



King Abdullah Fellowship Program

6th Annual Report

July 2016 –
August 2017



EMORY

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Dr. Abdullah Assiri



Dr. Adel Bashatah



Dr. Farid Awanes



Dr. Mansour Al-Yami



Dr. Samar Alsaggaf



Dr. Ziad Memish



**Dr. Mohammad
Zamakhshary**



Dr. Abdulaziz Bin Saeed



Dr. Hani Jokhdar



Dr. James Curran



Dr. Carlos del Rio

Executive Summary

Since the first cohort's graduation in 2013, when a fellow was chosen by faculty and students to be the commencement speaker, the King Abdullah Fellowship Program (KAFP) has seen its students distinguish themselves, doing important work in research and in the field of public health in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The past year is no exception.

In 2015, KA fellows have led the Saudi Students Association (SSA) which became an officially chartered Emory association in conjunction with the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission. Through the SSA, students have taken an active role in the life of the school, particularly for Saudi Day. For this commemoration and cultural showcase, the primary walkway between the two school buildings were decorated with art, furnishings, and images from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Students, faculty, and staff enjoyed Saudi cuisine prepared by the students and attended cultural events that were scheduled that day.

During the 2016—2017 school year, a total of 12 first- and second-year students were enrolled. Eleven students in Global Health completed their degree and submitted thesis projects in different areas of public health highly relevant to KSA.

The program has continued to provide English instructors to the fellows, with the ratio of fellows to instructors being about 11 to 1. The team has also involved KAFP In-Country Directors who played a crucial role in program coordination and recruitment.

This was the second year to execute a KAFP Online Orientation which familiarized students with the basics of the curriculum, the program, and life in Atlanta. The online orientation guided candidates step-by-step through the application process with help at every stage, including resume and personal statement composition and editing. The staff made a preliminary assessment of their English language ability and level of commitment to pursuing the program as well as answered any questions that arose through the process.

This year, the program welcomes the seventh cohort of KAFP fellows. Their predecessors have taken leadership roles in the public health field, published their research and have gone on to continue in post-graduate studies and training. We have no doubt that these students will follow in their footsteps. We continue to be excited by the opportunities this program affords for scientific collaboration, cultural exchange, and knowledge building among public health professionals in both KSA and the United States.

Background

KSA has made significant efforts to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure. The Kingdom faces public health concerns for infectious diseases (e.g., MERS- CoV, dengue, tuberculosis, hepatitis) and chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, obesity). Public health professionals play a critical role in combatting these diseases.

King Abdullah established an endowment to build human capacity in KSA, and in 2010, a Letter of Engagement (LOE) was signed between the MoH and the Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH). The LOE includes several areas of mutually beneficial scientific collaboration. As of July 2016, the program has opened applications to MoH and non-MoH employees.

Objectives

The primary objectives of the King Abdullah Fellowship Program are to:

- ⦿ Strengthen public health capacity in KSA;
- ⦿ Engage in collaborative research activities; and
- ⦿ Promote bilateral exchange of students and researchers.

Master of Public Health Education (2011 to present)

King Abdullah Fellows matriculate in the Hubert Department of Global Health (HDGH) and the department of Health Policy and Management (HPM). Fellows conduct their practicum assignments and thesis research in KSA.

Collaborative Research

KA Fellows engage in collaborative research as a part of their program and graduate from Rollins having produced publishable work on public health topics such as diabetes, tobacco, hepatitis, vaccine preventable diseases, and tuberculosis in KSA. RSPH faculty develop collaborative research or spend extended lengths of time in KSA performing program assessments.

Exchange of students

In 2009, the first American Emory MPH student spent her summer in Riyadh working on a tuberculosis research project. And her manuscript was published in the Annals of Epidemiology. In May 2011, four American Emory MPH candidates traveled to Riyadh on a Global Field Experience (GFE) to work on diabetes and smoking control, antimicrobial resistance, and hepatitis projects, in collaboration with KSA counterparts. In 2014, a Global Health student traveled to Riyadh on a GFE to complete her practicum in diabetes prevention, under the supervision of KAFP alumnae Fatima Al Slail.

