



MECIDS Webinar Learning Guide

Challenges Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic

Thursday, 2nd April 2020

12 – 1:30 PM Jerusalem time (GMT+3)

The Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS), is a trilateral, non-official organization that was formed in 2002 by leading public health officials and academics from Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. MECIDS is a platform and source of expertise for cross-border collaboration and response to the current threats of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Register here:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6YjoSC4TT52DqgMDTPj39w

Introduction

MECIDS is a part of Connecting Organisations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS), a program of Ending Pandemics operating in Africa, Asia, and Europe. MECIDS was an instrumental platform of collaboration for addressing regional emerging infectious diseases such as H5N1 avian flu (2005), H1N1 pandemic influenza (2009), transmission of foodborne diseases (e.g. salmonellosis), transmission of vector-borne diseases (eg. West Nile Fever and leishmaniasis), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome –Corona Virus (MERS-CoV). Speakers will include experts representing MECIDS members and discussants from the World Health Organization, Tel Aviv University, the Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases and University of Haifa.

Webinar Overview

Dr. Marlo Libel (Ending Pandemics) will launch the webinar. This will be followed by a presentation given by Prof. Dani Cohen, Chair of MECIDS and acting head of the School of Public Health at Tel Aviv University. Prof. Cohen will give an overview on the characteristics of the COVID-19 pandemic and will present the experience of Israel in facing the current pandemic.

Dr. Sami Sheikh Ali, Head Data Management Department, the Communicable Diseases Directorate, Ministry of Health, Jordan, will present the experience of Jordan in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prof. Ziad Abdeen from Al-Quds University will present the Palestinian perspective relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Prof. Ella Mendelson, head of the Central Virology Laboratory of the Israeli Ministry of Health and a professor of epidemiology and preventive medicine, will highlight in her talk the importance of the rapid development of diagnostic tests for the new coronavirus and laboratory preparedness.

Dr. Bruria Adini from the School of Public Health at Tel Aviv University will give an overview on the non-medical challenges associated with facing and containment of the COVID-19 threat.

An international panel including Dr. Dorit Nitzan, Coordinator of Health Emergencies at World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, Dr. Silvia Bino, Head of the Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases (SECID) and Prof. Manfred Green from the University of Haifa, will give their perspective on facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions and comments submitted by the webinar audience will be addressed by lecturers and panelists.

Closing remarks will be given by Prof. Dani Cohen

Agenda

Timing: 90 minutes

Time	Topic
12:00-12:05	Introduction Dr. Marlo Libel Ending Pandemics, San Francisco, USA
12:05-12:50	MECIDS as a platform to address emerging infectious diseases The Israeli experience facing COVID-19 pandemic Prof. Daniel Cohen Chair of MECIDS and acting head of School of Public Health, Tel Aviv University, Israel
	The Jordanian experience facing COVID-19 pandemic Dr. Sami Sheikh Ali The Communicable Diseases Directorate, Ministry of Health, Jordan
	The Palestinian experience facing COVID-19 pandemic Prof. Ziad Abdeen Al Quds University, East Jerusalem

	<p>Rapid response in the diagnostics/detection- Laboratory preparedness Prof. Ella Mendelson and Dr. Yaniv Lustig The Central Virology Laboratory, Ministry of Health and School of Public Health, Tel Aviv University, Israel</p>
	<p>The non-medical burden of COVID-19 pandemic Dr. Bruria Adini Department of Emergency Management and Disaster Medicine, School of Public Health, Tel Aviv University, Israel</p>
<p>12:50-13:05</p>	<p>Panel discussion Dr. Dorit Nitzan Coordinator of Health Emergencies at World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe Dr. Silvia Bino Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases (SECID) Prof. Manfred Green School of Public Health, University of Haifa, Israel</p>
<p>13:05-13:25</p>	<p>Questions and answers</p>
<p>13:25-13:30</p>	<p>Closing remarks Prof. Daniel Cohen</p>

Acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
MERS-CoV	Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus
SARS-CoV	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus
SARS-CoV-2	The virus responsible for COVID-19

