# COVID19, Social Distancing and Lockdown: Implications on Older People in the Middle East & North Africa

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### Overview of the presentation



COVID<sub>19</sub>

Infection levels in the MENA region

Accuracy of reporting

Infection Control Measures

Social Distancing

Lockdown

Curfews

- The context of population ageing
  - A quick overview of the situation in the region
- Impact of COVID19 on older people
  - Introducing the MENARAH network
  - Findings from recent research
    - Specific to the wellbeing of older people during COVID19
  - Tools to support older people and their families

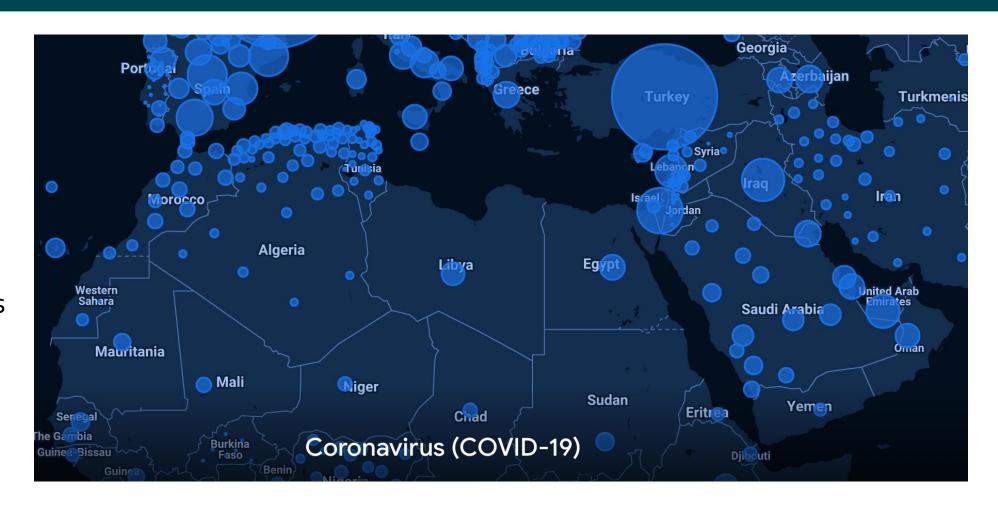
### COVID19 in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)



Infections levels high in certain 'hot spots'

Differences between actual & reported cases

Lack of widespread testing



Sources: Wikipedia, The New York Times, JHU CSSE COVID-19 Data

## Measures to Reduce Infection Spread- examples from selected countries

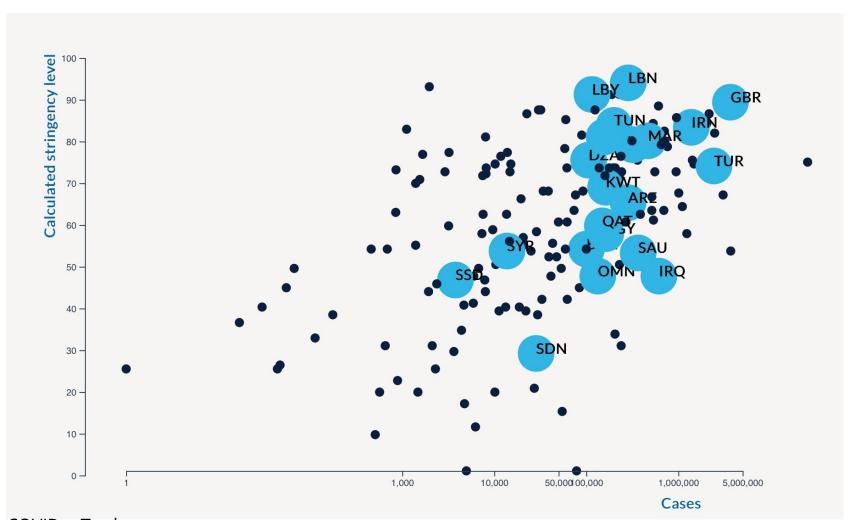


	Lebanon	Iraq	Morocco	Libya	Palestine	Syria
School Closure	*				*	
Workplace closure	*	*	*	*		
Cancel public event	*					
Gatherings	*					
Stay at home	*		*		*	
Int'n travel		*				
Testing					*	
Face covering						*

Source: Oxford University COVID19 tracker- up to 31 December 2020

### COVID19 Cases and Stringency Level





Source: Oxford University COVID19 Tracker https://covidtracker.bsg.ox.ac.uk

### Implications of COVID19 in the MENA region



- > Economic impact:
  - On the individuals & household income
  - Countries
- > Employment
- > Education
- Mobility
- > Remittances
- Older People



