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MEDIWORLD Middle East

Maryne Cotty-Eslous
CEO & Founder of NeuroCare

INNOVATION AT THE HEART OF AUGMENTED HUMANITY

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EDITORIAL

Inclusive Minds, Bold Futures

As healthcare and technology evolve hand in hand, so too must our understanding of the minds driving this progress. In recent years, the Middle East – particularly the UAE – has seen a notable rise in neurodiverse entrepreneurship. This movement is redefining innovation, making space for diverse cognitive perspectives that challenge traditional frameworks and fuel creative breakthroughs in the health-tech landscape.

The conversation around neurodiversity is shifting from one of awareness to one of active empowerment. More than ever, the region is recognizing the immense value that neurodivergent individuals bring to innovation, especially in sectors where unconventional thinking can lead to life-changing solutions. Whether it's reimagining patient experiences or designing new assistive technologies, neurodiverse entrepreneurs are reshaping how healthcare is envisioned and delivered.

Driving this transformation are forward-thinking initiatives and leaders who champion inclusivity not just in rhetoric but in action. In the UAE, figures like Maryne Cotty-Eslous stand out. A neurodivergent health-tech pioneer, Maryne is helping foster a culture where different neurological profiles are celebrated. Through her advocacy and ventures, she is opening doors for others like her – proving that embracing diverse minds is not only ethical but deeply strategic for future-ready innovation.

As regional incubators, universities, and policymakers start embedding neurodiversity into their agendas, the Middle East is positioning itself as a global hub for inclusive entrepreneurship. It's a hopeful sign that we are moving toward a world where talent is measured not by conformity but by the courage to think differently.

This issue is a celebration of those bold minds – and the systems rising to support them.

Laique Khan
Editor

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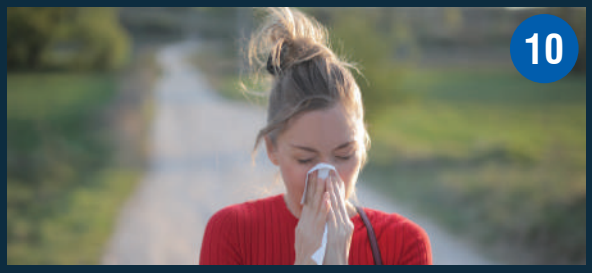


Innovation at the Heart of Augmented Humanity

A pioneer of human-centered innovation, Maryne Cotty-Eslous stands at the crossroads of the digital and the biological in Dubai, embodying a singular vision: innovation as an act of resilience and humanity.

At just 35 years old, she holds a leading position in the global health tech landscape and in the world of neurodiverse entrepreneurship. As the founder of several companies, she has revolutionized chronic pain management through nonpharmacological digital therapies, all grounded in a transdisciplinary philosophy.

She is a rare figure – a neuroscientist working at the intersection of artificial intelligence, cognitive science, and deep humanism – turning trauma and neurodivergence into powerful catalysts for change.

Maryne Cotty-Eslous
CEO & Founder of NeuroCare

MEDIWORLD Middle East

> **"Being an entrepreneur never was a dream for me, but it always was my nature," she tells us.**

On December 21, 2005, at exactly 7:30 p.m., a wall of concrete brought her heart to a sudden halt. The car crash, at over 150 km/h, became the first defining moment in her life. "My body screamed... every sound was unbearable." Doctors later told her, "You're very lucky, miss. You should have died." That trauma marked the beginning of a lifelong mission: to understand and heal the living.

Later diagnoses – including endometriosis and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome – would reveal an invisible neurodivergence. Her struggles in school were never a sign of incapacity, but rather a different cognitive profile she would soon learn to embrace and transform into a strength. Over the years, she earned nine degrees across anthropology, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence. In her view, innovation is never improvised – it is born from the productive collision of knowledge streams.

In 2024, now based in Dubai, she founded MCE Corp, a holding group that brings together several complementary ventures in consulting, neurotechnology, digital health, and support ecosystems for atypical thinkers. For her, entrepreneurship is not an aspirational career path – it is intrinsic.

She transforms failure into a renewed attempt, each time more aligned with her deeper purpose: inventing a model of care that places the human being – in all dimensions – at its center.

Among her flagship breakthroughs is her discovery of alternative, non-drug-based solutions for managing chronic pain. By combining AI-calibrated visual and auditory stimulation, she aims to deliver neurophysiological regulation without the side effects associated with conventional medicine.

At the core of her current work lies one of her most inclusive commitments: a coaching and mentoring program dedicated to neurodivergent entrepreneurs, based on the belief that 15 to 20 percent of the world's population thinks differently – a vast reservoir of creativity largely untapped in the professional world. Through this initiative, Maryne offers training, access to community, and strategic tools to convert cognitive uniqueness into entrepreneurial power.

But it is in Dubai that her impact truly accelerates. Through NeuroCare, a proprietary device she is developing, Maryne seeks to modulate the neural circuits associated with pain by using precise audio-visual frequency patterns. The objective is clear: to offer a non-invasive, drug-free therapy capable of significantly reducing the perception of pain within just a few weeks of use – an innovation set to be unveiled at GITEX Global once commercialized.

In February 2025, she received the prestigious Innovation Trophy at the French Middle East Trophies in Dubai, a recognition of her role as a bridge-builder between France and the UAE in the fields of AI and digital health. As she said at the time:

> **"This recognition highlights the work accomplished with my teams to push the boundaries of innovation and shape the technologies of tomorrow."**

This honor cemented her place within the upper echelons of international innovation. Her active role in ongoing debates around AI ethics, health data privacy, and digital regulation reflects a humanistic approach that puts the individual at the center of every technological leap. For Maryne, the value of a project is not measured in metrics or funding rounds, but in its ability to improve real lives in tangible ways.