Biographies of Speakers

1. Prof. Daniel Cohen, PhD, MPH (MECIDS, Tel Aviv University)



Professor Daniel (Dani) Cohen joined Tel Aviv University (TAU) for a full-time academic position in 2002 and has been a full Professor since 2006. Previously, he served in the Israel Defense Forces and was the Director of the Infectious Diseases Research Institute in the Medical Corps. Prof. Cohen served as the Head of Tel Aviv University School of Public Health for 6 years, after serving 4 years as Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine. Prof. Cohen founded the Tiberio Swartz Forum on Epidemiology of Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity, a very active national and international stage for scientific communications and discussions in the field of infectious diseases and vaccines. Additionally, he is the co-founder and co-director of the Summer International Institute of Advanced Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine at TAU School of Public Health. He also serves as an executive board member and the current Chairperson of the Middle East Consortium for Infectious Diseases Surveillance (MECIDS) and acts on various national and international advisory boards in the field of infectious diseases and vaccines. He is a member of the Israel MOH Director General Consulting Team on Epidemics including to date COVID-19. Prof. Cohen has been a consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO) on several occasions.

Prof. Cohen has supervised many graduate and post-graduate students. He has received several awards for outstanding contribution to research and is the author of more than 220 original, peer-reviewed articles. His field of research is on the epidemiology of infectious diseases and vaccinology and in particular on enteric diseases and enteric vaccines.

Prof. Cohen is currently Acting Head of the TAU SPH.

2. Dr. Marlo Libel, MD, MPH (Ending Pandemics)



Marlo Libel is Senior Advisor for Ending Pandemics. He applies over 40 years of public health surveillance experience to the goal of ending pandemics. He provides sound advice and strategic direction, along with technical support to CORDS (Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance) and EpiCore, a global crowdsourcing network of volunteer human, animal, and environmental practitioners committed to verifying disease outbreaks. Marlo previously worked with Ending Pandemics at the Skoll Global Threats Fund on a variety of projects. He led the SGTF project on participatory surveillance for early detection of disease outbreaks at mass gatherings (2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, both in Brazil).

Marlo was a medical epidemiologist at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) from 1985–2009. Initially stationed in Panama, he directed technical cooperation in Central America to improve public health surveillance systems, outbreak investigation and control, and HIV/AIDS surveillance and prevention strategies. From 1989 onward, at PAHO's headquarters in Washington, D.C., he served as regional advisor on communicable diseases with responsibility for coordinating PAHO's response to disease outbreaks. His work also included establishing emerging infectious disease networks in the Southern Cone, the Amazon Basin, and Central America and acting as a regional focal point for the implementation of IHR (2005). He received his MD from the Faculdade Catolica de Medicina de Porto Alegre, Brazil, and his MPH from the Tulane School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

3. Dr. Sami Sheikh Ali, MD (MECIDS, MOH, Jordan)



Dr. Sami Sheikh Ali is the Head of the Data Management Department in the Communicable Diseases Directorate of the Jordanian Ministry of Health. Dr. Sheikh Ali has been working at the Ministry of Health for many years, and has served as a WHO pandemic influenza preparedness focal point for Jordan. His areas of expertise include primary care, data management and epidemiology of infectious diseases.

4. Prof. Ziad Abdeen, PhD, MPH (MECIDS, Al-Quds University)



Professor Ziad Abdeen is the Director of Al-Quds Nutrition and Health Research Institute and Professor in the Department of Community Health at Al-Quds University Faculty of Medicine.

Professor Abdeen, graduate of Johns Hopkins, has worked, and taught extensively in the field of public health research and evaluation. His own research has focused on both Psychosocial and biomedical models, namely: a) identification of health risks such as Vector borne diseases, tick borne diseases, and micronutrient deficiencies, and b) school health behaviors especially related to mental health, nutrition, and bullying. The high quality of his research studies, and their practical value for development of well- targeted and effective strategies for addressing public health issues have resulted in numerous research grants from international donors including NIH, DFG, WHO, UNICEF. Professor Abdeen has also developed strong working relationships with organizations including the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education.

Recognized for his research and teaching skills and his knowledge of public health conditions and programming needs, as reflected in his current and past appointments as Dean of Research and Graduate studies at Al-Quds University, Director of the Palestinian National Health Plan, Founder and board director of Al-Quds Public Health Society, and member of the National Research Strategy Committee for Palestine. Professor Abdeen has developed an unsurpassed understanding of the public health problems, service delivery needs and constraints facing the West Bank and Gaza and strong working relationships with national and international professionals contributing to effort to achieve and maintain quality public health research and health service delivery there.

