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Emerging trends in health crisis and disaster management revealed at Arab Health 2024

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"A robust governance framework, well-defined standards and policies critical to an effective response system. Ã?Â· AI, telehealth, digital transformation and telematics are increasingly playing a critical role in managing disaster situations" explains Dr Al Ali, EMS and Disaster Medicine at the Department of Health Abu Dhabi



A leading expert in health crisis and disaster management has underscored the importance of pre-hospital care, hospital services, and enabling services, including laboratories and training programs in disaster management, as we move from classical operations to technology-driven disaster medicine.

Speaking at the Public Health Conference on the emerging trends in health crisis and disaster, Dr Saleh Fares Al Ali, Consultant of Emergency Medicine, EMS and Disaster Medicine at the Department of Health Abu Dhabi, and H.E. Dr Amer Sharif, CEO of Dubai Health shared their insights

Dr Saleh Fares Al Ali, Consultant of Emergency Medicine, EMS and Disaster Medicine at the Department of Health Abu Dhab:

Dr Al Ali revealed disaster management involves more than just having an ambulance on standby at the emergency department.

“It encompasses a wide range of services and requires a comprehensive approach to governance. This includes pre-hospital care, hospital services, and enabling services, including laboratories, training programs, and even poison centres. To effectively manage disasters, we must consider all of these elements as part of a larger system,” said Dr Al Ali.

“An effective response system requires a robust governance framework, well-defined standards, and policies. Additionally, you need an efficient operation centre to connect all the dots. It's crucial to cover all domains, from pre-hospital to hospital to enabling services, to create a well-orchestrated system,” he added.

Some of the key trends discussed by Dr Al Ali were technology and its critical role in managing disasters, where he underscored the importance of artificial intelligence (AI), telehealth, digital transformation and telematics and outlining how AI enhances medical diagnosis and triage by swiftly and accurately analysing patient data, predicting outcomes, and offering

treatment recommendations; additionally, AI-driven chatbots provide real-time medical guidance to first responders.

Telehealth technologies help enhance access to medical expertise, expedite remote consultations between prehospital providers and physicians, and optimise resource allocation, benefiting patients in rural or underserved areas by saving critical time during emergencies.

The burgeoning industry of advanced data insights utilises digital twins, enabling virtual replicas of entities such as emergency departments or ambulance systems, fostering crisis management, and employing predictive analytics to mobilise resources proactively, exemplified by anticipating ambulance needs at events such as Arab Health due to the volume of people gathering in one area.

Finally, telematics systems in ambulances, utilising 5G connectivity, offer real-time tracking for location, speed, and status, enhancing response times and route optimisation. Dr Al Ali highlighted a prototype collaboration between the Department of Health in Abu Dhabi and Etisalat whereby ultrasound images to hospitals will be transferred through this technology.

Elsewhere on the agenda at Arab Health, Dubai Health, the first integrated academic health system in Dubai presented a comprehensive overview of Dubai's first integrated academic health system model.

H.E. Dr Amer Sharif, CEO of Dubai Health:

“Through a unified commitment to patient-centred care, we are not just shaping the present healthcare landscape, but also laying the foundation for a transformative future anchored in our primary value of 'Patient First.’ This commitment extends beyond the present, as we strive to create a lasting impact on the lives and wellbeing of our community for generations to come” explained Dr Sharif.

Arab Health 2024 concludes on 1 February 2024, at the Dubai World Trade Centre, when the winners of the Innov8 startup competition will be revealed. The competition included 24 health-tech startups pitching unique concepts and innovations. The winners of the Cre8 competition will also be revealed. The competition has been designed to foster creativity and innovation among participating students in the UAE. Contestants were required to conceptualise and innovate a solution for an actual healthcare problem within an imaginary AED 100,000 budget.

Caption:

(Right) **Dr Saleh Fares Al Ali, Consultant of Emergency Medicine, EMS and Disaster Medicine at the Department of Health Abu Dhab**

(Left) **H.E. Dr Amer Sharif, CEO of Dubai Health**