

EMHJ

Eastern Mediterranean  
Health Journal

المجلة الصحية  
للشرق المتوسط



La Revue de Santé de la  
Méditerranée orientale



Following the unfolding events in Afghanistan, the World Health Organization (WHO) is fully committed to working in the country and delivering public health services as well as distribution of medicines and medical equipment. Currently WHO has a network of 84 staff and health workers inside the country working in all 34 provinces to ensure the most vulnerable in Afghanistan can access essential health services.

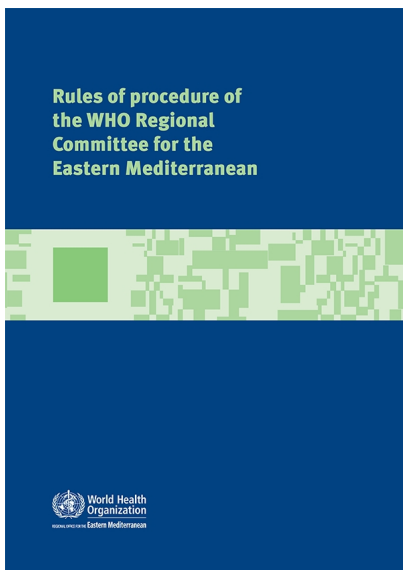
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المجلد السابع والعشرون عدد ٩  
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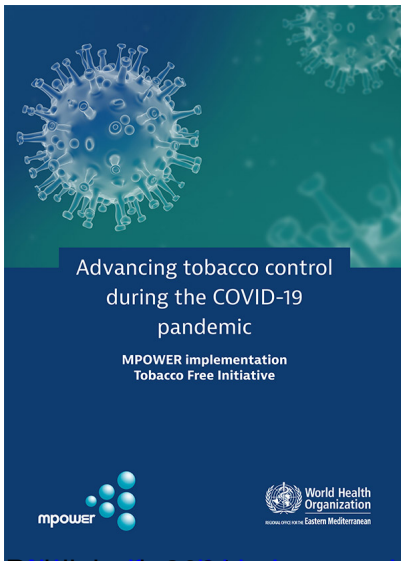
[Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal \[2021: Vol.27, Issue 9\]](#)

Published: 2021



[Rules of procedure of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean](#)

Published: 2021



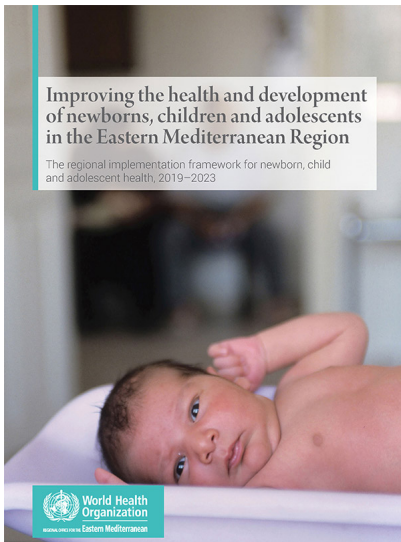
[Published: 2021. Tobacco control during the COVID-19 pandemic: MPOWER implementation](#)



[Published: 2021. Monitoring health and health system performance in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: core](#)



[Published: 2021. COVID-19 pandemic response in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: 2020 progress report of](#)

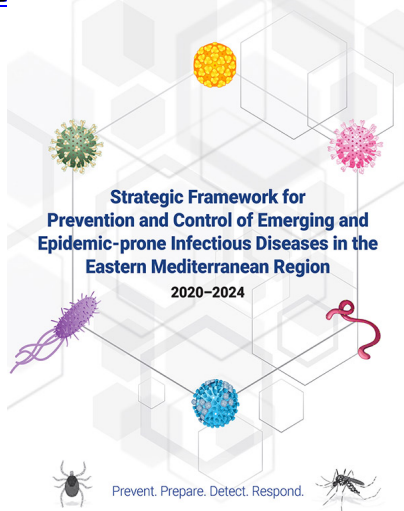


**Improving the health and development of newborns, children and adolescents in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**

