

Health-care alliance for tobacco dependence treatment launches training in the Middle East

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Global Bridges, a healthcare alliance for tobacco dependence treatment based at Mayo Clinic, and its regional partner, King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) in Amman, Jordan, announced today that they will start training health care providers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) on how to successfully treat tobacco users.

The first training, scheduled for April 27-28 at KHCC, will engage 15 [health care professionals](#) from Jordan. Feras Hawari, M.D., director of the Cancer Control Office at KHCC and regional director for Global Bridges, will conduct this workshop. In addition, KHCC will collaborate with other regional and international organizations to hold a four-day regional workshop in June.

"Prevalence of [tobacco use](#) is high in most of the Eastern Mediterranean countries, and only a few countries have structured [tobacco dependence](#) services. By offering training, we are making a step towards addressing this epidemic," says Dr. Hawari, who is also chief of pulmonary and critical care service at KHCC.

Global Bridges -- a collaboration among Mayo Clinic's School for Continuous Professional Development and Mayo Clinic's Nicotine Dependence Center, the American Cancer Society and the University of Arizona -- was established in 2010 as a worldwide, science-based initiative to help health care providers unite to treat tobacco use and

dependence while advocating for effective tobacco control policies. During its first year, Global Bridges has positively impacted 400,000 patients around the world through training over 5,400 [health care providers](#) in Mayo Clinic-led sessions on how to deliver culturally appropriate tobacco dependence treatment.

"Global Bridges adapts to regional needs and enhances access to proven treatment methods throughout each of the World Health Organization's (WHO) six regions, " says Richard Hurt, M.D., founder and director of the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center and principal investigator of Global Bridges. "The training that Dr. Hawari will lead is the first in a series of activities we are planning for WHO's Eastern Mediterranean region with our regional partner, King Hussein Cancer Center."

As a Global Bridges regional director, Dr. Hawari and his team will lead activities to grow the network and advance tobacco dependence treatment and tobacco control policies across the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region that covers 22 countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

King Hussein Cancer Center is a dedicated medical center that focuses on providing state-of-the-art comprehensive cancer care in Jordan and the Middle East. KHCC is disease-specific accredited by the Joint Commission, making it the first in the region and the sixth worldwide.

KHCC has been a strong advocate for tobacco control in Jordan. KHCC is the first hospital in Jordan to declare its campus 100 percent smoke-free. The tobacco dependence treatment program was established in 2008 under the leadership of Dr. Hawari, and was then incorporated under the umbrella of the Cancer Control Office (CCO) established in 2010.

Prevalence of tobacco use is high in most EMRO countries. The Tobacco Atlas shows rates for men ranging from 82 percent in Afghanistan to 13.4 percent in Oman. For women, rates range from 57.1 percent in Lebanon to less than 1 percent in Oman. Among youngsters, WHO reports that between 1 in 3 and 1 in 4 boys smoke in EMRO countries. In Jordan, prevalence is at 28 percent among adults but is as high as 48 percent among adult males. Thirty-five percent of boys between 13 and 15 years are smokers, and prevalence among girls is on the rise.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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