

FETP NEWSLETTER

September 2020

Fourth Edition

In this Issue

p-01	Editor's Letter
p-02	Feature Story
p-03	FETP News
p-21	Other News



Dear Readers,

We are delighted to bring you the fourth issue of our FETP Newsletter, which covers news between June and September 2020. The news shared in this edition serves as a testimony to all the hard work, dedication, and commitment of the FETP residents and graduates across the EMR, especially during these challenging times.

In this issue, we dedicate sections to the news of different country programs, and we feature the graduation of several FETP cohorts in the region. Moreover, we present the accomplishments and the challenges that the FETP graduates and residents faced while responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In fact, we have documented their support and achievements at the central, provincial, and local levels within their respective countries.



Seeing that the role of FETPs was -and still is- crucial in supporting the healthcare systems in their countries, we also highlight the participation of different FETP directors from our region in our WEBi series, specifically in the session titled “Role of FETPs and RRTs as First Line Responders During COVID-19 Pandemic”.

We hope that you find this issue to be a valuable reading experience and that it serves as a source of knowledge and inspiration for you all.

Wishing our region's FETPs further success and growth,
The Editorial Team

Feature Story

FETPs Continue to Celebrate Cohort Graduations



Despite the challenges faced by countries in the region in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FETP programs still managed to make progress. More specifically, more than 55 residents had completed their program requirements this year. Jordan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Egypt, all managed to celebrate graduations of FETP Cohorts.

In numbers, Yemen witnessed the graduation of 11 residents together making up the fourth cohort of the advanced program. Their graduation is an achievement that is a source of pride in the region as these public health professionals have managed to complete their education despite challenges faced by the country at large. From another angle, Afghanistan witnessed the graduation of 30 residents who together made up the first cohort of its Intermediate FETP Program. Jordan witnessed the graduation of six residents making up its 16th cohort in the Advanced Program, and Sudan witnessed the graduation of 14 residents together making up its first cohort in its Advanced Program. Finally, Egypt also celebrated the graduation of its 20th cohort of its advanced program.

To satisfy their graduation requirements, these graduates attended workshops, participated in fieldwork, attended, and contributed to conferences, and they also reported on the health situation in their countries. These graduates also played a key role in supporting their countries in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other public health emergencies.

Most FETP graduates move on to play central roles in their respective ministries of health, thus proving to be valuable assets as frontline responders to public health emergencies.

FETP NEWS

News from FETP Afghanistan:



Meet AFETP's Second Cohort

FETP Afghanistan Continues to Manage Science, Epidemiology, and Research (SER) Committee: An Initiative to be further Expanded

The Science, Epidemiology and Research (SER) committee was established in late March 2020 and has been managed by the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP). For the last three months, it is operating under the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute (ANPHI)/ Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

Its managing committee consists of epidemiologists, scientists, public health specialists, clinicians, lab experts, and other health professionals. They work voluntarily to fight against COVID-19 and to support COVID-19 management efforts in the MoPH. The committee members provide advice and consultations by issuing weekly meetings and policy briefs.

The committee, so far, has conducted more than 30 online meetings, attended by public health experts, as well as experts in the fields of Epidemiology and Research on both national and international levels. To date, the committee also developed 13 Policy Briefs that have been submitted to the MoPH for implementation.

FETP AFGHANISTAN HOLDS COMMUNITY AWARENESS ACTIVITIES IN KANDAHAR



The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) held a community awareness session for students of the Lincoln Education Center in the Kandahar province. The session focused on COVID-19, its symptoms, modes of transmission, self-protection, the importance of mental health for COVID-19 patients, and it offered participants pieces of advice and tips they can follow to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

FETP AFGHANISTAN AND WHO COLLABORATE TO CREATE A SUMMARY OF HEALTH SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) worked on a summary of 16 health recommendations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations were drafted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The end results were published on AFETPs Facebook page..



FETP AFGHANISTAN RESIDENTS AND GRADUATES GET INVOLVED IN THE NATIONAL COVID-19 SURVEY

According to the instruction of the Cabinet of Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has planned and conducted a national survey to estimate the seroprevalence of COVID-19 in the country.