### Population Ageing in the MENA Region



'Rapid' process of ageing (fast and steep)

High level of unpreparedness

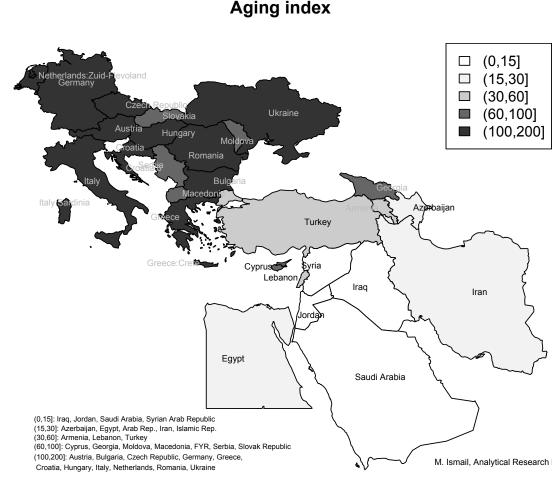
- Health and care services
- Infrastructure
- Social & economic opportunities

Social-determinants of health and wellbeing at old age

Nested within other demographic dynamics (pop. growth & dividends)

Socio-political structures

Perceived age-related roles & duties



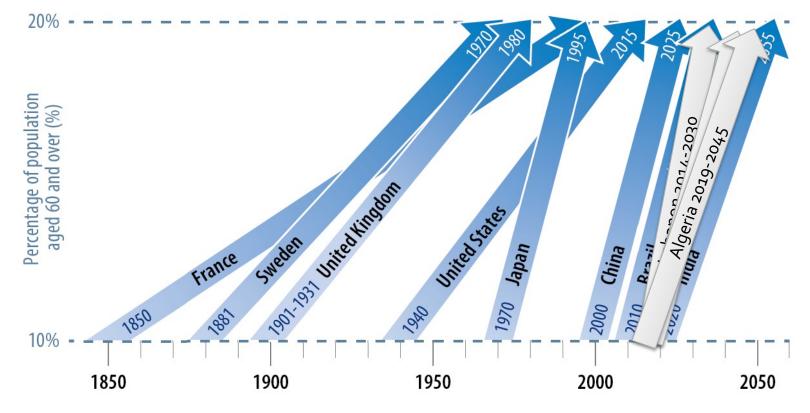
Source: Ismail & Hussein (Forthcoming)

### The speed of ageing in the MENA region



By 2050, 80% of the world older people will be living in

**LMICs** 



### Ageing and Cultural Contexts



'Treasuring' older people

Re-constructing 'real' vs.

rhetoric values

Healthy and meaningful ageing process

Care as a family 'business'

Care ability and burden

- Socio-determinants of health and comorbidity
- Physical (in)activity
- Isolation and loneliness
- Care options and support mechanisms
- Regional and socio-economic differences
  - Within and between countries
- Impact of COVID19

### The Reliance on Family and Informal Networks



Gender roles, expectations and aspirations

Both as older people and informal carers

Unequal, and qualitatively different, gender share of caring burden

Family and marriage norms

Intergenerational two-ways flows of exchange

Ageing as 'women's' issues – at both ends of the spectrum

Wellbeing & quality of life

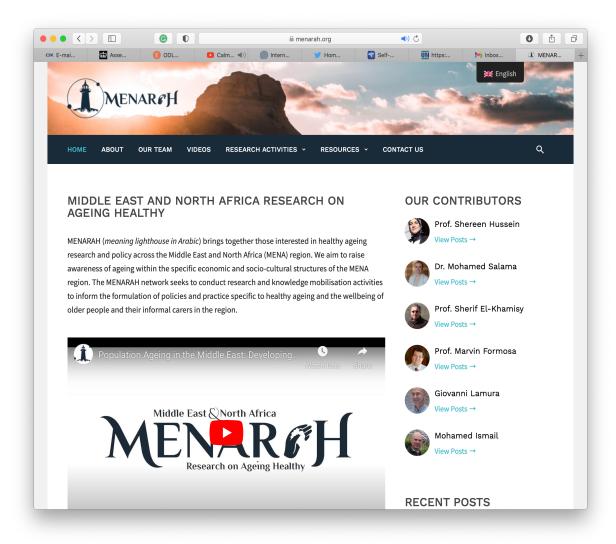
Opportunities – learning, training & the workforce

Informal support networks, communities and 'care-share'