The regional implementation framework for newborn, child and adolescent health, 2019–2023



Published 2021, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2019–2023, implementing framework for newborn, child and adolescents in the Eastern

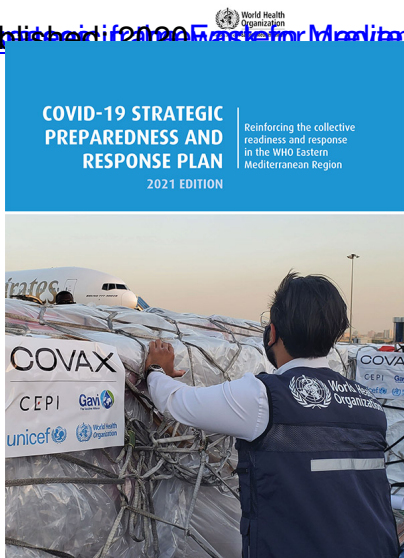


**Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Emerging and Epidemic-prone Infectious Diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**

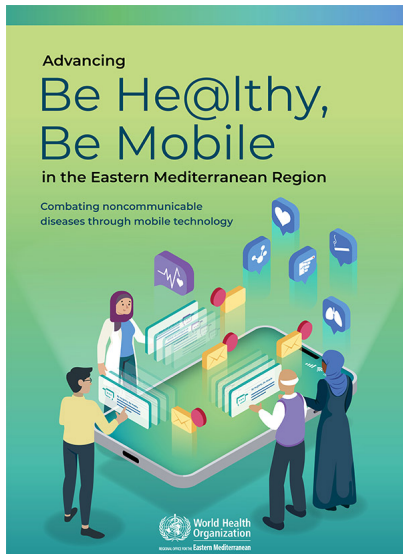
2020–2024

Prevent. Prepare. Detect. Respond.

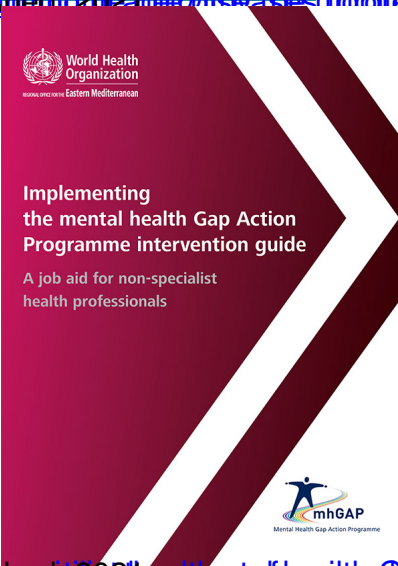
Published 2020, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2020–2024, and epidemic, prevent, detect, respond



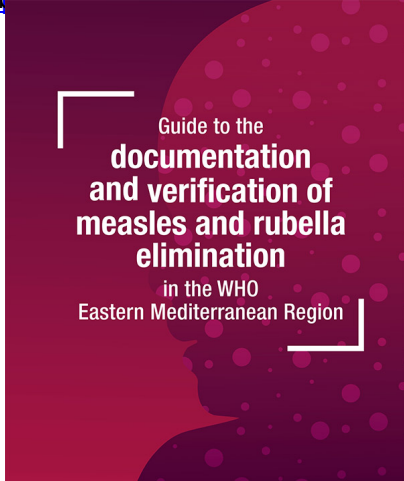
Published 2021, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2021, reinforcing the collective readiness and



[Published in 2021, \*Advancing Be He@lthy, Be Mobile in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: combating\*](#)



[Published in 2021, \*Implementing the mental health Gap Action Programme intervention guide: a job aid for\*](#)



[Published in 2021, \*Documentation and verification of measles and rubella elimination in the WHO\*](#)

## BUILD BACK FAIRER ACHIEVING HEALTH EQUITY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS  
OF HEALTH IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Published 2021. Commission on social determinants of health equity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region report executive summary



Published 2020. Tackling infectious disease outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region



INTRODUCING THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS  
OF HEALTH IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

### New report reveals path-breaking insights into the state of health inequities in the Eastern Mediterranean

In-depth analysis carried out for a WHO Commission highlights health inequities in the Region – and what can be done to remedy them.

