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AL-Qasemi Academy (R.A)
Academic College of Education



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World Congress Integrative Medicine & Health in Berlin

Refugees with Chronic Diseases between the Middle-East and Europe:

The role of traditional and integrative medicine in bridging gaps

Speakers:

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Gunver Sophia Kienle MD¹² Noah Samuels MD¹³ Michael Silbermann DMD PhD¹⁴

with additional speakers from the Middle-East

1. Integrative Oncology Program, Lin Medical center, Clalit Health Services; Faculty of Medicine, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel
2. The Association for Integrative Oncologic Therapies Research (A.R.T.O.I.), Italy
3. Al-Qasemi Academy, Baqa El-Gharbia, Israel
4. Die Filderklinik, Stuttgart and Paracelsus-Krankenhaus Unterlengenhardt, Bad Liebenzell, Germany
5. ASL Tuscany North West Lucca, Italy – Tuscan Network for Integrative Oncology
6. Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey
7. St. George Hospital, Balamand University, Beirut, Lebanon
8. Children's Welfare Teaching Hospital, Baghdad, Iraq
9. Radiation & Isotope Centre, Khartoum, Sudan
10. Ministry of Health, Amman, Jordan
11. Palliative Care Services, Gharbiya Cancer Society, Egypt
12. University of Witten/Herdecke, Freiburg, Germany
13. Tal Center for Integrative Oncology, Institute of Oncology, Sheba Medical Center, Israel
14. Middle East Cancer Consortium

Introduction: The recent wave of immigration from the Middle-East to Europe has intensified the need to find a model for supportive cancer care which is tailored to the dominant paradigm of health belief among refugees, with its high affinity for complementary and traditional (CTM) medicine. The integration of traditional medicine in national healthcare systems is a core issue being addressed as part of the World Health Organization traditional medicine strategy (2014-2023). During the past decade the Middle-Eastern Research Group in Integrative Oncology (MERGIO), a body under the auspices of the Middle-East Cancer Consortium (MECC), has been



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conducting extensive research on the integration of CTM in supportive cancer care throughout the Middle-East. Through the study of patients' and health care providers' (HCPs) perspectives, the MERGIO researchers were able to define the goals of the integrative process. These entail improving quality of life-related outcomes through the use of effective and safe CTM modalities which are tailored to the patient's individual needs and expectations, within the context of broader social, cultural, and spiritual perspectives of the community, with its deep-seated affinity with traditional and herbal medicine. The Middle-Eastern context of health care contrasts significantly from that of integrative oncology research and clinical practice which is prevalent in Europe and other developed nations, where complementary medicine is typically used by patients from the upper socio-economic and educational level of society.

Objectives:

1. To raise awareness to the cross-cultural communicational barriers which divide European HCPs and their Middle-Eastern refugee patients, as it relates to CTM use in supportive oncology care.
2. To provide HCPs with pragmatic skills in order to better communicate with their refugee patients on the effective and safe use of CTM modalities, addressing the patient's health belief model of care and evidence-based supportive cancer care.
3. To develop a collaborative group of multi-disciplinary researchers and clinicians from Europe, the US, and the Middle-East, with the goal of promoting the integration of CTM within supportive and palliative cancer care for refugee populations.

Relevant MECC/MERDIO recent publications:

Ben-Arye E, Samuels N, Goldstein LH, Mutafoğlu K, Omran S, Schiff E, Charalambous H, Dweikat T, Ghrayeb I, Bar-Sela G, Turker I, Hassan A, Hassan E, Bashir S, Nimri O, Kebudi R, Silbermann M. Potential risks associated with traditional herbal medicine use in cancer care: a study of Middle-Eastern oncology healthcare professionals. *Cancer*, 2016;122(4):598-610

Silbermann M, Daher M, Kebudi R, Nimri O, Al-Jadiry M, Baider L. Middle Eastern Conflicts: Implications for Refugee Health in the European Union and Middle Eastern Host Countries. *Journal of Global Oncology*, 2016.

Silbermann M, Ed., Cancer Care in Countries and Societies in Transition, Springer Publishers, 2016.

Ben-Arye E, Popper-Giveon A, Samuels N, Mutafoğlu K, Schiff E, Omran S, Hajjar R, Charalambous H, Dweikat T, Ghrayeb I, Turker I, Hassan A, Hassan E, Nimri O, Kebudi R, Silbermann M.



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Communication and Integration: A qualitative analysis of perspectives among Middle Eastern oncology healthcare professionals on the integration of complementary medicine in supportive cancer care. *Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology*, 2016; 142(5):1117-2

Silbermann M, Daher M, Fahmi-Abdalla R, Jaloudi MA, Hassan AA. The Middle East Cancer Consortium promotes palliative care. *Lancet*. 2015;385(9978):1620-1.

Ben-Arye E, Massalha E, Bar-Sela G, Silbermann M, Agbarya A, Saad B, Lev E, Schiff E. Stepping from traditional to integrative medicine: Perspectives of Israeli-Arab patients on complementary medicine's role in cancer care. *Annals of Oncology* 2014; 25(2):476-80.