# The Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy (MENARAH) Network





- Focuses on healthy ageing in its broadest meaning
- Aims to
  - Conduct research and knowledge mobilisation activities
  - Raise awareness and connect different actors
  - Inform policy and practice
- A network of researchers, NGOs, policymakers and many more
- Launched Sep. 2020; funded by the GCRF, UK

# Recent Research on the Wellbeing of Older People during COVID19 in the MENA Region



### Summary of activities

- Group discussions
- Virtual Workshops
- > Telephone Interviews (11)

From May-December 2021

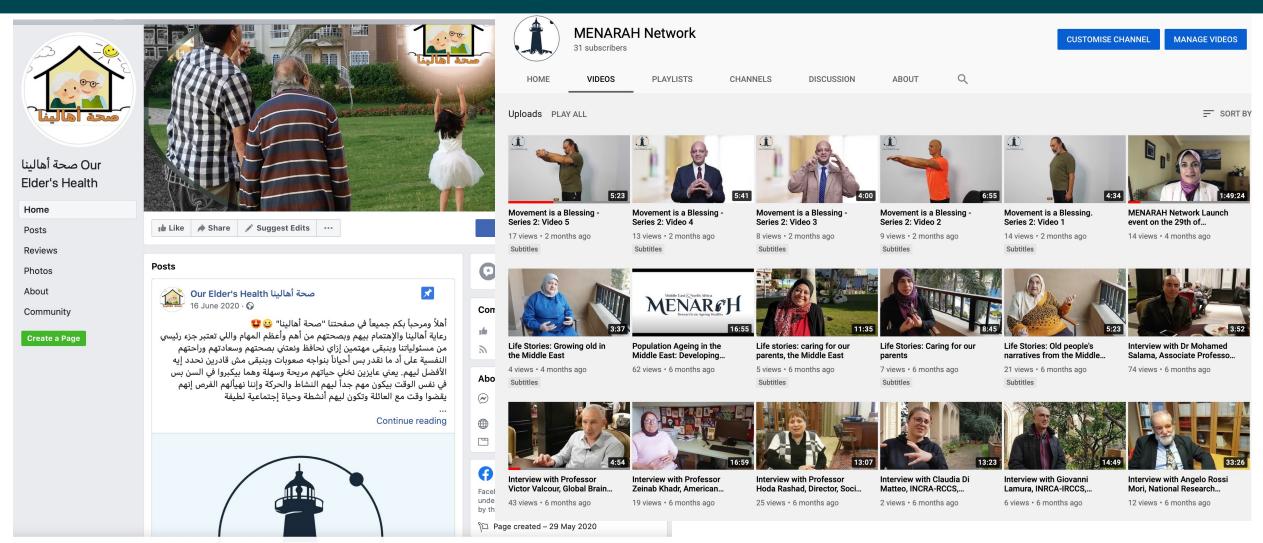
Supportive tools

- Doctori Pilot (survey n=216)
- Facebook page
- Tailored exercise videos
- Blogs & articles

- Key findings from interviews
  - Reduced levels of social and physical activities
    - Risks of deconditioning
    - Social isolation
  - Reduced access to health and care services
    - Disease management and control
  - Significant negative impact on physical and psychological wellbeing
  - The potential role of technology & social media

### Developing Practical Online Tools





# Impact of COVID19 on older people- interviews with older people and their carers



Significant reduction in physical/social activities:

Including social visits, going to work or running errands

تقليل الزيارات للاقارب او عدد مرات التنزه او التسوق

(older person (man); 65)

Reduction in medical checks and visits to health professionals

تقليل الزيارات الدورية للاطباء او المستشفيات والخوف من التعرض للاصابة بالفايروس في مثل هذه الاماكن

(Family carer (daughter in law), 80 years)

Isolation especially for older people who are living alone

قبل الكرونا كنت باروح رحالات كتير ، بنشوف اماكن جديده ونتمشي ونمارس انشطه كتير. الكرونا خلت الواحد مش عارف يخرج لوحده، محتاج حد يمسكه عشان يمشي لان فيه خوف من كتر القاعده فالبيت وكمان الناس اللي ممكن تقابليهم متعرفيش ممكن يعدوكي. المشي نفسه بقي صعب. فالتاثير سلبي جدا علي صحة الواحد. انا بقالي اكتر من ٦ اشهر مخرجتش من البيت. كنت بأروح النادي مرتين بالاسبوع دلوقتي انا خايفه اخرج لوحدي

(Older person, woman, living alone, 81 years old)

### Impact on older people: continued



The home became the only place

كنا بننزل ونروح عند اولادها نزورهم ..كنا بنروح نتفسح شويه ..دلوقتي مفيش نزول .. مفيش خروج...مفيش اجتماعات...مفيش حد بيزورنا زي الأول. بقي قليل جداً لو حد جه يشوفها لانهم خايفين عليها وخايفين من الكرونا