Academic Timeline

2010 – 2015 Timeline

May 2010: Letter of Engagement to establish KAFP signed with Ministry of Health

May 2013: Graduation of first King Abdullah Fellowship cohort in May 2013 (youtu.be/bvWpYAibp9ol)

May 2013: Dr. Fatima Al Slail gave the commencement address at graduation (youtu.be/oclsvBfPwnE)

Sep 2013: KA Fellows establish the Saudi Student Association (SSA).

May 2014: Abdulaziz Aloufi receives Award for Exceptional Global Master's Thesis poster

March 2015: RSPH established an official Prayer and Meditation Room as well an Ablution Room which allows students to conveniently engage in his or her faith while on campus

May 2015: 11 KAFP Fellows graduate A special commentary discussing the KAFP was published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health, May 2015

July 2016: RSPH established 5-year contract with Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission

2016 – 2017 Academic Timeline

Mar – Aug 2016: Administrative and logistical support for arrival of cohort of 2015

Jul – Aug 2015: Cohort 2016 students arrive to Atlanta and Cohort 2015 return from completing practicum in KSA

Aug 2016: Fall semester for Cohort 2016 begins

Sep 2016: Rollins School of Public Health celebrates Saudi National Day

Oct – Dec 2016: Launching of the Online Orientation Workshop for Fall 2017 applicants

Jan – June 2017: Twenty candidates recruited and interviewed

Feb 2017: Second year Global Health students research and write their thesis projects

May – Aug 2017: Cohort of 2016 traveled to KSA to complete practicums

June 2017: Four enrolled into the HDGH for cohort of 2017

June 2017: Submission of theses to special issue of Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health

Program Highlights

2016 – 2017 Student and Alumni Achievements

Dr. Fatima Al Slail (MPH '13) is one of the graduates of the first cohort, who has been working as Director of Diabetes center at the Ministry of Health. She has been actively involved in Diabetes prevention research and implementation in the Kingdom. Her recent TV appearance on SAYA can be viewed [here](#).

Dr. Mohammed Alkhalawi (MPH '13) has been assigned as the Director of Infection Control Services in Medinah health directorate.

Dr. Ibrahim Alsumaih (MPH '15) has been assigned Director of Hospital Affairs in Hofuf.

Dr. Zaki Algasemi (MPH '15) has been assigned as Project Leader in the Health Strategic Transformation Center (HSTC) to design a new urgent care model of care in KSA.

Dr. Hussain Zobaidy (MPH '16) has been assigned as the Director for Research and Studies in Jeddah health directorate.

Dr. Yasser Bakhsh (MPH '16) has been accepted into the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), class of 2017, at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will be based in California for his service.

Dr. Khalid Alanazi (MPH '16) has been assigned as Deputy Director General of the General Directorate of Infection Control of Health Facilities.

Dr. Eman Almaghaslah (MPH '17) had an abstract for an oral presentation accepted at the American Public Health Association (APHA). Eman was also acknowledged and received an outstanding thesis certificate by the KAFP.

Dr. Zahra Alahmed (MPH '17) was selected to be the ambassador for Exercise is Medicine in KSA; is part of designing healthcare providers' solutions for the new model of healthcare system for preventive care for the Ministry of Health, Vision 2030; and has been selected to work with the national task force for health coach program and school wellness program for new care model of care for the vision realization office. Zahra was also acknowledged and received an outstanding thesis certificate by the KAFP.

Program Support

Dr. McNabb serves as the program director and thesis advisor for several Fellows. Dr. Ghada Farhat serves as the program co-director and thesis advisor for several Fellows. From the time they arrive, the Fellows and their families receive social and academic support to adjust to life at Emory.

- ⦿ Routine meetings with Dr. McNabb to discuss academic and social issues
- ⦿ Meetings with faculty, KAF staff, and instructors
- ⦿ English language instruction and support
- ⦿ Logistical support and guidance for preparation to arrival to Atlanta, and upon arrival
- ⦿ Assistance with enrolling children in schools and daycares
- ⦿ Cultural competency workshop for incoming and current students
- ⦿ Administrative support for filing the necessary paperwork



Program Staff



Scott J.N. McNabb, Ph.D., M.S.

