30 May 2024, Geneva, Switzerland/Cairo, Egypt – Eight awards are to be presented at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly to people and institutions from around the world for their outstanding contributions to public health in their countries and globally. Four of the awardees are from the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

A special awards ceremony will take place on 31 May 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The World Health Assembly President will hand out the awards alongside high-level representatives of the foundations providing the public health awards and prizes. WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus will also attend the ceremony, as administrator of the prizes.

“I feel so proud to see 4 experts and institutions from the Eastern Mediterranean Region receive 4 of the 8 highly valued WHO awards,” said Dr Hanan Balkhy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “This sends a strong message about how rich the Region is in talented, distinguished and knowledgeable people. The awardees’ expertise and achievements, across different health fields, show that we have human assets who contribute to the improvement of regional and global health.

“Heartfelt congratulations and a big thank you to Saudi Arabia’s National Death Registry System and to Dr Bader Al-Rawahi, Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi and Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri from Oman. You have made us all very proud and filled us with hope and determination.”

Regional winners of 2024 prizes

Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health
2024 laureate: Dr Bader Al-Rawahi, Oman

Dr Bader Al-Rawahi leads a major public health programme as Director of Communicable Diseases and Control, and Manager of the Expanded Programme on Immunization, at the Ministry of Health of Oman. The high quality of immunization services provided in the country is widely recognized internationally. Dr Al-Rawahi has made a considerable effort to leave no one behind, including migrants, displaced populations and underprivileged people.

United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize

2024 prize winner: National Death Registry System, Saudi Arabia

The National Death Registry System is a programme within the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia. Thanks to this system, the country can share its mortality data with WHO as well as identify subnational regions with the highest mortality rates and prioritize the provision of medical support to those areas. Data collected through this system inform national health policies and resource allocation within the health system.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion

The 2024 prize was jointly awarded to Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi, Oman, and the Chinese Geriatrics Society, China.

Dr Al Wahaibi is a family doctor who has made an important contribution to integrating high-quality care of older people within primary health care in Oman. Most recently, he has been leading the Elderly Care Section in the Primary Health Care Department of the Ministry of Health. He also played a part in the development of a national programme for people aged 60 years and above that provides screening, assessment and early interventions as part of primary health care.

The Chinese Geriatrics Society is a nongovernmental organization that aims to improve the health of 267 million older people in China. The Society runs a broad range of programmes and activities that are central to healthy ageing. It applies a comprehensive approach that includes geriatric assessment, clinical treatment, nutritional support, rehabilitation and palliative care.

Ihsan Doğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize
The 2024 winner: Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri, Oman

Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri is a renowned obstetrician-gynaecologist in Oman with extensive experience and leadership in women’s health. She is currently Director of the Department of Woman and Child Health in Oman. She has worked extensively in the field of

family health, including community health; prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis; human papillomavirus; management of HIV and various other communicable diseases; maternal health and prevention of maternal mortality; and newborn, child and adolescent health at primary and tertiary care levels.

Winners from other WHO regions

Sasakawa Health Prize
Dr Doreen Ramogola-Masire, Botswana

Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion
Professor Bontle Mbongwe, Botswana
National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, India

Call for nominations for 2025 awards

The call for nominations for the annual awards is put out each year after the World Health Assembly. Nominations can be made by national health administrations of a WHO Member State and by former prize winners. At its 154th session in January 2024, the WHO Executive Board decided upon the winners of the 2024 awards, based on proposals made by the dedicated selection panel for each prize.

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