Her scientific vision is rooted in a philosophy of perpetual movement. "If we stop moving, we wither away," she recently shared in an interview. Every obstacle is, to her, an invitation to invent what does not yet exist. Every instance of pain is fertile ground for creation. This perspective encapsulates the essence of her work: innovation not as a product, but as a service to humanity. That is the very soul of NeuroCare.

At the intersection of applied neurotechnology and non-pharmacological therapeutic innovation, the NeuroCare project today represents the culmination of Maryne Cotty Eslous's research and convictions. Designed as a next-generation medical solution, the device aims to selectively modulate the activity of neural circuits involved in the genesis and maintenance of chronic pain, through a fully non-invasive approach entirely free of any pharmacological agent.

Based on proprietary technology derived from over ten years of multidisciplinary research,

NeuroCare relies on neurocognitive stimulation protocols that combine visual sequences, auditory rhythms, and synchronized vibratory signals, calibrated to the functional characteristics of the targeted neural networks.

The orchestration algorithm, built on an artificial intelligence engine, dynamically adjusts the intensity, duration, and frequency profile of the stimuli in response to the patient's behavioral and physiological markers, in order to induce a sustained neuroplastic regulatory effect on nociceptive pathways.

This progressive neurobehavioral modulation enables the interruption of hyperalgesic feedback loops while preserving the integrity of sensory structures. In initial exploratory cohorts conducted in controlled clinical environments, a significant reduction in perceived pain intensity was observed as early as the third week of treatment, without adverse effects or cognitive maladaptation.

The ambition of NeuroCare is not merely to provide transient relief, but rather to initiate a functional reprogramming of cerebral circuits by acting on thalamo-cortical synchronization and abnormal gamma oscillations - patterns frequently identified in patients suffering from chronic pain syndromes.

In Dubai, she is investing in a strategic playing field – a global innovation hub hungry for disruption, where over EURO 50 billion have been allocated to AI development as part of a historic partnership with France. This ultra-connected environment, primed for high-speed scaling, is allowing NeuroCare to prepare for rapid deployment across hospitals and clinics in the UAE and beyond.

Today, Maryne Cotty-Eslous represents a new hybrid model: visionary entrepreneur, transdisciplinary innovator, inclusive mentor, and humanistic strategist. Her legacy is taking shape not only in the companies she builds, but also in the way she empowers atypical profiles, delivers technological responses to pain, and redefines the true meaning of impact. Her message to the next generation of creators is simple and powerful:

"Dare to pursue imperfect ideas. Focus on real-world impact. Even if you only change one life -it's worth more than any title in the world."

PRODUCT LAUNCH

SCHILLER's CARDIOVIT CS-300: Precision, Performance, and Cybersecurity in Stress ECG

SCHILLER's upcoming CARDIOVIT CS-300 sets a new benchmark in high-end stress ECG solutions, engineered for the fast-paced demands of modern hospitals. Combining cutting-edge performance with advanced digital integration, the CS-300 offers wireless ECG acquisition, exceptional hygiene features, and robust data protection.

At its core is a 27" 4K disinfectable touchscreen, accompanied by a waterproof keyboard and intuitive quick-access buttons—streamlining operation while meeting the highest standards of infection control. The system ensures workflow efficiency through its integrated 300-page thermal printer and fully automatic data transmission to the hospital's information system.

The CS-300's bidirectional HIS communication enables seamless integration of test data into electronic patient records, reinforcing accuracy and clinical decision-making. Built on a security-hardened Linux kernel, it features encryption at rest, customizable user privileges, and Wi-Fi protocols with certificate-based authentication to safeguard sensitive patient data.

The device supports both wired and wireless ECG acquisition, including the MS-12 BT Bluetooth module, which allows patient prep in a separate room—maximizing throughput. Clinicians can choose between 12-lead and optional 16-lead ECG configurations, with flexible power options.

Beyond its hardware, the CARDIOVIT CS-300 offers a suite of advanced diagnostics, including resting and exercise ECGs, rhythm monitoring, and optional tools like Advanced Arrhythmia Detection, ETM Sport, Vector ECG, and automatic BP/SpO_2 monitoring.

With its fusion of precision, connectivity, and confidence, the CARDIOVIT CS-300 redefines stress ECG testing—one heartbeat at a time.

BD Launches First Pharma-Sponsored Clinical Trial Featuring BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector for Biologics

BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company, announces the first pharma-sponsored combination product clinical trial using the BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector for subcutaneous delivery of complex biologics.

The selection of BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector for this pharma-sponsored trial follows successful outcomes from more than 50 BD-conducted pre-clinical and clinical studies, including a device clinical study demonstrating excellent performance with 100% of study participants stating they would likely use the BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector if prescribed.

The pharma-sponsored combination product clinical trial represents a significant advancement in accelerating innovation in drug-device combination products that provide greater flexibility for patients, including potential conversion from infused medications that require patients to travel to a hospital or clinic to more convenient patient care in various settings, including self-injection at home.

"This trial demonstrates BD's commitment to helping pharma companies by advancing large-volume injection science, ensuring therapies are accessible and patient friendly by offering more efficient and convenient options for biologics," said Patrick Jeukenne, worldwide president of BD Pharmaceutical Systems. "BD's enhanced testing

capabilities acquired through ZebraSci and the proven capabilities of the BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector technology further position BD as an innovative leader in drug delivery."

The BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector is an innovative, prefilled, patient ready-to-use drug delivery system designed to enable delivery of complex biologics via subcutaneous injection. The biologics market is expected to grow to more than $670 billion by 2030 and for pharmaceutical companies developing these complex drugs, the BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector offers a customizable, patient-centric solution. The BD Libertas™ Wearable Injector:

- Supports delivery of high-viscosity biologics (up to 50 centipoise), enabling a wide range of subcutaneous therapies
- Is offered in 2 to 5 mL and 5 to 10 mL configurations providing flexibility for diverse therapeutic requirements
- Features a fully mechanical, patient ready-to-use design with a simple "peel, stick and click" mechanism, requiring no end-user filling or assembly

BD's ongoing validations of fill-finish and final assembly processes with multiple Contract Manufacturing Organizations (CMOs) enable the company to support pharmaceutical partners from development through commercial-scale production.