5. Prof. Ella Mendelson, PhD (The Central Virology Laboratory, MOH, Israel)



Prof. Ella Mendelson is the Director of the Central Virology Laboratory of the Israeli Ministry of Health, where she has worked for over 30 years and a Professor of Epidemiology at Tel Aviv University School of Public Health. She has published over 200 original articles of national and international importance.

6. Dr. Yaniv Lustig, PhD (The Central Virology Laboratory, MOH, Israel)



Dr. Yaniv Lustig is the Head of the National Center for Zoonotic Viruses and the Deputy Director of the Laboratory of Environmental Virology at the Central Virology Laboratory of the Israeli Ministry of Health. His areas of research include zoonoses, tropical diseases, molecular diagnostics, emerging infectious diseases and disease surveillance.

7. Dr. Bruria Adini, PhD (Tel Aviv University)



Dr. Adini is the Head of the Department of Emergency Management and Disaster Medicine in the School of Public Health, Sackler Faculty of Medicine in the Tel Aviv University. Dr. Adini has a PhD in management of health systems. She is involved in both field and academic activities, facilitating research of challenges identified in preparing for and managing varied emergency situations and implementing the findings to promote effective management of emergencies and disasters. She is highly experienced in planning and implementation processes aimed at ensuring effective response to different hazards that pose a risk, including in studying, teaching, and validating policies.

Dr. Adini serves as a board member of the Local Authorities Confronting Disasters and Emergencies (LACDE), Science Training Encouraging Peace – Graduate Training Program (STEP GTP), the National Forum of Emergency Management, as well as a member of the Israeli National Council for Trauma and Emergency Medicine. She previously served for two periods as a board member of the World Association of Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM).

Dr. Adini has specialized since 1987 in emergency preparedness and response to healthcare systems for mass casualty events and disasters. She served in the Medical Corps for 17 years, including 4 years as head of the emergency hospitalization branch responsible for the emergency preparedness of all general hospitals. For 3 years she headed the Emergency Hospitalization Department in the Ministry of Health (MOH). Since 2000 she has served as a senior consultant of the MOH on emergency management. Dr. Adini directed on behalf of the MOH, Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) various training courses aimed at developing and enhancing emergency management competencies among healthcare personnel.

Dr. Adini researches various aspects of emergency preparedness and management, including risk perceptions, resilience, advanced methods of evaluating capacities, humanitarian aid, and utilization of social media in emergencies.

Biographies of Expert Panelists

1. Dr. Dorit Nitzan, MD, MPH (WHO Europe)



Dr Dorit Nitzan joined the Division of Health Emergencies and Communicable Diseases as Coordinator, Health Emergencies & Programme Manager, Emergency Operations at the Regional Office for Europe in August 2016. From March to September 2019, she was appointed as Acting Regional Emergency Director, leading the European Region WHO Emergency Programme through the full emergency cycle, from prevention to preparedness, to response and recovery. She is currently the Coordinator Health Emergencies, WHO European Region.

Dorit joined the World Health Organization in 2005. She was the Manager of Public Health Services in the South-eastern Europe Health Network, and the Head of Offices and WHO Representative in Serbia (including Montenegro at that time) until 2012. The team led by her received the 21st Century Award by the United Nations Secretary General for the special work done with and for the Roma people. And then WHO Representative in Ukraine, until 2016.

From 2012 to 2016 Dorit served as the WHO Representative in Ukraine. She led the WHO and Health Cluster humanitarian operations and the polio outbreak response in the country, established Field Offices and worked with the MOH, the UN, local health authorities, civil society, partners and academic institutions. For the work done, the team led by her received the WHO Director General Reward of Excellence for exceptional contribution to the Organization in 2015. In 2017 she was the first deployed Incident Manager for the grade 3 emergency due to the cholera outbreak in Ethiopia.

Prior to this, Dorit was the Director of the Nutrition Department and later the merged Food and Nutrition Administration in the Israeli Ministry of Health. She was also active in the humanitarian NGO "Physicians for Human Rights". She also supported humanitarian operations in the Middle East and Ethiopia with the World Food Programme, and was a nutrition, food safety, public health and emergency response consultant in China, Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation. She led health sector activities in disaster preparedness and response missions to

Africa, South America and Asia, and served the search and rescue operations response to the 2004 tsunami in Thailand.