Program Director

Research Professor Global Health

Adjunct Appointment in
Department of Epidemiology



Ghada Farhat, Ph.D., MPH

Program Co-Director

Associate Professor Global Health



***Hisham Bashawri,
M.B.B.S., MPH***

In-country Director,
Global Health Representative



***Sulafa Alqutub,
M.B.B.S., MPH***

In-country Director, Health Policy and
Management Representative



Lea Matar, MPH
Program Coordinator



Yasmin Zaki, MA
ESL Instructor



Sorie Dumbuya, MPHc
ESL Instructor



Linda Brockman
Research Administrative Assistant



Prabhjyot Saini, MPH
Data Analysis Instructor

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lesson Learned: The applicant online orientation presented some limitations including time difference, lack of proper technological training, an abundance of information over a two-week period, and lack of follow-up. **Recommendation:** The online orientation must begin with training to learn how to use the resources provided for orientation, must begin no later than November (a few months after SOPHAS applications open).

Lesson Learned: The candidates did not have sufficient time to prepare their application. **Recommendation:** Begin accepting applications one year in advance to familiarize applicants with the process, providing sufficient time to prepare application elements and avoid unexpected delays.

Lesson Learned: The candidates did not have sufficient time to prepare for and take standardized exams (e.g., GRE, TOEFL, IELTS). **Recommendation:** Candidates should be required to take the GRE and TOEFL tests before the January workshop. In having candidates become familiar with the format and questions of these tests prior to the workshop, for those students who need to take the test again, there is the opportunity to ask questions and gain effective feedback from the KAFP team in January. Additionally, having scores available earlier will allow the KAFP team to more effectively evaluate candidates during the workshop.

Lesson Learned: The candidates need to have strong English language skills, both oral and written, in order to succeed in Emory's demanding academic environment. **Recommendation:** Students should plan to arrive in Atlanta by the beginning of June to take intensive ESL class before the start of the academic semester. Or, they should be required to complete basic English online courses prior to their arrival.

Lesson Learned: The number of candidates able to enroll was less than in previous years, due to delayed paperwork, specifically with the acquisition of financial guarantee from KSA. **Recommendation:** Applicants must apply a minimum of eight months prior to start date of University courses in order to have their scholarship application reviewed and accepted.

Lesson Learned: The type of services offered at RSPH and KAFP overlap. **Recommendation:** Re-evaluate existing resources at RSPH from academic to social support to encourage KA Fellows to make use of them.