Reflecting on their knowledge and past training, AFETP residents and graduates were involved in designing the related training, and supervising the data collection process for this survey. Their involvement comes at both the central and provincial levels within the country.

Furthermore, AFETP residents took part in the monitoring and the supervision of the data entry process pertaining to the seroepidemiological survey of COVID-19 within the Sarepul Province.



FETP AFGHANISTAN CONCLUDES INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP OF THE SECOND COHORT IN KABUL



The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Afghanistan National Public Health Institute (ANPHI) have successfully completed the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) first cohort early this year and commenced training for the second cohort on August 10, 2020.

The second cohort was launched, in Kabul, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Global Health Development| Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (GHD|EMPHNET).

The introductory course of this program is designed to train and build the capacity of health workers in Kabul, as well as other provinces on the basics of epidemiology, fighting against outbreaks, such as COVID-19, operating and evaluating surveillance, collecting and analyzing data, and communicating results for decision-making.

During the course, his Excellency Minister of Public Health, Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz sat in on a session within this workshop. During his visit, he encouraged the residents and the facilitators to work hard at building their capacities and the capacities of the other relevant workforces. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening capacities and how doing so will contribute effectively to the detection, control, and prevention of health threats in the country.

The workshop's activities consisted of group work, the delivering of presentations, Q&A and discussion sessions. The residents also started to think and plan for their field projects . These projects involve the analyzing of secondary datasets as well as choosing topics to conduct surveys and long-term research projects. Finally, the residents presented their project concepts in front of the class and the mentors.



Following the conclusion of this workshop, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Afghanistan (AFETP) successfully completed a mentor's workshop for 15 health professionals. This training was held with the support of the CDC and GHD|EMPHNET. The workshop focused on FETP mentorship, teaching versus mentoring concepts, mentorship details, FETP coursework, successful mentoring tips, the mentor's role and competencies, mentorship roadmap, proprietorship management guide, mentorship evaluation approach, and time management. The trained mentors will move on to support the mentees during the completion of their intermediate program requirements.

THE AFGHANISTAN FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM IS NOW A MEMBER OF TEPHINET



TEPHINET Secretariat
325 Swanton Way
Decatur, GA 30030
United States of America

October 26, 2020

Dr. Bashir Noormal
Ministry of Public Health
Afghanistan National Public Health Institute
Directorate of Public Health Research & Clinical Studies
5th & 6th Floors of the Central Blood Bank, building
Cinema Pamir area, Kabul
Afghanistan

RE: TEPHINET Membership Application Status

Dear Dr. Noormal,

We are pleased to inform you the Advisory Board, which met on October 15, 2020, accepted the Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (AFETP) for a 5-year membership in TEPHINET.

While TEPHINET is a program of The Task Force for Global Health, it is also a global network of field epidemiology training programs with a mission to strengthen global public health capacity by supporting well-qualified professionals in field epidemiology through training, service, and networking opportunities. The TEPHINET Advisory Board comprises of seven people, six of whom represent regions corresponding to those used by the World Health Organization. The representative for TEPHINET's Eastern Mediterranean Region is assigned by the regional network, EMPHINET.

We invite you to go to www.tephinnet.org, which provides the most up-to-date information with regards to TEPHINET activities and conferences.

On behalf of the Advisory Board and The Task Force for Global Health, welcome to the TEPHINET network. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carl Reddy, MBChB, FCPHM, MSc (Epi)
Director

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TEPHINET is a global network of field epidemiology training programs with a vision that all people are protected by a field epidemiology workforce capable of detecting and responding to health threats.

TEPHINET is a program of The Task Force for Global Health.
www.taskforce.org

The Afghanistan Field Epidemiology Training Program (AFETP) has recently been recognized as a member of the Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET). AFETP has been granted a five-year membership following the review of the program's membership application by the TEPHINET Advisory Board and its satisfying of eligibility criteria. This is a milestone in the journey of AFETP as this development now enables the program to make use of the membership benefits offered to TEPHINET member programs.

We congratulate AFETP on this achievement and we look forward to celebrating more of the program's success to come.