Not Just a Sneeze: Why Spring Allergies in the UAE Deserve Serious Attention

By: Laique Khan

As spring settles in across the UAE, it brings not just warmer weather but a noticeable rise in allergy-related health issues. The season is marked by an increase in airborne allergens such as dust, pollen, and pollution – posing particular challenges for those with asthma, allergic rhinitis, and other chronic respiratory conditions. The country's dry desert climate, frequent sandstorms, and seasonal bloom of desert flora make the allergy season more intense and longer-lasting than in many other regions.

Dust and fine particulate matter are among the primary triggers. Seasonal winds and sandstorms carry large amounts of dust through both urban and rural areas, irritating the respiratory system and causing symptoms such as sneezing, itchy eyes, nasal congestion, and difficulty breathing. In urban areas, the problem is compounded by air pollution from vehicles and industry, worsening the impact on air quality and public health.

Pollen is another key contributor. Though the UAE lacks dense forests, native desert plants, grasses, and ornamental trees produce ample pollen that spreads easily through the air. For allergy sufferers, even a short time outdoors can lead to severe discomfort and allergic reactions.

Healthcare professionals in the UAE are urging residents to adopt preventive measures during this period. Staying indoors during high-risk times – usually early mornings and late afternoons – can help reduce exposure. It is also advised to use air purifiers at home, keep windows closed, and ensure air conditioning filters are cleaned regularly to avoid allergen buildup indoors.

When venturing outside, especially during dusty or windy days, wearing a protective mask – such as a surgical or N95 mask – can offer significant protection from inhaling allergens. This is especially helpful for those with severe sensitivities.

For persistent or worsening symptoms, medical advice should be sought. Over-the-counter antihistamines, decongestants, and nasal sprays often provide relief. In more serious cases, allergy testing and immunotherapy may be recommended to help desensitize the immune system over time.

Special attention should also be given to vulnerable groups, such as children and the elderly. Schools and caregivers are encouraged to monitor air quality and limit outdoor activities when necessary. Those with asthma or other chronic conditions should ensure medications are up to date and readily available.

Ultimately, spring allergies in the UAE are more than a seasonal annoyance – they represent a real public health issue. With proactive steps, timely medical care, and greater awareness, residents can manage symptoms more effectively and enjoy the season with greater ease.

MEDIWORLD Middle East

Dr. Mohammed Harriss
Consultant Pulmonology,
Medcare Royal Specialty Hospital, Al Qusais

In an exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Dr. Mohammed Harriss, Consultant Pulmonology at Medcare Royal Specialty Hospital, Al Qusais, offers expert insight into UAE's seasonal allergy surge.

He outlines that spring in the UAE brings a sharp rise in allergy cases, with dust, pollen, air pollution, and mold spores combining to create a challenging environment for residents—especially those with respiratory sensitivities.

Dr. Harriss explains that unlike temperate regions where tree and grass pollen are primary triggers, the UAE's arid climate exposes people to dust storms, pollutants, and allergens from imported ornamental plants such as mesquite and date palms.

He emphasizes that fine dust from construction sites and mold from air conditioning ducts are often underestimated yet common culprits. Sandstorms, he notes, exacerbate symptoms by dispersing fine particles that irritate respiratory passages and dry out protective mucous membranes.

Dr. Harriss stresses the importance of distinguishing mild allergies from more severe conditions like asthma or sinus infections and encourages seeking medical attention if symptoms persist beyond 10 days.

To manage symptoms, residents are advised to keep windows closed, use air purifiers, wash off allergens after outdoor exposure, and maintain dust-free homes. With climate change lengthening pollen seasons, Dr. Harriss recommends proactive monitoring and early medical intervention to mitigate the impact of seasonal allergies.

What are the primary causes of spring allergies in the UAE, and how do they differ from allergies in other regions?
In the UAE, spring allergies are primarily triggered by airborne irritants like dust, mold spores, and pollen from certain desert and ornamental plants. Unlike temperate regions where tree and grass pollens are the dominant culprits, in the UAE, the dry, arid climate means residents are more exposed to dust storms, airborne pollutants, and imported plant species that release allergens.

Can you walk us through the most common allergy triggers during the spring season in the UAE, such as dust, pollen, and pollution?
Certainly. The most common triggers include:

• **Dust**: Fine particles from the desert and construction sites.

• **Pollen**: Especially from fast-growing ornamental plants like mesquite and date palms.

•**Air Pollution**: Emissions from vehicles and industrial activity can exacerbate symptoms.

•**Mold Spores**: Often overlooked, but mold can thrive in indoor AC ducts and cause reactions.

How does the desert climate, including sandstorms and dry winds, contribute to increased allergy symptoms?
Sandstorms stir up fine dust and allergens, which can irritate the eyes, nose, and respiratory system. The dry wind also dries out mucous membranes, making individuals more susceptible to airborne allergens and irritants.

Which allergens are most prevalent in urban areas, and how do construction dust and vehicle emissions aggravate allergic reactions?
In cities like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, construction dust, smog, and vehicular emissions are leading allergens. These pollutants not only trigger allergies but can also worsen conditions like asthma, especially in children and the elderly.

Who is at more risk during allergy season – and what signs should individuals look out for to identify allergic reactions early?
People with a family history of allergies, asthma, or eczema are at greater risk. Warning signs include:

• Persistent sneezing

• Itchy eyes or throat

• Nasal congestion or runny nose

• Coughing or wheezing

• Fatigue due to disturbed sleep

How can residents differentiate between common allergies and more serious respiratory conditions like asthma or sinus infections?