Dorit is a pediatrician graduated from the Medical Faculty in Sackler Faculty in Tel Aviv University, Israel, and completed her residency, fellowship and MPH in Babies Hospital, Columbia Presbyterian-Columbia University in New York City, USA. Prior to this, she graduated as a Registered Dietitian, Hebrew University, Israel.

2. Dr. Silvia Bino, MD, PhD (SECID)



Dr. Silvia Bino is the Head of the Control of Infectious Diseases and Immunization Department of the Institute of Public Health and an Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases at the Faculty of Medicine, Tirana University, Albania. She was the Director of National Public Health Institute from 2000-2006. She is also the Chair of SECID, the Southeast European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases.

She has coordinated infectious diseases control programmes, (including the immunization programme), helped to establish syndromic based early warning surveillance system, and, since 2014, has been working to establish an integrated mosquito control program in Albania.

She has also coordinated surveillance, diagnostic, and response activities for pandemic influenza A (H1N1) 2009, and seasonal influenza in Albania and beyond in the South East European Region as part of the network to strengthen surveillance and control of communicable diseases. This has fostered early warning systems, policy development, preparedness and response, and expert and institutional collaboration in the implementation of the International Health Regulations.

She has been a consultant to WHO and other UN agencies and served as a member of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization until April 2009, the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) in relation to Pandemic Influenza A (H1N1) in 2009 and later on the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework Advisory Group.

She earned her medical degree from the Tirana University, Albania. She continued her postgraduate training and research studies on infectious diseases, microbiology, field epidemiology and public health in Switzerland, Belgium, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

3. Prof. Manfred Green, PhD, MD, MPH (University of Haifa)



Prof. Manfred Green was born in South Africa and earned an MBChB from the University of Cape Town. He earned MPH and PhD degrees from the School of Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has served as head of the Public Health Branch of the Israel Defense Forces and as Director of the Israel Disease Control. In 1996, he was promoted to full professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University. In 2008, he was appointed as Professor and head of the School of Public Health at the University of Haifa where he currently heads the International MPH program. He serves on a number of advisory committees in the Israeli Ministry of Health, including the committee on the control of epidemics, and is chairman of the measles, rubella and polio eradication committees.

Background Reading

COVID-19

Murthy S, Gomersall CD, Fowler RA. Care for Critically Ill Patients With COVID-19. *JAMA*. 2020 Mar 11. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.3633

Wang W, Xu Y, Gao R, Lu R, Han K, Wu G, Tan W. Detection of SARS-CoV-2 in Different Types of Clinical Specimens. *JAMA*. 2020 Mar 11. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.3786.

Sharfstein JM, Becker SJ, Mello MM. Diagnostic Testing for the Novel Coronavirus. *JAMA*. 2020 Mar 9. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.3864.

Arentz M, Yim E, Klaff L, Lokhandwala S, Riedo FX, Chong M, Lee M. Characteristics and Outcomes of 21 Critically Ill Patients With COVID-19 in Washington State. *JAMA*. 2020 Mar 19. doi: 10.1001/jama.2020.4326

McCloskey B, Zumla A, Ippolito G, Blumberg L, Arbon P, Cicero A, Endericks T, Lim PL, Borodina M; WHO Novel Coronavirus-19 Mass Gatherings Expert Group. Mass gathering events and reducing further global spread of COVID-19: a political and public health dilemma. *Lancet*. 2020 Mar 20. pii: S0140-6736(20)30681-4. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30681-4.



Dong E, Du H, Gardner L. An interactive web-based dashboard to track COVID-19 in real time. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2020 Feb 19. pii: S1473-3099(20)30120-1. doi: 10.1016/S1473-3099(20)30120-1

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<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html>

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>

<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

MECIDS

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Gresham L, Ramlawi A, Briski J, Richardson M, Taylor T. Trust across borders: responding to 2009 H1N1 influenza in the Middle East. *Biosecur Bioterror*. 2009 Dec;7(4):399-404. doi: 10.1089/bsp.2009.0034.

Leventhal A, Ramlawi A, Belbiesi A, Balicer RD. Regional collaboration in the Middle East to deal with H5N1 avian flu. *BMJ*. 2006 Oct 21;333(7573):856-8.



Organizing Committee

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