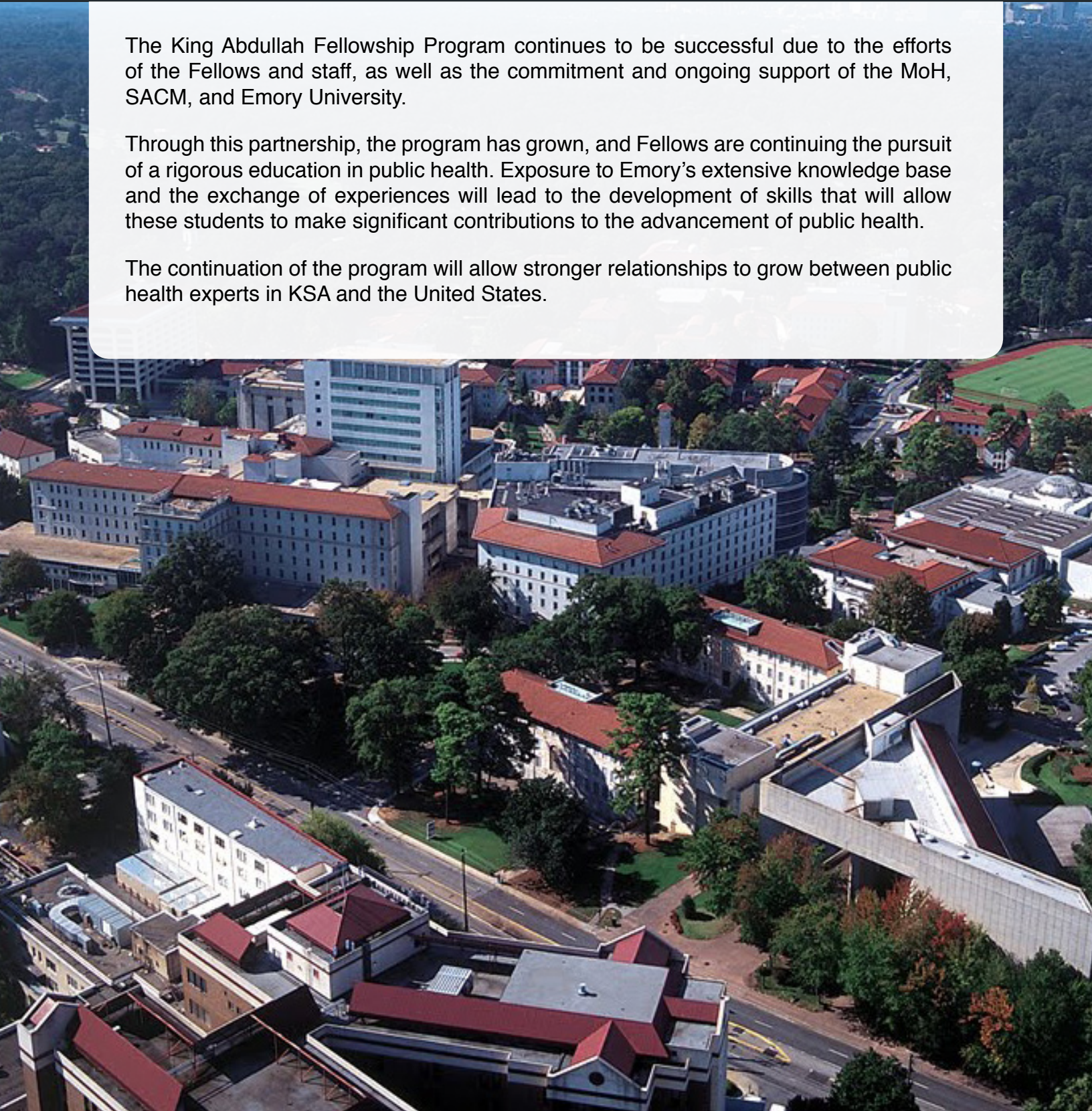
Lesson Learned: Graduates of the KAFP face difficulties in obtaining Public Health positions post graduation. **Recommendation:** Develop mentor-mentee relationships among Alumni to help create career and professional development opportunities for new graduates.

Conclusion

The King Abdullah Fellowship Program continues to be successful due to the efforts of the Fellows and staff, as well as the commitment and ongoing support of the MoH, SACM, and Emory University.

Through this partnership, the program has grown, and Fellows are continuing the pursuit of a rigorous education in public health. Exposure to Emory's extensive knowledge base and the exchange of experiences will lead to the development of skills that will allow these students to make significant contributions to the advancement of public health.

The continuation of the program will allow stronger relationships to grow between public health experts in KSA and the United States.



King Abdullah Fellows Cohort of 2015



Zahra Alahmed, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery

Work Experience and Training: General Physician and Director of Primary Care Center, Safwa City, KSA

Team Leader in Cardio Metabolic Risk Screening Campaign in Qatif, Easter Province, KSA

Team Leader in Saudi Hypertension Management Society



Hatim Alghamdi, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



Mohammed Alghamdi, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery

Work Experience and Training: Private Health Inspector, Jeddah KSA

Medico-legal Investigator Physician, Jeddah KSA



Naif Alharbi, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



Eman Almaghaslah, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery

Work Experience and Training: General Practitioner in Primary Health Care Center, Qatif, KSA

Healthcare Center Manager, National Health Program Clinics, Qatif, KSA



Yumn Al Nimr, MBBS, MPHc

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, AGU, Bahrain

Work Experience and Training: Riyadh Regional Laboratory, Ministry of Health, Riyadh, KSA



Sami Alqahrani, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery, King Khalid University

Work Experience and Training: General Physician and Technical Supervisor, Alronah PHCC, Ministry of Health, KSA



Saleh Alqarni, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



Roaa Jumbi, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



Nada Munshi, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



Bayan Shekri, MBBS, MPH

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery

King Abdullah Fellows Cohort of 2016



Roaa Aggad, MBBS, MPHc 2018

Education: Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery



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Ministry of Health



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