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Confronting Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Middle East and Turkey: Challenges and Opportunities

MODERATOR & SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

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Kamel M. Ajlouni, MD, DRL, FACP, FACE, FRCP



Dr. Ajlouni is President of the National Center for Diabetes Endocrinology & Genetics in Amman, Jordan. He is a fellow of the American College of Endocrinology, American College of Physicians, and Royal College of Physicians. He has served in many public offices, including Minister of Health of Jordan, President of the Jordan Medical Council, President of the Jordan University of Science and Technology, President of the Association of Arab Universities, and Senator of the Upper House Jordan Parliament. He attended Rashidiah College in Jerusalem and Hussein College in Amman, Jordan. Dr. Ajlouni received a medical degree from the University of Heidelberg in Germany and an Honorary Doctorate in Law from the University of Windsor, Canada. Dr. Ajlouni began a rotating internship at the University of Heidelberg and Stuttgart City Hospital and an internal medicine residency at St. Ursula Hospital in Boppard, Rhein. He completed his medical training in the US with an internship and residency at Mercy Hospital in Buffalo, New York, and a residency and fellowship in endocrinology at the Medical College of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Mohammed Rasoul Al-Tarawneh, MD, MBBs



Dr. Al-Tarawneh serves as the Director of Non-communicable Disease and the Deputy Director of the Executive Board of the Jordan Breast Cancer Screening Program Directorate at the Ministry of Health, Jordan. He has also served Jordan's MOH as its Director of Cancer Prevention Directorate; Director of Training & Education Directorate; Director/Trainer of Family Practice Training Programme; and Director of Health Academy. Research interests include: Obesity, Cardiovascular Risk Factors, Cancer Research, NCD Epidemiology and Prevention, Physicians, Blood Pressure, and Blood Pressure Monitoring. He has extensive experience facilitating professional training courses and workshops such as Research Cancer Methodology Workshop, Oman; WHO Regional Meeting on Prevention and Control of NCD risk factors, Kuwait; WHO Technical workshop on Salt and Fat intake reduction, Egypt; and Regional Consultation on the development of an updated global action plan for the prevention and control of NCD; among many others. He received his MD. MBBs in Medicine and Surgery at Leningrad Medical Institute; Diploma in Community Medicine – Epidemiology- Jordan University-Affiliated With WHO; and Post graduate Diploma in Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiff University, UK.

Richard Deckelbaum, MD, CM



Dr. Deckelbaum is Professor of Epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, Professor of Pediatrics at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the Director of Columbia's Institute of Human Nutrition. His research interests concern human plasma lipoproteins and the cellular effects of dietary fats and free fatty acids. His research has been supported by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, the US Agency for International Development, and private industry. His work has contributed to better understanding of mechanisms whereby human lipoproteins are structurally remodeled in the plasma compartment, factors modulating receptor-lipoprotein interactions, and nutrient-gene interactions. He has also led international NIH and USAID programs integrating nutrition with risk factors of cardiovascular disease in children, as well as the molecular biology, clinical and epidemiologic manifestations of intestinal parasites, with emphasis on chronic diarrhea and malnutrition. His research complements a professional interest in global health, which grew out of work in the Middle East and Africa.

Wafaa Mahmoud El-Sadr, MD, MPH, MPA



Dr. El-Sadr is University Professor of Epidemiology and Medicine at Columbia, where she founded and currently directs ICAP, a center situated at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH). ICAP's central goal is to improve the health of families and communities by strengthening health systems around the world. With its roots in comprehensive, family-focused HIV services, ICAP is known for capacity building and for its innovative, effective, and ethical programs addressing a wide range of public health challenges, including communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health and health systems strengthening. ICAP is also known for its collaborative and supportive approach to strengthening government health systems and local partners' capacity to deliver quality health services. To date, ICAP has worked to address major public health challenges and the needs of local health systems in more than 2,700 sites across 21 countries. For two decades, Dr. El-Sadr served as chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Harlem Hospital Center in New York City. In this role, she was instrumental in developing a comprehensive HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis program focused on service, training, and research. Dr. El-Sadr has mentored numerous trainees in clinical research epidemiology, program design and clinical infectious diseases. She is also the director of the MSPH Global Health Initiative, which draws on the diverse expertise of MSPH, the larger CU community, and its international partners to enable collaborative work for addressing critical global health challenges. She has headed large teams of researchers, program staff and faculty, and has managed complex large-scale grants and contracts with funding from NIH, CDC, USAID, HRSA and foundations; this robust portfolio includes several NIH cooperative agreements, R01s, a T-32 training grant in infectious diseases epidemiology and a T-37 training grant in minority and global health. She is a member of the strategic HIV Advisory Group at the WHO, and is Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN). She was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2008 and elected a member of the Institute of Medicine in 2009. Dr. El-Sadr received her medical degree from Cairo University, MPH from Columbia University and MPA from Harvard University.