News from FETPV Bangladesh:

ONE HEALTH BANGLADESH CONTINUES ITS WEBINAR SERIES

Since the start of the pandemic, One Health Bangladesh has been organizing and hosting a series of webinars that tackle various aspects of COVID-19. Held in partnership with GHD|EMPHNET, the sessions were packed with tips and strategies highlighting how to communicate, respond, and plan for the pandemic.

To date, One Health Bangladesh has successfully conducted eleven webinars within this series. In the webinar titled: “Testing Strategies to Tackle COVID-19: Current Limitations and Future Prospect of Diagnostic Tests”, a focus was made on recognizing the current role of the One Health community during the pandemic and preventing other outbreaks. This session was followed by another webinar titled “Risk Communication and Community Engagement to Tackle COVID-19: How to Empower Communities for Compliance with Public Health Measures”. This session shed light on risk communication strategies, their effectiveness, and ways to ensure community safety during COVID-19. The eighth webinar in the series was titled “Can We Envision a World Without Pandemics”.

The session focused on strategies and preparedness to combat COVID-19. The ninth webinar in the series was titled “Impact of COVID-19 on Food and Nutrition Security: Call for Action”, it shed light on the impact of COVID-19 on food and nutrition security and what can be done to face the challenges. The eleventh and last webinar in the series was titled “Is Vaccine a Silver Lining for the COVID pandemic?” which focused on the recent development and challenges of getting vaccine of COVID-19. The webinar also focused on the One Health aspect of the vaccine development for other zoonotic diseases.



THE FIELD EPIDEMIOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM OF BANGLADESH FOR VETERINARIANS (FETPV) CELEBRATES ITS OFFICIAL LAUNCH



On August 23, 2020, the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) of the Bangladesh Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, and Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Science University (CVASU) celebrated the official launch of the first cohort for the Field Epidemiology Training Program for Veterinarians in Bangladesh (FETPV). This milestone was commemorated in an official launch event held virtually during which the program officially announced the start of its first semester.

Supported by GHD|EMPHNET, FETPV of Bangladesh follows the advanced FETPV two-year program module. The first cohort sitting for this program comprises six residents from the DLS. The FETPV residents will, throughout the upcoming two years, work towards a Masters’ Degree in Veterinary Medicine.

The program’s launch was attended by the six FETPV residents who introduced themselves, DLS senior officials, CVASU personnel, and GHD|EMPHNET officials, alongside others.

The launching event featured a presentation conducted by FETPV Course Coordinator, and Director of One Health Institute, CVASU, Prof Sharmin Chowdhury who walked participants and attendees through the journey leading to the program’s launch. This was followed by a presentation highlighting the program’s development and a third presentation highlighting the steps to be taken towards its implementation. These presentations were conducted by Technical Advisor GHD|EMPHNET, Prof. Nitish Debnath and PSO, Central Disease Investigation Laboratory, Prof. Rukon Rashid Bazlur, respectively.

Keynote addresses were also given by GHD|EMPHNET Executive Director, Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour who highlighted the program’s importance as a contributor to the elevation of veterinary field epidemiology and the role of veterinarians in spearheading the One-Health approach forward, while Dr. Goutam Buddha, CVASU Vice-Chancellor congratulated the participants on this achievement. The FETPV is designed to strengthen the residents’ knowledge of basic epidemiological tools, distribution, pattern, causation, and prevention of disease within a population.

NEWS FROM FETP EGYPT

FETP EGYPT CONDUCTS TRAINING COURSES AT THE CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL LEVELS

Throughout the month of July, FETP Egypt conducted five training courses on electronic COVID-19 data reporting quality at the central level, and four training courses at the peripheral level within the Cairo governorate. The training courses targeted surveillance officers, surveillance sanitarians, and data entry personal in five governorates namely: Giza, Qalubia, Menofia, Dakahlia, and the Cairo districts. These governorates were selected because they are home to almost 50% of the COVID-19 cases in Egypt. These sessions were designed to offer on-job training on valid and timely COVID-19 data entry to the local public health workers and help them achieve better decision-making. Furthermore, the on-job training strengthened participants' skills in the areas of reviewing, analyzing, and completing the data collection process. The courses also highlighted the importance of dealing with quality data for better decision-making, good flow of notification and reporting techniques, and the review of governorates' COVID-19 data compared to the data from the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS).