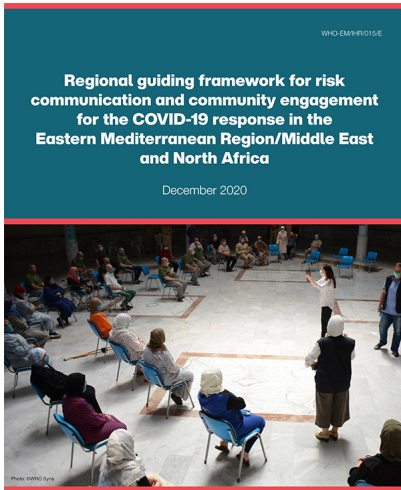
There are marked inequities in health between countries in every region of the world, but they are particularly dramatic in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. For example, male life expectancy in Somalia is 54 compared with 79 in Kuwait, among women the range is 59 to 82. These inequities in health also exist within countries, related to income, wealth, education, rural or urban location and conditions associated with being a migrant, refugee, or internally displaced person.

Inequities between and within countries that are judged to be avoidable are unfair. These unfair health inequities are shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age – the social determinants of health – and by political, economic, cultural and environmental influences which are the structural drivers of those conditions. Health systems are necessary for treating illness when it occurs, and universal health coverage is vital. But it is the social determinants of health (SDH) that determine health, and inequities in health.

How can we better treat people if we then send them back to the conditions that made them sick? Now, the Commission on Social Determinants of Health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region has examined the conditions that make people sick and deprive them of the opportunity to lead lives of dignity in the Region.

The Commission's new report, *Build back fairer*, presents a stark picture of the need for action to improve health in the Region by focusing on the social determinants of health. It is set against the backdrop of pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and continued problems of conflict, mass movements of people, economic inequality and poverty, environmental challenges and gender inequities. The Commission has brought together a mass of evidence from the Region and provided a comprehensive set of recommendations for stakeholders, international and regional organizations, national and local governments, civil society including faith-based organizations, the health sector, the corporate sector and humanitarian agencies all have a role to play in building back fairer.

Published 2021. Introduction to the Commission on social determinants of health equity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

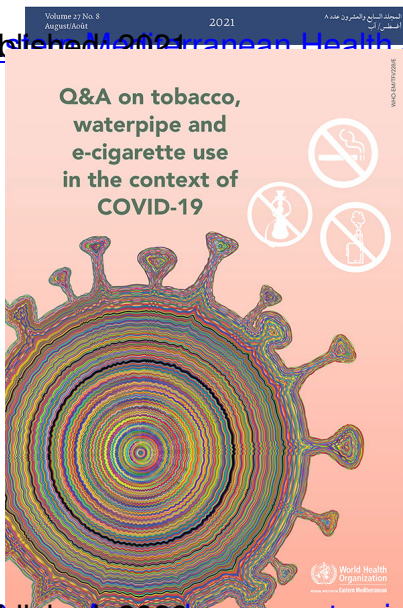


[Published 2020. Framework for risk communication and community engagement in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Middle East and North Africa](#)



Strengthening Primary Health Care through family practice based model of care is an essential bedrock in achieving Universal Health Coverage. However, the shortage of family practitioners in most countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region remains a daunting challenge. To overcome the shortage of family practitioners, the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has launched a 4-month regional professional diploma in Family medicine as a bridging programme to upgrade the skills of general physicians.

