulting in the education of 1,500 healthcare professionals.

The Tunisian Geriatric Association (ATG) has, in conjunction with MEAMA, created the first intense postgraduate course in geriatric medicine that stimulates enthusiasm and geriatric expertise. The program consists of four two-day sessions that must be completed within one year. In addition to a number of Euro-Med conferences, the Tunisian Geriatric Association has conducted seven cycles of training due to the success of the initial course.

In national research agendas and national funding agencies, the importance of research on aging is inadequate. With the exception of Lebanon, Egypt, and, to a lesser extent, Tunisia, studies and publications on the topic are limited in MENA nations. Additionally, there is a need to promote, support, and fund research on older persons among regional scholars. This is the reason why we publish the abstracts of young researchers from the region for free in order to support their work in the field.

In this issue we have abstracts from the MEAMA Postgraduate Course session 3 & 4 that was presented during the online session by member of the MEAMA network who did their training either with MEAMA or with STG. In addition to the English abstracts from the the Annual Geriatric Meeting STG and the third Euro-Geriatric Meeting organized by the Tunisian Geriatric Society (STG), CNG, 2022.