FETP EGYPT CONDUCTS TRAINING COURSES ON BIOSAFETY AND BIOSECURITY

FETP Egypt conducted four training sessions on Biosafety and Biosecurity for laboratory teams' testing for COVID-19 in five governorates namely: Cairo, Giza, Qalubia, Gharbia, and Dakahelia.

The sessions were designed to raise awareness and to protect the laboratory staff from harmful biological agents and toxins. They covered the following topics: waste management, spill management, and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This training served as a general baseline program to raise awareness and to start changing the safety attitude adopted in hospital laboratories in Egypt.



FETP EGYPT CONDUCTS THREE TOT TRAINING COURSES FOR HEALTH EDUCATORS AND COMMUNITY WORKERS

FETP Egypt conducted three Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions targeting health educators, community workers, and graduates of the Technical Health Institute-MOHP (Counseling and Health Education Division). The training sessions' objectives were to fill the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to create a cadre of well-trained health educators and community workers and to improve the practice and attitude of the community when responding to COVID-19. The sessions focused on the role of health educators when dealing with public health risks and epidemics. They also highlighted the best practices adopted to protect the community against COVID-19 and the importance of delivering timely accurate messages.



NEWS FROM FETP IRAQ

FETP IRAQ RESIDENTS AND GRADUATES CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR COUNTRY'S COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS

Throughout the last three months, the Field Epidemiology Training Program of Iraq (IFETP) played a key role in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic. FETP Iraq residents and graduates were involved in conducting rapid needs assessment for isolation wards in hospitals across different Departments of Health (DOHs). Their involvement started prior to the first registered COVID-19 case in the country.

From a different angle, FETP Iraq graduates also assisted in the process of risk assessment within 154 Healthcare facilities. Furthermore, FETP graduates participated in Infection Prevention Control training in Iraqi DOHs and issued multiple Epidemiological situation reports covering various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic response at both the central and provincial levels.

FETP Iraq graduates also published two scientific studies on COVID-19 and they established an electronic system for the COVID-19 registry at the Central Public Health Laboratory (CPHL). They also participated in data management of surveillance, active surveillance, and contact tracing for COVID-19. Building on their skills, they used a COVID-19 registry system at Points of Entry.

FETP Iraq graduates also designed and implemented an electronic registry system for Healthcare workers. This system is especially designed to collect data pertaining to children under five, and for pregnant women with COVID-19 infection.



NEWS FROM FETP JORDAN

FETP JORDAN RESIDENTS INVESTIGATE MASS FOOD POISONING OUTBREAK

On July 26, 2020, and following the reports of an increasing number of cases with food poisoning signs and symptoms from the Balqa Directorate of Health Affairs and Prince Hussein Hospital of the Balqa governate in Jordan, FETP Jordan residents in coordination with the Directorate of Communicable Diseases conducted an outbreak investigation to look further into the matter.

They started off by interviewing the patients, taking stool samples, and water samples. Their investigation also included taking food samples from the restaurant that was suspected to be the source of the food poisoning. This task was done in coordination with the Jordan FDA. They then analyzed their findings using Epi Info software and wrote a final report reflecting their findings. This report was then sent to stakeholders in the Jordan Ministry of Health.

Their findings revealed that Shawarma was the source of the outbreak. More specifically, lab results indicated the presence of *Salmonellae enteritis* in the samples.



FETP JORDAN COMMENCES TRAINING FOR ITS 17TH COHORT

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Jordan (JFETP) commenced their training with the launch of the Advanced JFETP introductory workshop for Cohort 17. The workshop saw the participation of 12 public health professionals who together make up the program's 17th cohort.

Lasting over a period of two weeks, this introductory workshop enabled participants to learn more about surveillance systems, data analysis, data interpretation, and the basics of epidemiology. After the two-week training period, participants will move on to complete other modules and fieldwork assignments making up the program's requirements.