Önder Ergönül, MD, MPH



Önder Ergönül is Professor of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology in the Clinical Epidemiology Department at Koç University's Medical School. Formerly, he was Professor of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology at Marmara University, School of Medicine and Infectious Diseases Specialist/Assoc. Professor at Ankara Numune Training and Research Hospital. He currently serves as investigator for research projects including the Collaborative initiation of a Human Monoclonal Antibody Development Initiation Project for Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Post-Exposure Prophylaxis and the International Research Ethics Award, both supported by the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Ergönül served in the Turkish Medical Association, Nusret Fişek Public Health Scientific Excellence; Steering Committee of International Network for Capacity; and led research including the Transmission Dynamics of *Acinetobacter baumannii* Infections in Intensive Care Units, Turkish National Science Foundation (TUBITAK), *Impact of Climatic Parameters on Malaria Prevalence* UNDP-GEF; *The Prevalence of Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Varicella among Health Care Workers*, Turkish National Science Foundation, and *The Role of QuantiFERON-TB-Gold Test in Detection Occupational Tuberculosis*, Bayındır Hospital. Dr. Ergönül received his MD from Hacettepe University Medical School, did his residency at Ankara University Medical School and received his MPH from Harvard's School of Public Health.

Salma M. Jaouni, MPA, PGDip



Ms. Jaouni is the Chief Executive Officer of the Health Care Accreditation Council since May 2012, the Arab region's only independent not-for-profit organization that aims at improving the quality of health care services and promoting patient safety. Ms. Jaouni is leading the HCAC in its new phase to address capacity building of health care professionals and accreditation of organizations to ensure the continuous provision and improvement of quality services in health care; as well as service and regional expansion to meet the market needs with the patient at the heart of HCAC's services. Prior to joining the HCAC Ms. Jaouni was the Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister of Jordan on public and social policy, leading the Prime Minister's Agenda on health and education improvement, social development, youth engagement and public sector reform. Ms. Jaouni was founding director/four year manager of Jordan's Breast Cancer Program (JBCP) – the National initiative dedicated to improving the quality, accessibility, and usability of screening services while raising awareness and educating the public. Further, she has key with the World Bank and USAID consulting for governments in the Middle East on public health issues, poverty alleviation, employment strategies, and social development. Ms. Jaouni holds a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School, a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Systems Management from the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine at the University of London, and a Bachelor of Sciences degree from the American University of Beirut.

Ali Mohammed Khader



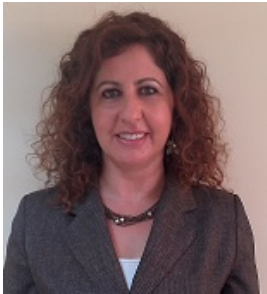
Dr. Khader serves as Project Coordinator of the Family Health Team & Acting Director of the Department of Health at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Since 2003, he has been UNRWA Headquarters Reproductive Health Officer. Formerly, he served as Chief Health Protection & Promotion and has worked with UNRWA-Jordan as doctor and area health officer. Dr. Khader has conducted several operational research studies and participated in the design, analysis and report writing and publication of various papers and articles related to the work of UNRWA and the health of Palestine refugees. He has also supported the development of technical guidelines for UNRWA health department in the fields of maternal health, family planning and child health. He sits on a number of key committees such as Jordan Medical Association; Jordan Society of Evidence Based Medicine; and a reviewer of manuscripts for the EMHJ Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal. Dr. Khader holds MPA, Epidemiology Jordan University of Science and Technology.

Umaiye Khamash, MD, MPH



Umaiye Khamash is a medical doctor and senior public health specialist with a Master's degree in Public Health from Emory University and over 30 years of experience in all aspects of primary health care, from practicing medicine to running local and international health programs. He is currently the Chief of Health Programs for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in the West Bank. Formerly, he worked as Chief Technical Advisor for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Central Asia and was Chief of Party for the USAID Maram Project in the West Bank and Gaza. He is a founding member of several health & social organizations & forums including the Middle East Health Policy Forum, the International People's Health Council, the Medical Relief Society, Juzoor for Health & Social Development and others. Dr. Khamash is Palestinian and lives in Jerusalem.