Allergies typically present with itchy, watery eyes, and clear nasal discharge. In contrast:

• Asthma involves shortness of breath, chest tightness, and wheezing.

• Sinus infections often include facial pain, thick nasal mucus, and fever.

• If symptoms persist or worsen, it's essential to get evaluated.

What are some of the most effective at-home or lifestyle remedies for managing mild seasonal allergies?

• Keep windows closed during high dust or pollen days.

• Use air purifiers indoors.

• Wash face and hands after being outdoors.

• Shower before bed to remove allergens from skin/hair.

• Stay hydrated and maintain a clean, dust-free environment.

When should someone seek professional medical help instead of relying on over-the-counter medications?
If symptoms persist beyond 7–10 days, interfere with daily life or sleep, or if over-the-counter antihistamines are no longer effective, it's time to consult a specialist. Wheezing, difficulty breathing, or recurrent sinus infections should not be ignored.

Are you seeing a rise in allergy-related cases at Medcare clinics during the spring months?
Yes, we typically observe a noticeable spike in allergy-related consultations during spring – especially among children and those with pre-existing respiratory issues. The mix of environmental triggers and increased outdoor exposure during school breaks adds to the surge.

Are there any new or advanced treatments available for managing seasonal allergies that Medcare offers?

At Medcare, we offer:

• Allergy testing to identify specific triggers

• Desensitization therapy (immuno-therapy) for long-term relief

• Prescription-grade nasal sprays and antihistamines

- Advanced air filtration assessments for patients with severe indoor allergies

Can you recommend preventive measures to reduce exposure to allergens — both indoors and outdoors?

Outdoors: Wear sunglasses, masks during sandstorms, and avoid outdoor activities during high pollen days.

Indoors: Regularly clean AC ducts, use HEPA filters, and avoid carpeting which traps dust.

Is there any link between climate change and the intensity or duration of allergy seasons in the UAE? If so, how can residents prepare for this trend?

Yes, climate change has contributed to longer and more intense allergy seasons due to increased CO2 levels, which promote plant growth and pollen production. Residents should prepare by staying informed via air quality apps, practicing preventive measures, and consulting allergy specialists early in the season.

Advancing Anesthesia: Highlights from PAAC 2025

PAN ARAB ANESTHESIA CONFERENCE 2025

The Pan Arab Anesthesia Conference 2025 (PAAC 2025), held from June 20-22, 2025 in Dubai, UAE, brought together a leading assembly of anesthesiologists, intensivists, pain management experts, and allied healthcare professionals from across the Arab region and beyond.

The conference officially kicked off with an opening ceremony and plenary sessions highlighting "Anesthesiology in Health Emergencies" – the 2025 annual theme endorsed by the World Federation of Societies of Anesthesiologists. Over three full days, attendees engaged in workshops, symposiums, and panel discussions covering cutting-edge innovations in anesthesia, perioperative patient safety, and chronic pain management.

The expert-led program was overseen by a distinguished scientific committee, including Dr. Cornelia Weidinger (Anesthesia Program Chair), Dr. Salah Al Ali (Pain Management Chair), and Dr. Osama Sami Maki Al Ani (Workshop Chair). Speakers included internationally recognized specialists such as Prof. Abdel Karim Al Oweidi Al Abbadi presenting on neuro monitoring techniques and critical care strategies.

Corporate partners like Zahrawi Group and Medtronic showcased advanced monitoring tech including BIS™, INVOS™ NIRS, McGRATH™ MAC, and the Leon MRI anesthesia system – underlining the conference's dual focus on education and technological application.

PAAC 2025 served as a dynamic platform for cross border collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and innovation in anesthesia and pain medicine. Attendees departed equipped with practical insights on emergency preparedness, neuro monitoring, and advances in patient centric perioperative care.

A Deeper Look at IBD: Dr. Quraishi on Early Detection, Innovation and Personalized Treatment

Dr. Mohammed Nabil Quraishi
Consultant Gastroenterologist and Director, IBD Centre, SSMC

By: Laique Khan

Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC) in Abu Dhabi stands at the forefront of transforming IBD care in the UAE. Dr. Mohammed Nabil Quraishi, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Director of the IBD Centre at Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC), shares how the institution is redefining IBD care in the UAE.

Dr. Mohammed Nabil Quraishi highlights a sharp rise in regional cases—especially Crohn's disease—and emphasizes early detection, advanced diagnostics, and personalized treatment. With cutting-edge biologics, small molecule therapies, and the UAE Epi-IBD study, SSMC is advancing precision medicine tailored to genetics, microbiome, and lifestyle.

"Our goal is proactive, individualized care that prevents complications," says Dr. Quraishi, as SSMC redefines the standard of IBD management in the UAE.

Could you tell us more about how SSMC is shaping its approach to IBD management and what makes your IBD Centre unique in the UAE?

At Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC), we take a comprehensive and personalized approach to managing Inflammatory Bowel Disease. We focus on treating the individual in front of us, not just the disease. Our IBD Centre in the UAE distinguishes itself by its multidisciplinary team of internationally trained experts, encompassing specialists from gastroenterology, surgery, nutrition, nursing, psychology, and pharmacy – a comprehensive approach unique to few centers across the UAE.

This collaborative team utilizes state-of-the-art facilities, including advanced diagnostic tools and a dedicated infusion suite. This integrated approach contributes to excellent clinical outcomes, with the majority of our patients achieving and maintaining rapid disease control. We create tailored care plans for each patient, provide access to the latest treatments through active research programs and clinical trials, and offer extensive patient education and support services, including a dedicated helpline and mental wellness support. We also have specific programs to proactively manage disease flares and support our sickest patients.