The JFETP Advanced Program is a two-year program designed to build the capacity of health workers in Jordan. Adopting a learning-by-doing approach, the program provides its residents with the skills they need to fight against outbreaks such as COVID-19, through analyzing surveillance efforts, collecting, and interpreting data, and communicating results for informed decision making.

Established in the year 1998, the program, to date, has contributed to major outbreaks investigations in Jordan.

Until recently, all FETP Jordan training activities were on-hold as FETP residents and graduates were involved in their country's COVID-19 response efforts.



NEWS FROM FETP MOROCCO

FETP MOROCCO RESIDENTS AND GRADUATES CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THEIR COUNTRY'S COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS

Since the beginning of this year, drastic measures were adopted across the country to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such measures included the suspension of public events, restriction of movement, and the suspension of international travel. Within these circumstances, More specifically, FETP residents and graduates were involved in supporting the preparedness plans, and providing assistance in the areas of data collection, guidelines testing, and protocol treatments.

FETP Morocco residents and graduates also assisted in the country's emergency response against COVID-19 by providing daily updates on the epidemiological situation, enabling real-time epidemiologic reporting, and contributing to evidence-based decision-making.



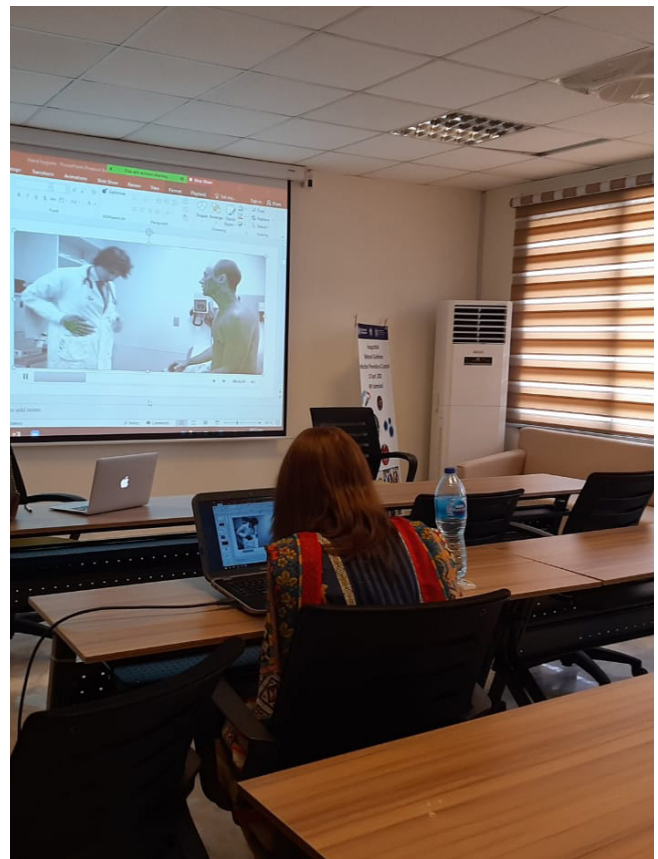
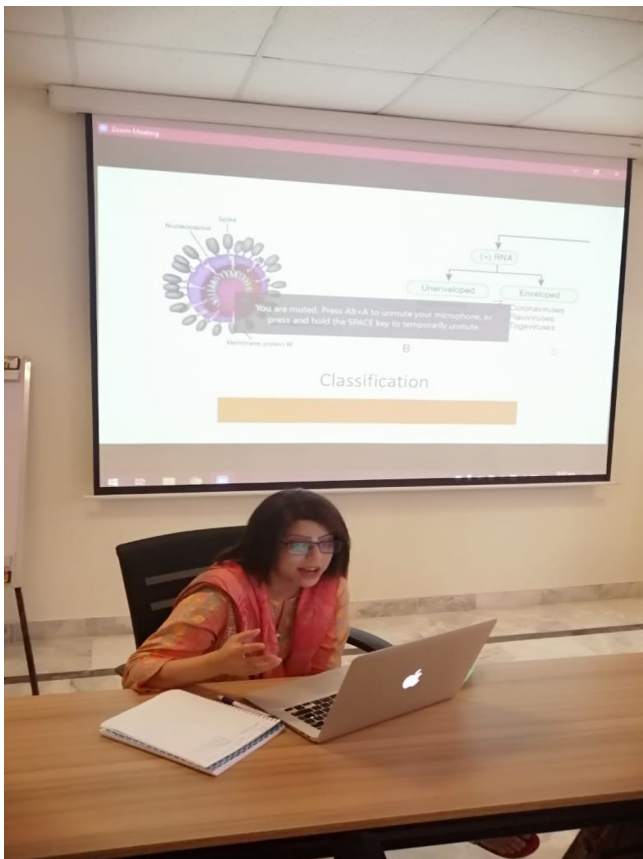
NEWS FROM FELTP PAKISTAN