Salwa George Massad, PhD, MS



Dr. Massad serves as the Research Manager at the WHO Palestinian National Institute of Public Health. She is an Assistant Professor at BirZeit University as well as an Adjunct Associate Research Scientist at Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition. She has worked with numerous institutions, including: Juzoor for Health and Social Development; UNRWA; the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC); UNFPA; Save the Children Sweden; USAID; and the Royal Health Awareness Society/Jordan. Dr. Massad has won several fellowships and awards: a Fellowship in nutrition from Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition, an International Doctoral Fellowship from the American Association of University Women [AAUW], and the Fulbright fellowship. She has served in numerous national committees including: the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Scientific National Committee, the Palestinian Population Forum, and the Network of Researchers on HIV/AIDS in the Middle East and North Africa Region (GNR-MENA). She is a member of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the American Society for Nutrition, and the Bioethics Network on Women's Issues in the Arab Region. Dr. Massad received her PhD in Population Health Sciences from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and MS degree in Community and Public Health from BirZeit University.

Salwa Najjab, MD, OB/GYN



Dr. Najjab is Director, Juzoor Foundation for Health & Social Development, a Palestinian non-governmental organization based in Jerusalem working at the national level, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Palestinian families and promoting health as a basic human right. Formerly, she served as Reproductive Health Advisor for Juzoor Foundation, 2005- 2006, as well as Reproductive Health Director for the USAID funded MARAM Health Project, Intra-health International, 2003-2004. Dr. Najjab has a wealth of expertise in the areas of Public health, Reproductive, Maternal and child health, Health and social Development, women's health rights, family planning, neonatal health and infection control, Lecture in Women's Health. She is a Board certified OB/GYN and sits on numerous committees including but not limited to the Palestinian Medical Council, the Advisory committee and the founding member, Al Mustakbal Hospital in Palestine; Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC); Save the Children Task Force for Mother and Child Care. Publications and works include: Infection Prevention and Control Training Curriculum, 2005; Maternal & Child Nutrition Training Curriculum, 2005; Newborn Care and Resuscitation Training Curriculum, 2005; and Funder for the first Gynecological Cytology program, Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), Palestine - Funder for the Woman Health Coalition. Dr. Najjab received her MD from Kouban Medical Academy, Russia, completed a residency program in Obstetrics-Gynecology at Al Mustakbal Hospital; and earned a diploma in Gynecological Cytology and Family Planning, from Manchester University-Saint Mary's Hospital, UK.

[Anne Paxton, DrPH, MPH](#)



Dr. Paxton is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Population and Family Health at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. She is an epidemiologist with over 20 years of experience in public health program design, implementation and evaluation in low- and middle-income countries, primarily in West and North Africa. Dr. Paxton has focused on maternal mortality prevention, nutrition in pregnancy, child survival and neglected tropical diseases. Dr. Paxton is the Director of the Global Health Certificate Program at the Mailman School of Public Health, an interdisciplinary program that provides students with a global economic and political framework for analysis and action in their selected fields of study. In order to accomplish these goals, the program focuses on both coursework and fieldwork and requires students to complete a 6-month practicum in a low- or middle-income country.

[Miriam Rabkin, MD, MPH](#)



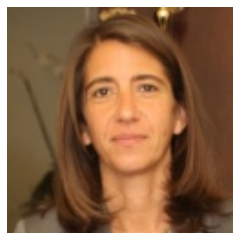
Dr. Rabkin is an Associate Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, and Director for Health Systems Strategies at ICAP Columbia. Her work focuses on HIV and health systems, access to HIV services in resource-limited settings, and the design, delivery and evaluation of chronic care programs for HIV and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). She has supported the implementation of HIV programs across sub-Saharan Africa, as well as health systems research and training in multiple countries. Her current research interests include the impact of HIV scale-up on health systems and the intersection of HIV and NCDs. Dr. Rabkin teaches at Columbia's College of Physicians & Surgeons and the Mailman School of Public Health, where she works with MSPH colleagues to design and deliver distance education courses on Health Systems Strengthening and Quality Improvement for mid-career professionals at CDC, USAID and health ministries around the world. She is also the program director for an NIH-funded T37 training grant in minority and global health. Dr. Rabkin received her medical degree from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons and her master's degree in public health (epidemiology) from the Mailman School of Public Health.