Could you give us an overview of the current prevalence of inflammatory bowel disease in the Middle East region? Are you seeing a rising trend?

Yes, we are definitely seeing a significant rise in IBD cases across the Middle East, including here in the UAE. The region is experiencing a rapid increase, likely driven by factors like urbanization, changing diets, and other environmental shifts. While exact figures across the entire region are still being gathered, estimates suggest a considerable jump in cases is expected in the coming years.

Our own data at SSMC reflects this dramatic trend, showing a nearly eighteen-fold increase in new IBD diagnoses among Emirati patients over the last two decades, particularly a sharp rise in Crohn's disease since 2016. Crohn's disease now makes up about two-thirds of the IBD cases we see in this group. This highlights a growing public health challenge for the region.

What are the key challenges in diagnosing IBD early, and how can clinicians differentiate it from other gastrointestinal conditions, especially in young adults?

Diagnosing IBD early can sometime be challenging because its symptoms – like stomach pain, diarrhea, tiredness, and weight loss – often mimic other common gut problems, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). This overlap can lead to delays in getting the correct diagnosis and commencing appropriate treatment, sometimes for months or even years. Differentiating IBD, especially in young adults where IBS is also common, requires careful attention. Doctors should look out for "red flag" symptoms more typical of IBD, like rectal bleeding, weight loss, or waking up at night with diarrhea. Simple tests can help; for example, a stool test called fecal calprotectin can detect inflammation in the gut, pointing towards IBD rather than IBS.

Specific red flag symptoms and tests necessitate procedures such as colonoscopy which allow doctors to see inside the bowel and take tiny samples for testing, combined with specialized scans like MRI, are often needed to confirm the diagnosis and tell the difference between IBD and other conditions. Urgent referral to an IBD specialist is key if IBD is suspected as early diagnosis and early appropriate treatment can effectively change the course of the disease.

How does gut microbiota influence disease activity, and are we close to seeing microbiome-based diagnostics or therapies in routine clinical practice?

The trillions of bacteria living in our gut, known as the gut microbiome, play a crucial role in our health, especially our immune system. In IBD, the balance of these bacteria is often disrupted – a state called dysbiosis. This imbalance, likely triggered by environmental factors in people with a genetic predisposition, can lead to the inappropriate immune response and chronic inflammation seen in IBD.

The gut microbiota influences disease activity by affecting immune regulation and the health of the gut lining. An unhealthy microbiome can contribute to ongoing inflammation. While we understand the microbiome's importance, using it for routine diagnosis isn't standard practice yet, though research into specific microbial "signatures" as biomarkers is progressing rapidly. Therapies targeting the microbiome are also advancing.

Fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT), a procedure where we transfer processed stool from a healthy

donor, has shown some success in treating ulcerative colitis in trials, but more research and standardization are needed. We have completed a clinical trial ourselves in the UK (called STOP-Colitis) where we learnt that FMT does improve disease activity in patients with ulcerative colitis, but this effect is variable and short lived. The future likely lies in more precise approaches, like using specific beneficial bacteria or specially designed gut microbes, some of which are already in clinical testing.

How have biologics and small molecule therapies changed IBD treatment, and how do you choose between them for patients?

Modern treatments like biologics and the newer small molecule drugs have truly changed the lives of people with moderate to severe IBD. These advanced therapies work by targeting specific parts of the immune system that drive inflammation.

Compared to older medicines, they are much better at controlling symptoms, healing the lining of the gut, and reducing the need for steroids. This leads to a significantly better quality of life and can help prevent long-term complications. We now have several types, targeting different immunological pathways.

Choosing the right therapy for each patient requires careful consideration. We look at how effective the drug is for their specific type and severity of IBD, its safety profile and potential side effects, how it's given (injection, infusion, or pill), the patient's lifestyle and preferences, other health conditions they might have, and treatment cost and access.

It's a very personalized decision we make with our patients and is aimed at finding the best possible outcome for that individual. At SSMC, a large proportion of our patients benefit from these advanced treatments and consequently most of our patients are well with no symptoms or measurable disease activity.

How is personalized medicine—guided by genetics, microbiome, and environment—shaping IBD care?

Personalized medicine is incredibly important in IBD because the disease varies so much from person to person. What works well for one patient might not work for another. We need to tailor treatment to the individual's specific situation.

Understanding a person's unique genetic makeup, their gut microbiome, and their environmental exposures helps us do this more effectively. For instance, specific genes can influence someone's risk of developing IBD or how severe their disease might become.

Similarly, the types of bacteria in someone's gut can impact inflammation and potentially how they respond to treatment. Environmental factors, like diet, smoking, or past antibiotic use, also play a significant role.

By gathering information on all these aspects, we may one day be able to predict who is at higher risk, who will respond best to which treatment, and even how to prevent the disease in susceptible individuals. Our Department of Health-funded UAE Epi-IBD study at SSMC is central to achieving this in the UAE. This is a large body of work in collaboration with multiple national and international institutes that aims to understand and combine various factors to develop more precise and personalized treatment approaches for our patients in the UAE.

Can diet and lifestyle help manage IBD, and what advice do you give patients?

Diet and lifestyle are important pieces of the puzzle in managing IBD. While they don't usually cure the disease, they can certainly help control symptoms, prevent nutritional problems, and support overall well-being.

Certain foods might trigger symptoms like pain or diarrhea for some people, especially during a flare-up, so identifying personal triggers is helpful. Malnutrition can be a concern, so ensuring adequate intake of calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals is vital for healing.

Lifestyle factors matter too; stopping smoking is critical for Crohn's disease patients, and managing stress can be beneficial. At SSMC, we work closely with dedicated IBD dietitians to provide personalized advice. When the disease is calm, we often recommend a balanced, varied diet like the Mediterranean diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and healthy fats.