FELTP PAKISTAN COMMENCES VIRTUAL TRAINING

The National Institute of Health (NIH) Pakistan started the virtual training of hospital staff on infection prevention and control of COVID-19. The first training was held for the hospital staff of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Hospital in Islamabad. The staff consisted of doctors, nurses, and paramedics.

NIH Pakistan successfully trained two batches of healthcare staff of CDA Hospital on infection prevention and control of COVID-19. They also successfully trained the housekeeping staff of CDA hospital on infection prevention and control of COVID-19.

NIH Pakistan also commenced virtual training for housekeeping staff of Azad Jammu, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan on infection prevention and control of COVID-19. The team successfully trained the housekeeping staff of 13 hospitals of Azad Jammu, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. NIH/ FELTP continued its efforts and trained healthcare staff including doctors, nurses, paramedics, and housekeeping staff of the Isolation Hospital and Infectious Treatment Center (IHITC) on infection prevention and control of COVID-19.



FELTP PAKISTAN GRADUATES AND RESIDENTS FACILITATE RANDOM COVID-19 TESTS

In order to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Islamabad and the Capital territory, the National Institute of Health (NIH) Pakistan /FELTP Pakistan facilitated random COVID-19 testing at multiple restaurants, religious places, and other different places in Islamabad. The team from NIH/ FELTP Pakistan in collaboration with the Islamic International University also facilitated COVID-19 tests for the staff and students at the university.



NEWS FROM FETP SAUDI ARABIA

FETP SAUDI CONTINUES TO SUPPORT COUNTRY EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

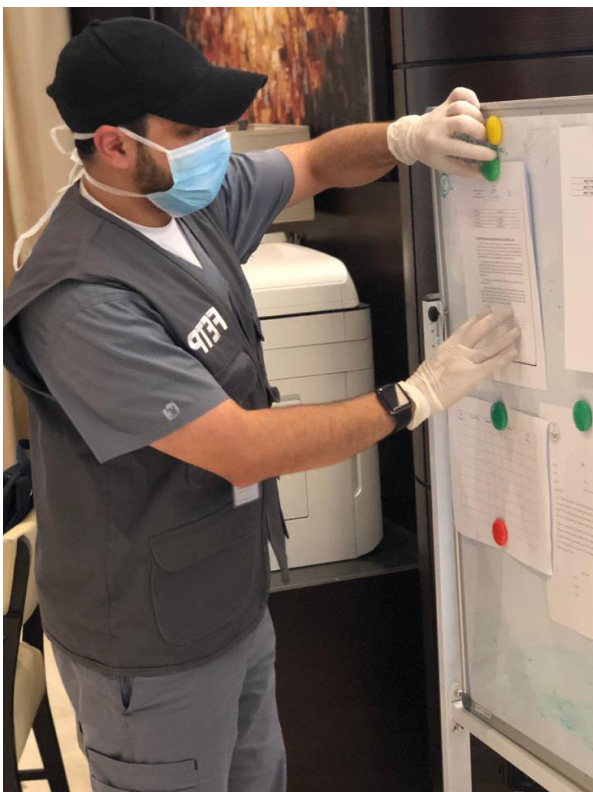
The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Saudi Arabia played a key role in supporting the COVID-19 response efforts in Saudi Arabia and Oman. The FETP residents in Saudi Arabia worked with the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs), where they collected samples and identified hot spots to speed up the process of isolating infected cases.