(Formal home care worker; 86 years old)

اذا امكن تقديم خدمات طبية مثيلة بالمنزل لهؤلاء المسني

(Family carer (daughter), 77 years)

دلوقتي لازم نتعايش مع الكرونا. فلازم يكون فيه تشجيع للحركه جوه البيت. العلاج الطبيعي لكبار السن كمان مهم قوي

(Family carer (son), 90 years)

Impact on older people's wellbeing

الحاله النغسيه اتاثرت جدآ..كتير ..كتير.. بقت زعلانه ومتضايقه

(most participants)

### Deconditioning and Reduced Muscle Strengths



ماما كانت نشيطه جدا وكل يوم كانت بتنزل النادي لغاية سنتين فاتت كانت بتنزل لوحدها. السنتين اللي فاتوا بقينا ننزل معاها شغاله. البيت اربع ادوار مفيش اسانسير وكانت تنزل وتطلع مفيش مشاكل. حصل موضوع الكرونا وعدم النزول حصل تدهور غير عادي. مره واحده حركتها محتاجه حد يسندها حتي لو داخله الحمام . مبقتش تقدر تمشي لوحدها. لازم تتسند. مكانتش كده. كانت بتنزل اربع ادوار وتروح النادي وتطلع تاني لوحدها. الكرونا كان ليها تاثير سلبي جامد علي صحتها.

(Family carer (son); 90 years old)

خطوتها قلت الاول كانت تطلع وتنزل السلم ونخرج ونروح النادي دلوقتي لأ مش عارفين نعمل اي حاجه و هي مبقتش تقدر دلوقتي بسبب طول الوقت قاعده ... دلوقتي بامشيها بالعافيه شويه شويه بالراحه لكن مش بتقدر زي الأول

(Formal carer, 86 years old)

### Feedback on the Exercise videos



#### **Benefits**

- Very useful to have these videos as something can be done at home
- All participants had internet and devices to access the videos (tablet, smart phone)
- Suitable to be adapted for the older person and the family carer (most in their 50s)
- They valued the simple instructions and innovative ways to use household items as exercise equipment
- The general advice on measures to reduce infection was felt to be easy to follow Challenges
- Some participants wanted their family to help them access the videos
- Some needed encouragement to select most suitable moves for their health conditions

### Read Our Blogs & Research on TeleCare



HOME

ABOU<sup>\*</sup>

**OUR TEAM** 

IDEOS RESEA

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES V

RESOURCES v

CONTACT US

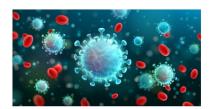
HOME > RESEARCH ACTIVITIES > COVID19 AND THE WELLBEING OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

#### COVID19 AND THE WELLBEING OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The role of physical activities and the use of technology to enhance older people's wellbeing in the Middle East during COV. Pandemic: A pilot study Informal carers in Egypt are one of the main groups of large access and use of mobile phones in Eg the use of apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook are widespread. For example, mobile shipments to Egypt were 14.9 million 2019 alone, with 72% being smartphones. This project aims to capitalise on the use of smartphones and apps to provide a sand unique platform for information, advice and service dedicated to ensuring the health and wellbeing of older people the following activities that will be brought together under one online platform. Egypt, similar to many other LMIC, suffers from infrastructure and support for older people. The COVID19 pandemic presents an unprecedented situation where older peop those with long term care needs are forced to self-isolate in homes. Utilising social media, telemedicine and the online pla becomes necessary within such a situation to maintain the physical and mental wellbeing of older people. The project cons four main activities:

- 1. Piloting a virtual doctor 'Doctori' platform, an initiative to connect older people and their carers to doctors online
- 2. Developing and producing physical training instruction video specific to older people at home during quarantine and beyond. These a at both older people and carers to support them.
- 3. Conducting scoping research on the use of telecare simple devices in monitoring and supporting older people's health.
- 4. Developing a Facebook Group 'our elderly health at home', hosting the above activities and providing signposting to relevant charities organisations and a platform for communications with carers.

**Research team:** Professor Shereen Hussein (PI) in collaboration with Dr Mohamed Salama at the American University in Cairo, Sport Make Arrow Systems, Cairo, Egypt. **Funding:** The University of Kent, Global Challenges Research Fund, Emergency research Fund.



COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa Region



Telemedicine solutions for older people in the MENA region

#### **OUR CONTRIBUTORS**



Prof. Shereen Hussein



Dr. Mohamed Salama
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الصفحة الرئيسية ‹ أنشطة البحث ‹ COVID19 ورفاهية كبار السن في الشرق الأوسط

MENARCH

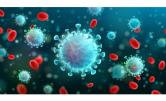
*آخر* ~

#### COVID19 ورفاهية كبار السن في الشرق الأوسط

دور الأنشطة البدنية واستخدام التكنولوجيا لتعزيز رفاهية كبار السن في الشرق الأوسط خلال جائحة COVID19: دراسة تجريبية يُعد مقدمو الرعابة غير الرسميين في مصر إحدى المجموعات الرئيسية ذات الوصول الكبير واستخدام الهواتف المحمولة في مصر ، والاستخدام من التطبيقات مثل WhatsApp و ModesApp منتشرة على نطاق واسع. على سبيل المثال ، بلغت شحنات الهواتف المحمولة إلى مصر 14.9 مليون وحدة في عام 2019 وحده ، مع 72% هواتف ذكية. بهدف هذا المشروع إلى الاستفادة من استخدام الهواتف الذكية والتطبيقات لتوفير منصة فريدة من نوعها في الوقت المناسب للمعلومات والنصائح والخدمات المخصصة لضمان صحة كبار السن ورفاههم من خلال الأنشطة التالية التي سبيم جمعها معًا في منصة واحدة عبر الإنترنت. تعاني مصر ، على غرار العديد من البلدان المنخفضة والمتوسطة الدخل ، من ضعف البنية التحتية وبعم كبار السن. يمثل جائحة COVID19 حالة غير مسبوقة حيث يضطر كبار السن وزوي الاحتياجات الرعاية طويلة الأجل إلى العزلة الذاتية في المنازل. يصبح استخدام وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي والتطبيب عن بعد والمنصة عبر الإنترنت ضروريًا في مثل هذه الحالة للمفاظ على الوفاهية الجسدية والعقلية لكبار السن. يتكون المشروع من أربعة أنشطة رئيسية:

- 1. تجربة منصة طبيب افتراضية "Doctori" ، وهي مبادرة لربط كبار السن ومقدمي الرعاية لهم بالأطباء عبر الإنترنت
- 2. تطوير وإنتاج فيديو تعليمي للتدريب البدني مخصص لكبار السن في المنزل أثثاء الحجر الصحي وما بعده. وهي موجهة لكبار السن ومقدمي الرعاية لدعمهم.
  - 3. إجراء بحث استكشافي حول استخدام الأجهزة البسيطة للرعاية عن بعد في مراقبة ودعم صحة كبار السن.
- 4. تطوير مجموعة Facebook "صحة المسنين في المنزل" ، واستضافة الأنشطة الذكورة أعلاه وتقديم إشارات للجمعيات الخيرية والمنظمات ذات الصلة ومنصة للتواصل مع مقدمي الرعاية.

فريق البحث: الأستاذة شيرين حسين (P) بالتعاون مع الدكتور محمد سلامة في الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة ، Sport Makers and Arrow Systems ، القاهرة ، مصر . التمويل: جامعة كنت ، صندوق أبحاث التحديات العالمية ، صندوق أبحاث الطوارئ.



COVID-19 في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا

5 أكتوبر 2020



حلول التطبيب عن بعد لكبار السن في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا







مساهمينا

أ.د. شيرين حسين

مشاهدة المشاركات →



شريف الخميسي مشاهدة المشاركات →

ENARAH.org

October 5, 2020

### Conclusion



- COVID19 and infection control measures have wide implications on the economy, social life and livelihood of many groups in the MENA region
- The impact on older people is largely ignored
- Lack of awareness of ageing issues and lack of formal support mechanisms
- Reliance on families
- The impact on older people physical and psychological wellbeing is significant
- The potential role of targeted and well-tailored use of digital technology and social media
- Older people will still need support to use such tools
- The need for advocacy, building capacity and raising awareness of issues related to older people and their families

### The MENARAH Network: www.menarah.org





### References



- The Middle East and North Africa Research on Ageing Healthy (MENARAH): <u>www.menorah.org</u>
- YouTube Channel: Menarah Network
- Facebook page: صحة-أهالينا Our-Elders-Health
- Twitter: @MENARAH3; @DrShereeHussein

Ismail, M. and Hussein, S. (2019) Long-Term Care Policies in the Gulf Region: A Case Study of Oman. *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*. 31(4): 338-357.

Khan, H., Hussein, S. and Deane, J. (2017) Nexus between demographic change and elderly care need in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries: Some policy implications. *Ageing International*, 42 (4):466–487.

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### Thank you for Listening