During flares, we might suggest temporarily modifying the diet to include easier-to-digest foods, sometimes using a low-fiber approach for a short period. Specific diets like the Crohn's Disease Exclusion Diet are sometimes used under supervision. The key is individualization and ensuring good nutrition is maintained.

What future IBD therapies or trials are you most optimistic about? Is FMT showing promise?

The future of IBD treatment looks very promising, with research exploring many new avenues. I'm optimistic about therapies that target inflammatory pathways even more precisely than current treatments allow, including newer biologics and small molecule drugs.

We are also learning more about combining existing therapies for patients with very difficult-to-treat disease. Therapies aimed at the gut microbiome are a major focus. Fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT), as mentioned, has shown potential for ulcerative colitis in some studies, but we need more research to define its exact role.

Perhaps even more exciting is the development of precisely defined microbiome therapies – specific beneficial bacteria delivered as a treatment. Another key area is the integration of 'multi-omics' data – combining genetic, microbial, and other biological information – to truly personalize treatment choices and predict outcomes. At SSMC, we ensure our patients have opportunities to participate in clinical trials exploring these innovative approaches.

What multidisciplinary approach is key to effective IBD care? How vital is specialist collaboration in managing IBD?

Effective IBD care absolutely requires a team approach – what we call multidisciplinary care. This condition affects so many aspects of a person's life that no single specialist can manage it all alone. Collaboration is crucial.

At SSMC, our core team includes gastroenterologists, specialist IBD nurses, dietitians, psychologists, and surgeons working closely together. The nurses provide vital education and support, dietitians manage nutritional health, psychologists help with the emotional and mental health challenges, and surgeons address complications.

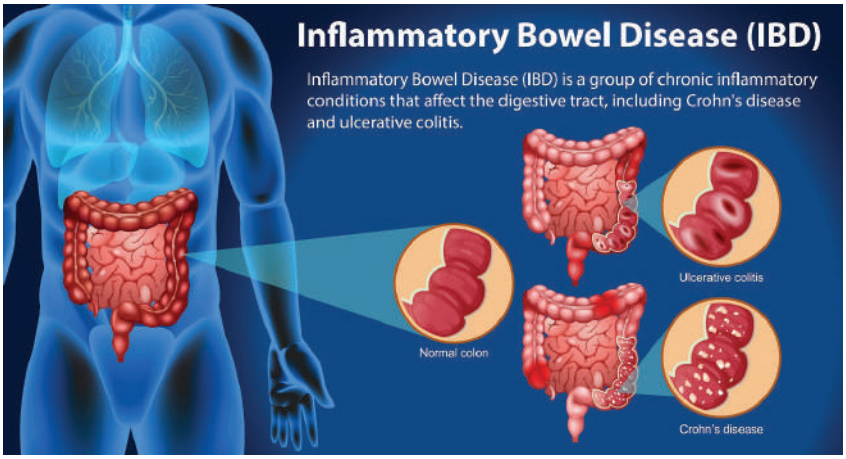
We also bring in radiologists, pathologists, pharmacists, and other specialists like rheumatologists or dermatologists whenever needed. This team effort ensures we look at the whole picture, leading to more accurate diagnosis, better treatment plans decided through team discussions, improved management of complications, and ultimately, better health and quality of life for our patients.

What advice do you have for primary care doctors in the Middle East to improve early IBD detection and referrals?

Primary care physicians are on the front line and can make a huge difference in catching IBD early. Given that IBD is increasingly common in the Middle East, my main advice is to keep IBD in mind when patients present with persistent gut symptoms like chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain, bleeding, or weight loss, especially if they are young adults but remembering it can occur at any age. Look out for "red flag" symptoms that suggest something more than IBS.

Using the fecal calprotectin stool test is a very helpful step; it can indicate inflammation and helps decide who needs urgent referral to a specialist. Don't hesitate to refer patients with suspicious symptoms or an elevated calprotectin test to a gastroenterologist or an IBD specialist promptly.

Early diagnosis and treatment lead to much better outcomes and can prevent serious complications down the line. Continued collaboration between primary care and specialist teams is also vital for ongoing patient care.




Michio Kondo
Managing Director, Fujifilm Middle East

Fujifilm: Shaping Regional Healthcare Future

By: Laique Khan

In an exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Michio Kondo, Managing Director at Fujifilm Middle East, and Masataka Akiyama, President and CEO of Fujifilm Europe, discusses the company's strategic growth and its mission to transform healthcare across the Middle East and Africa.

Mr. Akiyama reflected on Fujifilm's early adoption of digital healthcare through its PACS system nearly 30 years ago, emphasizing a commitment to quality and innovation. He praised the UAE's healthcare infrastructure as an ideal environment for deploying customized technologies.

Mr. Kondo traced Fujifilm Middle East's growth from a small 10-member team in 2010 to over 200 professionals today, supporting operations across countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, and South Africa. "We are focused on innovation and expanding into emerging markets," he said.

The Fujifilm Technology Center in the UAE was highlighted as a regional hub for hands-on training and knowledge exchange. Mr. Kondo noted its role in addressing the specific needs of both advanced and underserved healthcare environments.

AI is central to Fujifilm's future, with Mr. Akiyama stressing its use in easing the burden on medical staff by automating routine tasks. The NURA AI-powered screening center also reflects the company's drive toward preventive healthcare, inspired by Japan's culture of regular health checks.

Sustainability is another core value, showcased by Fujifilm's helium-free MRI technology and the environmentally conscious design of its new Dubai office near Expo City. The company's collaboration with Thumbay University Hospital further underscores its regional commitment.

Looking ahead, Fujifilm plans to deepen investments through strategic partnerships, AI integration, and localized healthcare education – balancing global expertise with meaningful regional impact.