Furthermore, the residents worked with the contact tracing teams throughout the Kingdom, and they also worked on investigating specific clusters of infection, including the first cluster of cases in Qatif, as well as other clusters, such as the cluster of healthcare workers at a diabetes center.

FETP residents also helped in Al Ahsa, where an outbreak has been reported at a long-term rehabilitation center. The FETP team visited the center and started the investigation of the outbreak. The residents worked on separating the suspected cases from the patients and the healthcare and management workers. They swapped all workers and tracked them since most of the patients were at high risk.

Moreover, the FETP residents and graduates helped create a center within the infection control department. and trained the workers. They also started an education center, to train the healthcare and management workers. These training sessions raised the awareness of workers regarding COVID-19. The mission at Al Ahsa was a success, as the efforts of the FETP residents stopped the outbreak within a week.

Later, FETP residents met the head of the Human Resources in the East Region and discussed issues and agreed to create a guideline for all Kingdom centers based on this experience and generalized it to all centers. Later, the FETP team visited Dammam and Hafr Al Baten centers to apply the same procedure.



NEWS FROM FETP SUDAN

FETP SUDAN RESPONDS TO COVID-19

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Sudan has been actively supporting COVID-19 response efforts in the country. Since the start of the Pandemic, the FETP residents and graduates were engaged in the investigation, response, and surveillance activities .

FETP residents also contributed to training healthcare workers and management cadres in hospitals, clinics, and different health department sectors. The objective of these training sessions was to raise awareness regarding COVID-19, its main signs and symptoms, its transmission, and how to avoid contamination. These sessions also focused on the importance of social distancing and wearing masks during this period, as well as hand washing techniques .

FETP residents also assisted in reviewing and editing Sudan's National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19. Furthermore, the residents helped in evaluating the safety precautions taken at the Khartoum Airport and port while making rapid need assessments for Khartoum Airport.



NEWS FROM FETP TUNISIA

FETP TUNISIA RESPONDS TO COVID-19

The Field Epidemiology Training Program of Tunisia (TFETP) has been greatly involved in Tunisia's COVID-19 response strategy. The strategy aims at limiting the spread of the disease and avoiding the overwhelming of healthcare capacities in the country. TFETP graduates participated in all three phases of Tunisia's preparedness and response plan. In the first phase, the TFETP graduates revised the plan immediately after the first COVID-19 case was announced in Tunisia and they developed the plan's communication strategy.

The TFETP teams then revised the first version of the preparedness plan with careful consideration of the quarantine, screening, and contact tracing measures. In phase two, TFETP graduates updated the plan as Tunisia got its first imported case followed by locally transmitted cases. Furthermore, the TFETP graduates revised the plan and included different preventive measures. In phase three, the TFETP teams revised the response plan and the communication strategy further so that they are aligned with the measures that need to be taken in light of advanced community circulation in the country.

Moreover, TFETP graduates were involved in the early detection, confirmation, investigation of cases, and the development of SOPs for treatment at the national and regional levels. Furthermore, TFETP teams and Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) were involved in the following activities: Point of Entry (PoE) surveillance and alert system, investigation and follow-up of patients, contact tracing, following up on all hospitalized cases, enhancing lab activities, and quarantine procedures.

All these teams worked under the supervision of the coordinator at the Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases (ONMNE).



NEWS FROM FETP YEMEN

FETP YEMEN RESPONDS TO COVID-19

FETP Yemen was established nine years ago and has graduated four cohorts with 42 students. The program's fifth cohort, which involves 11 residents is currently undergoing its advanced training. The YFETP residents and graduates played a major role in responding to COVID-19 since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) this year. FETP Yemen was also quick to develop a national plan and conducted a rapid assessment of the country's preparedness at all levels.

After getting a low score from the rapid assessment test, FETP Yemen residents and graduates conducted a risk assessment where they found that the country is at moderate to high risk of importing COVID-19. Based on this assessment, they developed and worked on different scenarios, and updated the national plan accordingly. The program developed many guidelines that were implemented in the country.