[Published 2021. Eastern Health Journal \[2021; Vol.27, Issue 8\]](#)



[Published 2020. Tobacco, waterpipe and e-cigarette use in the context of COVID-19](#)



**COVID-19 and beyond**

Banning the use of tobacco and e-cigarettes in public places

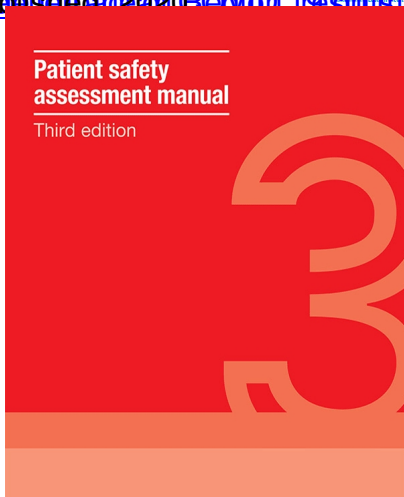
[Published 2020 COVID-19 and beyond: banning the use of tobacco and e-cigarettes in public places](#)

**The impact of COVID-19 on mental, neurological and substance use services in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**

Results of a rapid assessment



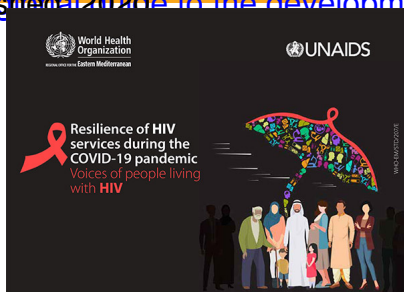
[Published 2020 COVID-19 on mental, neurological and substance use services in the Eastern](#)



[Published 2020 Patient safety assessment manual: third edition](#)



Published 2020 [A regional guide to the development of nursing specialist practice](#)



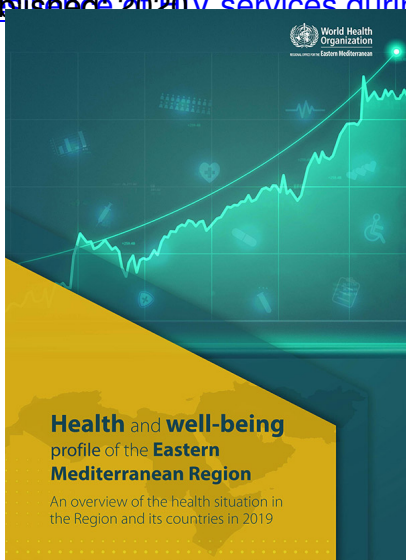
**Introduction**

On 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in February 2020. To date, the pandemic has been rapidly evolving, affecting all 22 countries in the Region. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns authorized by governments as containment measures have had a profound impact on the HIV response. While countries have been working tirelessly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, other essential health services such as HIV services have been affected and disrupted, causing challenges for people living with and affected by HIV and putting their lives at risk.

Despite efforts to scale up HIV services in recent years, countries in the Region still have gaps in the scale of the response needed to achieve Target 3 (ending AIDS) of Sustainable Development Goal 3. COVID-19 threatens the gains made in the response to HIV and to women ages, especially in access to services by the most marginalized. A modelling exercise convened by WHO and UNAIDS in May 2020 forecast that a 6-month disruption in access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) could lead to a doubling in AIDS-related deaths in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 alone.\*

\*The cost of a 6-month COVID-19-related service disruption could cause hundreds of thousands of extra deaths from HIV (gender). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. <https://www.who.int/news/item/2020-05-18-the-cost-of-inaction-covid-19-related-service-disruptions-could-cause-hundreds-of-thousands-of-extra-deaths-from-hiv>.