Fujifilm's legacy in healthcare innovation dates back to 1936, when it began producing medical film. Since then, the company has evolved into a global leader in medical imaging, diagnostics, and digital healthcare technologies.

Fujifilm is redefining the future of diagnostics and medical imaging by combining decades of innovation with a deep commitment to improving patient care. Leveraging its advanced imaging technologies, the company delivers a comprehensive range of products and solutions that support clinicians in accurate diagnosis, treatment planning, and efficient healthcare delivery.

At the heart of Fujifilm Healthcare's portfolio are its high-performance diagnostic imaging systems, including MRI, CT, X-ray, and ultrasound systems, designed to deliver exceptional image clarity and operational efficiency. Its Digital Radiography (DR) systems integrate seamlessly with PACS (Picture Archiving and Communication System) to streamline workflows and enhance diagnostic accuracy.

In the Middle East and Africa, Fujifilm Healthcare supports partners with AI-enabled diagnostics and imaging, combining imaging, informatics, and AI to deliver efficient, patient-centric solutions. As it expands globally, the company remains committed to innovation that transforms lives through faster, more accessible healthcare.

Can you briefly share Fujifilm Middle East's journey and your vision for innovation and growth in the region's healthcare and tech sectors?

Fujifilm Middle East began its operations in 2010 with a very small team of fewer than 10 employees. Over the years, we have experienced significant and steady growth, and today we proudly have a team of over 200 professionals. Our regional presence has expanded as well, with offices now established in the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa.

This growth has allowed us to continually evolve and broaden our product portfolio. Looking ahead, there are still numerous opportunities for us to further expand our business—both by introducing our solutions to untapped markets and by entering new countries where our presence is not yet established. We remain committed to innovation and to playing a key role in advancing healthcare and technology across the region.

What key factors have driven Fujifilm's expansion in the UAE, Middle East, and Africa, and how is it shaping the future of healthcare there?

Healthcare systems in the UAE and GCC countries are already equipped with some of the most advanced technologies, and digital transformation is well underway in the region.

However, there are still valuable opportunities to contribute further. One example is promoting aspects of Japanese healthcare culture, such as a strong emphasis on early detection and early treatment through regular check-up programs. By introducing and integrating this proactive approach, we believe we can support better health outcomes and add meaningful value to the region's evolving healthcare landscape.

How does Fujifilm leverage its global expertise to tackle healthcare challenges in medical imaging, diagnostics, and IT in the Middle East and Africa?

Medical imaging, diagnostics, and healthcare IT are among Fujifilm's core areas of focus. We draw on our global network to bring advanced solutions and expertise to the MEA region. One of the ways we do this is by organizing seminars and educational programs, which are often led by our in-house experts.

We also invite internationally renowned doctors to participate, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration. These initiatives not only support skill development but also help build strong professional networks across the region.

How does the Fujifilm Technology Center in the UAE support healthcare professionals and partners through hands-on training and capacity-building?

Technology today is evolving at a rapid pace, and medical equipment is becoming increasingly advanced. Because of this, one of our key missions is to provide comprehensive education that enables healthcare professionals to use our products effectively and to their full potential.

Our training programs are designed to support all stakeholders in the healthcare sector—not just doctors, but also nurses, technicians, and clinical staff. Through these hands-on sessions, we help them gain the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver better care and optimize the performance of our solutions. This approach ensures that innovation is not just introduced, but fully integrated into daily clinical practice.

How does the Fujifilm Technology Center help bridge the gap between technological advancements and clinical application, particularly in under-resourced areas of the region?

Healthcare infrastructure varies significantly from one country or region to another. For example, the GCC countries are highly advanced and have largely transitioned to fully digital systems, with little to no use of traditional film.

However, in parts of Africa and other under-resourced areas, analog systems are still in use. This means we need to offer different solutions tailored to each market's specific needs. At

Fujifilm, we make it a priority to understand local conditions and demands, allowing us to provide customized proposals and technologies that are both appropriate and effective for each region.

Fujifilm recently signed an MoU with Thumbay University Hospital for an AI program. Can you explain the collaboration's scope and how it fits Fujifilm's vision for AI in patient care?

Thumbay University Hospital has a strong vision for the future and is closely connected with Gulf Medical University. Our goal through this collaboration is to support the education and development of students who will become the next generation of healthcare professionals.

While the detailed structure of the program is still being finalized, we envision creating a continuous, long-term initiative. This partnership will also involve the hospital's doctors and nurses, who can contribute their clinical expertise. Ultimately, this collaboration reflects our commitment to advancing AI in healthcare by combining innovation with education and real-world clinical application.

What role does Fujifilm's Expo City office play in strengthening regional partnerships, and how has it supported the acceleration of innovation and localization of healthcare technologies?

Expo City offers a forward-thinking vision, both economically and from an ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) perspective. This aligns well with FUJIFILM's own environmental and sustainability goals, allowing us to pursue innovation with a strong focus on responsible practices.

In addition, with major events like Arab Health taking place nearby over the next three years, the infrastructure around Expo City makes Fujifilm's new office an ideal location for hosting partners and stakeholders. It provides a dynamic space for collaboration, helping us to showcase our technologies, engage with healthcare leaders, and foster innovation that is locally relevant and impactful.

How do you see Fujifilm's AI-powered NURA screening center, inspired by Japan's annual health checkups, transforming preventive healthcare and longevity in the UAE and MEA?

Yes, culturally, there's still a difference in approach to healthcare. In many parts of the Middle East, people typically visit the hospital only when they feel unwell. In contrast, in Japan, annual health checkups are mandatory and widely accepted as part of preventive care.

With NURA, our goal is to raise awareness about the importance of early detection and early treatment—even when no symptoms are present. Through education and public campaigns, we hope to encourage a shift toward proactive healthcare. This model can play a significant role in improving long-term health outcomes, reducing treatment costs, and supporting healthier lifestyles across the UAE and the MEA region.