In addition, FETP Yemen established and supervised the COVID-19 hotline. The FETP program was also actively involved in multiple training sessions including the training of the surveillance staff in governorates, the training of the Rapid Response Teams (RRTs), the training of health workers in issues related to case management, and infection control.

OTHER NEWS

FETPS PARTICIPATE IN “ROLE OF FETPS AND RRTS AS FIRST LINE RESPONDERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC” WEBINAR CONDUCTED BY EMPHNET

On Tuesday, August 25, 2020, EMPHNET successfully held its fifth webinar titled “Role of FETPs and RRTs as First Line Responders during COVID-19 Pandemic”. This webinar comes in part of EMPHNETs WEBi series that focuses on COVID-19 issues. The webinar was a special event, since it hosted FETP directors from different countries in the EMR, giving them the floor to highlight the different activities undertaken by FETPs and RRTs during the COVID-19 response.

The webinar hosted the following FETP directors: Executive Director/Clinical Director FELTP, National Institute of Health, Islamabad- Pakistan, Prof. Aamer Ikram, SI(M); General Director of the National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases; FETP Director – Tunisia, Prof. Nissaf Bou Afif; FETP Yemen Director, Dr. Abdulhakeem Kohlani; and FETP Egypt Director, Dr. Sahar Sami.

From FELTP Pakistan, Prof. Aamer Ikram shared that almost all FELTP graduates have been actively involved in the coordination, planning, and monitoring activities during the pandemic. FELTP graduates were also involved in the establishment of a communication mechanism for the dissemination of messages and materials. The graduates were heavily deployed at Points of Entry (PoEs). Moreover, they assisted in collecting large numbers of samples and transported them to public health laboratories and conducted training for medical and nonmedical front-liners.

From FETP Tunisia, Prof. Nissaf Bou Afif highlighted the role of TFETP graduates in revising, updating, and conducting Tunisia's preparedness and response plan. TFETP graduates were also involved in the detection, confirmation, and investigation of cases, as well as the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for treatment. Furthermore, the FETPs and RRTs were responsible for PoEs surveillance, investigation and follow-up of patients, contact tracing, following up on all hospitalized cases, enhancing lab activities, and quarantine procedures.

Dr. Abdulhakeem Kohlani, from FETP Yemen, shared that the YFETP residents and graduates were responsible for conducting the evaluation for the PoEs and RRTs, laboratory capacity, hospital preparedness, IPC, logistics, and coordination at all levels. YFETP residents and graduates also updated and edited the national plan and developed the guidelines that were implemented by the country.

From FETP Egypt, Dr. Sahar Sami talked about the participation of the FETP residents and graduates in the development and updating of the national public health emergency and response plan. The graduates were also involved in the screening, follow-up, and data collection at PoEs. Additionally, they also assisted in enhancing the national surveillance system through developing SOPs.

Through this webinar, FETP directors were given the opportunity to discuss the role of FETPs and RRTs during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to showcase the response activates undertaken by their teams, they also identified the gaps and mitigation measures, monitoring and evaluation process, and contribution in operational research.

EMPHNET WEBi Series
Role of FETPs and RRTs as First Line Responders during COVID-19 Pandemic
 Tuesday, August 25, 2020
 17:00 to 18:40 Jordan Local Time (UTC +3)

Speakers

- Dr. Mohannad Al Nsour**
Executive Director, GHQ EMPHNET
- Prof. Aamer Ikram, SI(M)**
Executive Director/Clinical Director FELTP
National Institute of Health, Islamabad,
- Prof. Nissaf Bou Afif**
General Director of the National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases; FETP Director- Tunisia

Facilitators

- Dr. Faris Lami**
Associate Professor at Baghdad University, FETP Resident
- Dr. Heather Burke**
CDC Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

The webinar will focus on

- 1- Highlighting the various activities undertaken by FETPs and RRTs during COVID-19 response.
- 2- Investigating the importance of supporting FETP and RRT graduates in the EMR.
- 3- Identifying areas of improvement regarding bridging response gaps.
- 4- Elaborating on the significance of data management and involvement in operational research.
- 5- Explaining institutional setup and synergies with other public health authorities/ departments.

COVID-19 Response
 #EMPHNET with you against COVID-19