



*Health officials looked to Dr Yassin as a key source of scientific and historic knowledge on outbreaks and epidemiological surveillance in Yemen*

By: Sadeq Al-Wesabi

20 June 2020 – Years after his retirement, Dr Yassin Abdul-Warith's passion for fighting epidemics across Yemen never waned nor did he rest until he died from one of the diseases he fought: COVID-19.

One of the oldest and most well-known epidemiologists in Yemen, Dr Yassin had been working for around 50 years fighting different epidemics in the country, including Rift Valley fever, diphtheria, malaria, cholera and lately COVID-19.

Health officials looked to Dr Yassin as a key source of scientific and historic knowledge on outbreaks and epidemiological surveillance in Yemen.

“Dr Yassin played a major role in detecting and responding to most outbreaks and

communicable diseases hitting Yemen,” said Dr Adel Al-Jassari, the malaria control expert for WHO Yemen and former director of the National Malaria Control Programme.



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He added: “As a senior epidemiologist and surveillance advisor, he dedicated his life to contain diseases and outbreaks, travelling to all Yemen’s governorates to help curb the spread of infectious diseases. “His death was a big loss to the health sector and WHO in Yemen.”

With profound knowledge and experience, Dr Yassin mentored thousands of health workers in the field of epidemiology and emergency response.

“He was one of the heroes of primary health care in Yemen and is credited for establishing field epidemiology. He was among the first respondents to any disease outbreak guiding the health sector towards surveillance and effective response,” said Dr Jamal Nasher, the Health System Coordinator for WHO Pakistan and former Deputy Minister for Planning at Yemen’s Ministry of Health and Population.

Weeks before his death, Dr Yassin was responding to COVID-19, training rapid response teams and visiting isolation centres to assess the situation and needs.

“I worked with him closely for years. His dedication and humanity can never be forgotten. He left a significant legacy nearly in every single health programme,” said Dr Saeed Al-Shaibani, a laboratory National Professional Officer for WHO Yemen.

The death of Dr Yassin shocked not only his family and those who worked with him for years, but also many new nurses and physicians who received training and guidance from him.



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“Every time he visits us, he listens carefully to our urgent needs and try his best to help provide us with these needs. He was always there when we needed training, guidance and advice, especially during the cholera outbreaks,” Dr Amal Al-Haidari, a physician at Aza Health Centre in Sanaa, recalled.

Beside his rich medical knowledge and background, Dr Yassin is also known for his benevolent goodwill and deep humanity

“He was never reluctant when it came to helping others, especially those who needed medical treatment but couldnt afford it,” said his brother Professor Jamal Abdul-Warith.

“Before specializing in epidemiology, he worked as a surgeon in areas where security situation was destabilized. He helped treat and save the lives of many people who couldn't afford the cost of surgical operations. Most cases were treated free-of-charge” he added.

“Medicine was not only a profession for Dr Yassin, but a humanitarian service and mission.”

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