

Third Annual Report

July 2013 – August 2014



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the ongoing efforts, services and contributions of King Abdullah Bin Aziz Al Saud, His Excellency Eng. Adel M. Fakeih, the leadership of the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, and the King Abdullah Fellows for making this fellowship program successful.

We would like to offer our special thanks for the support provided by:

Dr. Mohammed Zamakhshary

Dr. Abdullah Assiri

Dr. Samar Alsagaf

Dr. James Curran

Dr. Carlos Del Rio

Background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has made significant efforts to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure. The Kingdom faces public health concerns for infectious diseases (e.g., 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.

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 - 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 develops collaborative research or spends 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.

2013 – 2014 Timeline

Oct – Nov 2013: Cohort of 90 candidates recruited and interviewed from the Ministry of Health (MoH)

Jan 2014: Application workshop and preparation in Riyadh

Mar 2014: Cohort of 16 accepted into the HDGH and HPM

Apr 2014: Cohort of 12 enrolled in HDGH and 4 enrolled in HPM

May – Aug 2014: Cohort of 2013 traveled to KSA to complete practicums

Mar – Aug 2014: Administrative and logistical support for arrival of cohort of 2014

Jul – Aug 2014: Cohort of 16 students arrived to Atlanta

Aug 2014: Cohort began studies

Aug 2014 – May 2015: English, epidemiology, accounting and biostatistics tutoring provided

Activity Highlights

First King Abdullah Fellowship cohort's graduation in May 2013
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvWpYAibp9o>)

Fatima Al Slail's commencement address: In May 2013, Dr. Al Slail was nominated and then elected by peers and faculty members to give the commencement address at graduation before fellow students, faculty and staff, and family members and friends
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oclsvBfPwnE>)

Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled "A Call for Universal Health-care" in the March 28, 2013 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campuswide newspaper
(<http://www.emorywheel.com/a-call-for-universal-healthcare/>)

Sulafa Al-Qutub (Health Policy Management, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, Technical Efficiency in Mammography Screening in the March 24, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper
(<http://www.emorywheel.com/technical-efficiency-in-mammography-screening/>)

Rania Al-Qudaihi (Health Policy Management, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, Intervention and Community in the April 17, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper
(<http://www.emorywheel.com/intervention-and-communityindividual-approach-to-addiction-insufficient/>)

Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) published an editorial entitled, Racism Denies Equal Health Care Access in the April 15, 2014 edition of the Emory Wheel, the campus-wide newspaper
(<http://www.emorywheel.com/racism-denies-equal-health-careaccess/>)

Abdulaziz Aloufi (Global Health, Cohort 2012) receives Award for Exceptional Global Master's Thesis poster.

- The Saudi Student Association (SSA) was founded by KA Fellows in September 2013
- The first International Week celebrating Saudi Arabia took place in September with a high level of participation and enthusiasm among the Rollins staff and student body



Photos: International Week Saudi Arabia 2013

Program Staff

Scott J.N. McNabb, Ph.D., M.S., Program Director, Research Professor

Natalie Schulhofer, B.A., ESL Instructor

Yasmin Zaki, M.A., ESL Instructor

Lea Matar, B.Sc., MPHc, Program Coordinator

Sorie Dumbuya, B.Sc., ESL Instructor

Programmatic Support

Dr. McNabb serves as the program and academic advisor for the Fellows. From the time they arrive, the Fellows and their families receive social and academic support to adjust to life at Emory.

- Weekly meetings with Dr. McNabb to discuss academic and social issues
- Meetings with faculty, KAF staff, and instructors
- English language instruction and support
- Biostatistics, epidemiology, accounting, and data analysis instruction and support
- Transportation services during transition period
- Assistance with enrolling children in schools and daycares
- Cultural competency workshop for incoming and current students
- Administrative support for filing the necessary paperwork
- English classes for spouses and family members of Fellows
- Financial support for extracurricular activities inside and outside of Georgia

English as a Second Language for Families

This year, we offered beginning level “survival” English classes to KA Fellows’ family members to aid in the smooth transition into American culture. Classes focus mainly on conversation practice, building vocabulary, and teaching the grammar points needed to construct proper English sentences in real world scenarios, allowing for confident engagement in everyday conversation.