[Sevket Ruacan, MD, PhD](#)



Dr. Ruacan has served as the Founding Dean of Koç University's School of Medicine in Istanbul since 2009. He is the Vice President of the Association of Academies of Science in Asia (AASA) and an Executive Board member of the InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP). Prior to Koç University, Dr. Ruacan served as the Dean of the Medical School and Director of the Institute of Oncology at Hacettepe University. He has been a member of key institutions such as the Higher Education Council of Turkey, the Executive Board of Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey and the European Union and NATO Science Committees. An authority on research and medical ethics, he has been a member of the Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the Turkish Research Council and Higher Education Council for numerous years. He was the president of the local ethics committee of Hacettepe University, and has given numerous lectures on Publication Ethics in more than 25 universities and scientific meetings. Dr. Ruacan was elected to the Turkish Academy of Sciences and presently sits on the Academy Council. He received his post graduate training in pathology, cancer research and biochemistry at New York University and the University of Pennsylvania, and completed his medical degree at Hacettepe University.

Hanya Salah, MA



Hanya Salah is the Deputy Director at the CU Global Centers: Middle East, where she oversees and manages the Research and Academic Support Department and supports the Director in a number of initiatives. Prior to joining the CU Global Centers: Middle East, She was the Director of the Children's Museum in Jordan and was responsible for implementing and coordinating the final phase of the museum's development and launch, as well as managing its overall activities. She also directed the Ali Jabri Human Heritage Foundation, where she curated and oversaw the opening of the Foundation's inaugural exhibition and managed the Foundation's daily operation.

Ms. Salah also worked for over 10 years at UNICEF and the United Nations, New York in different capacities. She received her B.A. in Art History from Williams College and studied for her M.A. in Near Eastern Studies and Museum Studies at New York University.

Akihiro Seita, MD



Akihiro Seita serves as the Director of Health Programs for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in Jordan. He is also the WHO Special Representative at UNRWA, where he manages UNRWA health services that include 3,000 staff at 139 health centers, with annual expenditures of USD 100 million. Dr. Seita has initiated and expanded UNRWA's health reform efforts with the *Family Health Team* initiative, the engagement of key stakeholders, and the *e-Health* innovative monitoring system for diabetes and hypertension. He

has extensive experience in the Middle East and has worked with institutions such as the Regional Office in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (WHO/EMRO), Egypt where he was responsible for TB, AIDS and Malaria programs, covering 22 countries in North Africa and the Middle East. With the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, he helped to expand the global TB control strategy known as DOTS. Dr. Seita received his medical degree from Kochi Medical School in Japan and was a Research Fellow at the Takemi Program for International Health at the Harvard University School of Public Health.

Mustafa Taşdemir, MD



Dr. Taşdemir is the Director of the Istanbul Public Health Directorate. He was born in Amasya in 1963 and studied history and philosophy at Boğaziçi University from 1982 to 1984. After that, Dr. Taşdemir attended Marmara University Medical Faculty and graduated in 1990. After completing his obligatory public service, he attended specialization training at the Public Health Department of Marmara University from 1994 to 1998, completing his thesis on health quality management. He then worked in the private sector, specializing in quality management implementation. He worked as a manager at two consulting and auditing firms, and also as a

quality management consultant and auditor in various sectors. In 2001, he joined the faculty at the Department of Health Management at Marmara University, becoming Vice Chairman of the Department. In 2008, he was assigned to the Public Health Department of the Medical Faculty at the same university. He took charge as a member of various boards and committees at the Faculty. In 2009, he graduated from the Faculty of Business Administration at Anadolu University. He led many national and international projects while working at the university. In 2004-2005, he worked at the National Health Accreditation System Steering Committee of the Ministry of Health. In 2008-2009, he worked as a senior training and research coordinator in the name of the UNDP at the Ministry of Health for almost one year. He has written several books, chapters, articles and proceedings during his academic career. Dr. Mustafa Taşdemir was appointed the Director of the Istanbul Public Health Directorate on May 15, 2012.

[Y. Claire Wang, MD, ScD, MSc](#)



Dr. Wang is Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management and Co-Director, Obesity Prevention Initiative at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University. Dr. Wang is a decision scientist and epidemiologist who uses mathematical models to integrate epidemiology and demography to inform policy. She is interested in the distribution of modifiable risk factors like diet, exercise, and preventive screening, and how they reduce disease risk across the population. Her present research focuses on obesity and cardiovascular disease prevention. Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, she examined environmental and behavioral determinants of energy balance (energy intake vs. energy expenditure) to evaluate how various strategies and policies may help fight obesity in children and adolescents. One of her research areas is the role of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption by children and adults and the health and economic impacts of levying excise taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages (see report to New York State in 2010.) More recently, she led research projects to assess clinical guidelines of cardiovascular disease prevention, such as guidelines for blood pressure and cholesterol screening as part of pediatric services, and using imaging technologies to screen for atherosclerosis. Dr. Wang received her ScD and MSc from Harvard School of Public Health and MD from National Taiwan University.