Published 2020 [HIV services during the COVID-19 pandemic: voices of people living with HIV](#)

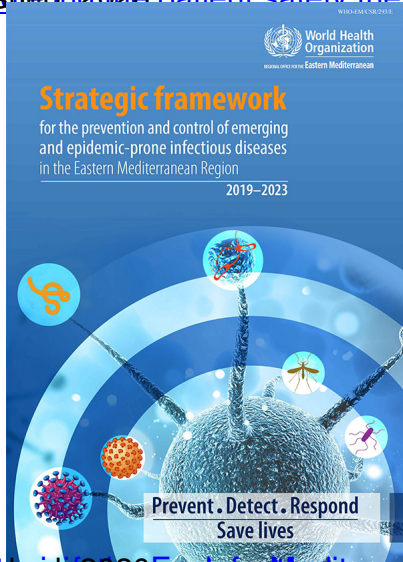


Published 2020 [Regional profiles of the Eastern Mediterranean Region: an overview of the health](#)

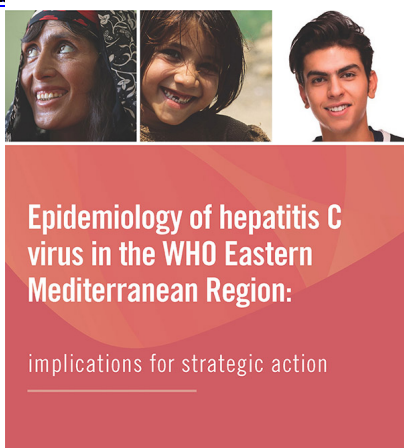




[Published 2020 patient safety friendly hospital framework](#)



[Published 2020 Eastern Mediterranean Region 2019-2023 emerging and epidemic-prone infectious](#)



[Published 2020 of hepatitis C virus in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: implications for](#)



Implementation guide for  
health systems recovery in emergencies



[Published 2020](#)  [Implementation guide for health systems recovery in emergencies: transforming challenges](#)



[Published 2020](#)  [Establishing syndromic surveillance and event-based surveillance systems for Zika, dengue](#)



[Published 2021](#)  [Report of the 67th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, WHO Regional Office, Cairo, Egypt, 12-13 October 2020](#)

## Vision 2023 for the Eastern Mediterranean Region

### Update on progress during 2019

In October 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region launched Vision 2023, a new vision for health in the Region. The vision identifies the Organization's strategic priorities and is supported by a strategy outlining the actions needed to meet those priorities.

This short report highlights progress towards achieving the vision in the first year since it was introduced. It is designed to be as clear and straightforward as possible so that everyone can see what WHO is doing. It consists of two tables focusing on a list of 10 key initiatives for 2019 that was set out in the vision and a plan developed by WHO's Regional Office to implement the vision in its first year. The report uses simple indicators to show progress on each item: green for substantial progress, amber for some progress and red for no substantial progress. Where no substantial progress has been made on an item, text in italics shows the planned action that has not yet been accomplished. These outstanding actions are being carried over to the new operational workplan.

You can find the full text of Vision 2023 plus the related strategy and other relevant documents on WHO's website at: [www.emro.who.int/about-who/vision2023/vision-2023.html](http://www.emro.who.int/about-who/vision2023/vision-2023.html).

The 10 key initiatives for 2019

Key initiatives	Status as at December 2019
1) Forming an Alliance for Health for All by All with key partners and stakeholders in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A preparatory meeting for the Regional Health Forum was held in November 2019; the launch of a Regional Health Alliance is planned for the Regional Health Forum in 2020.</li> <li>The Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, a worldwide initiative to improve collaboration for health among multilateral agencies, is being piloted in five countries of the Region; discussions have begun in three additional countries.</li> </ul>
2) Establishing a leadership and health diplomacy development programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHO's African Region is planning to hold its next leadership and health diplomacy course jointly with the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; the course is scheduled to take place in Cairo in April 2020.</li> <li>The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean partnered with the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) to deliver a course on country leadership on health and well-being</li> </ul>

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