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.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Admissions

1. Lesson Learned: The candidates did not have sufficient time to prepare for and take the GRE and TOEFL tests.

Recommendation: The admissions process must begin in October (via email) with the KAFP team members. Recruitment and interviews through MoH should begin in September. Once the applicants have been screened, KAFP team members can send required information to applicants so they can begin preparing to apply (scheduling their tests and beginning to study for them). This will allow them to be better prepared for our session in January, where we will focus on editing resumes and SOPs as well as previewing the school's offerings and helping them finalize their applications. The fellows should submit their applications by March 1st at the latest. This must be the deadline and set cut-off date, no exceptions.

2. 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: An English placement test (developed and reviewed by KAFP ESL Instructors) should be administered during the workshop in January. ESL instructors will evaluate this test and consider the score when making recommendations for admission. In addition, each candidate should be interviewed, and questions should be related to topics that candidates might encounter during their studies.

3. Lesson Learned: A communication gap exists between the ministries of KSA. This resulted in the delay of the release of papers and the students' arrival in the US.

Recommendation: Clearly defined start dates and deadlines. Starting the admissions process in September will allow them to gain more time and possibly avoid arriving late.

4. Lesson Learned: Poor communication between applicants in KSA and KAFP Team at Emory.

Recommendation: Circulate clearly-defined deadlines and cut-off dates. No exceptions should be made. If applicants do not respond in a timely manner to requests from Emory RSPH Admissions and KAFP Team, they will not be considered for admission.

5. Lesson Learned: KAF Program Services were not clearly understood by fellows.

Recommendation: Develop and review KAFP Agreement form and/or promotional materials, which should be presented to applicants in January.

Logistics

1. Lesson Learned: Difficult to accommodate all the fellows' transportation needs at the beginning of the school year.

Recommendation: The KAFP team should set aside two weeks for all the fellows for transportation (for shopping-related activities). A bus would be hired and different schedules developed. The fellows would have the choice of visiting different places only within the transportation schedule. Exceptions would be made for anyone whose visa or ministry papers had been delayed.

2. Lesson Learned: Several KA Fellows wanted to exchange their computers. The main reason was because they had ordered laptops that they found too large or heavy.

Recommendation: Provide two computer options (MacBook Pro 13" and Dell).

3. Lesson Learned: Communication, event scheduling, and coordination have proven more challenging with the program's growth.

Recommendation: Adopt a centralized student data and program management system that is specific to KAFP.

Thesis and Practicum Projects, Cohort of 2012-2014



Homoud Al Garni, MBBS, MPH
Trends of Reported Cases of Hepatitis B Virus Infection, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2009 – 2013

Abdulaziz Al Oufi, MBBS, MPH
Trends of Reported Human Cases of Brucellosis, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2004 – 2012



Rana Al Helali, MBBS, MPH
Evaluation of Home Respiratory Therapy Delivered to Patients in the Ministry of Health's Home Medical Program (HMP) and Administered through the Madinah HMP Center, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Abdullah Al Shahrani, MBBS, MPH
Trends in the Reported Cases of Hepatitis C Virus Infection, Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2008 – 2012



Yaser Al Dosari, BSc. Nursing, MPH
The Role of Language Barriers and Communication Skills in Providing Quality Health Care by Non-Saudi Nurses for Saudi Patients

Abdulaziz Al Enezi, MBBS, MPH
Diabetes Control During Month of Ramadan



Saad Al Johani, MBBS, MPH
Seat belt policy in Saudi Arabia

Amal Zaidan, MBBS, MPH
Analyses of Road Traffic Vehicle Crashes, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2007-2012



Rania Al Qudaihi, MBBS, MPH
Evaluation of Triage System in Dammam Medical Tower and Obstacles against Proper Implementation

Sulafa Al Qutub, MBBS, MPH
Perceived Barriers to Infection Control Practice within Primary Health Care Centers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Fatemah Al Zaghabi, MBBS, MPH
Healthcare Providers' (HCP) Perception of Influenza Vaccination, Especially after H1N1 S

Majed Alosaimi, MBBS, MPH