Is Fujifilm planning to bring its new interventional ultrasonic endoscope and endoscopy systems to the Middle East, and how will they improve diagnostic care there?

Yes, the interventional ultrasound endoscopy system is a global product. While it was initially introduced in Europe, we have now started bringing it to the Middle East and Africa as well.

This advanced system enhances diagnostic capabilities, particularly in areas where conventional endoscopy might be limited. It enables more precise, minimally invasive procedures and supports earlier, more accurate detection of conditions—ultimately helping to fill critical gaps in diagnostic care across the region.

Are there plans for new investments within the region?

Yes, definitely. The Technology Center is one of our key investments in the region. We also aim to collaborate closely with local companies, hospitals, and public sector organizations. Through these partnerships and investments, we strive to contribute positively to society and support the development of healthcare infrastructure across the region.

What kinds of collaborative efforts and support have you received from both the UAE government and the Japanese government?

The UAE is not only focusing on treatment but is also prioritizing preventive care, with a strong emphasis on screening programs. This approach aligns with the country's healthcare strategy, and we support it by providing comprehensive screening solutions.

For example, we offer programs such as the NURA screening center, along with specialized screenings for colon cancer and stomach conditions using FUJIFILM's endoscopy systems, as well as breast cancer screening programs. These services are tailored to meet the specific needs and priorities set by the government, ensuring effective support for their healthcare initiatives.

What are Fujifilm's main strategic priorities in the Middle East and Africa, especially regarding AI, medical imaging, and healthcare access?

Each country and region within the Middle East and Africa have different needs and healthcare priorities. While all of our products incorporate artificial intelligence to some degree, the demand varies—some countries require larger, capital-intensive equipment, while others benefit more from compact, portable solutions.

Our strategy is to tailor our approach to each market, offering the right technologies based on local requirements. This flexibility allows us to support the advancement of imaging and AI-driven healthcare, while also improving accessibility and outcomes across diverse healthcare systems in the region.

MEDIWORLD Middle East

Fujifilm's Healthcare Outlook: Driving AI, Imaging, and Preventive Care Across the Region

Masataka Akiyama
President and CEO, Fujifilm Europe

In an exclusive conversation, Masataka Akiyama, President and CEO of Fujifilm Europe, outlines the company's enduring commitment to advancing healthcare technologies and services across Europe, the Middle East, and particularly in the UAE—a region he sees as a critical hub for medical innovation and growth.

Fujifilm's legacy in healthcare began nearly nine decades ago with the production of medical film in 1936. Since then, the company has evolved into a global pioneer in medical imaging and digital healthcare solutions. "Our first digital leap was in 1988 with the development of our own Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS)," says Mr. Akiyama. "That milestone set the foundation for the innovation we continue to drive today."

Fujifilm's new regional headquarters in Dubai marks a strategic move to bolster its presence in the Middle East. "Dubai is now a major innovation hub," Mr. Akiyama explains. "Opening our new office here allows us to better serve the region and to develop technologies tailored to its advanced healthcare infrastructure."

Central to this vision is the Fujifilm Technology Center in the UAE, which has already trained over 3,000 healthcare professionals since its inception three to four years ago. Mr. Akiyama sees the center not just as a training hub but as a feedback loop for innovation. "Training ensures our technologies are used to their full potential, and the hands-on interaction allows us to refine our solutions based on real-world needs."

Beyond imaging, Fujifilm is advancing the region's adoption of preventive healthcare through its NURA Active AI screening model, initially developed in Japan. "We believe early detection is key to healthier lives," Mr. Akiyama emphasizes. "NURA brings Japan's proven screening model to the Middle East, adapted to local health challenges."

A significant driver of Fujifilm's innovation has also been its strategic acquisitions. The integration of Hitachi's imaging division has broadened the company's capabilities, resulting in hybrid systems that combine Fujifilm's expertise in image processing with cutting-edge CT and MRI technologies. "Our new MRI system in Japan, which operates without helium, is an example of sustainable innovation that we aim to bring to this region," Mr. Akiyama notes.

As the healthcare sector globally contends with growing workloads, especially among physicians, Fujifilm is placing AI at the core of its strategic roadmap. "We want our technologies to ease the administrative burden on doctors," says Mr. Akiyama. "By automating tasks like image reading and reporting, we're enabling more personalized, efficient, and focused patient care."

Looking ahead, Fujifilm envisions its role as a key enabler in the shift toward AI-driven diagnostics and minimally invasive treatments across the Middle East. "Our commitment is not just to innovate but to collaborate—partnering with local stakeholders to deliver healthcare solutions that are both globally advanced and locally relevant," concludes Mr. Akiyama.

With its growing regional footprint and relentless pursuit of innovation, Fujifilm is well-positioned to shape the future of healthcare across the Middle East and beyond.

Rewriting the Fertility Story: Dr. Charles Badr on Empowerment, Awareness, and Innovation

By: Laique Khan

What are some of the most common infertility issues you have come across?
The most common causes of infertility I see include hormonal imbalances like PCOS, blocked fallopian tubes, endometriosis, low egg reserve and male factor infertility. In many cases, lifestyle factors such as stress, obesity, or delayed childbearing also play a role.

Can endometriosis or similar conditions be detected early enough to preserve fertility options?

Yes, and that's why early check-ups matter. If you often have painful periods, discomfort during intimacy, or ongoing pelvic pain, it could be a sign of endometriosis. The good news? We have ways to detect it early like simple scans or minor procedures and explore options like egg freezing or treatment to help protect your future fertility.

Do most women only discover fertility issues when trying to conceive, or are there signs earlier?
Many women only find out when they start trying. But there are often signs irregular periods, painful cycles, acne, hair growth, or hormonal issues that suggest something is off. The key is not to wait talk to your doctor early if something doesn't feel right.

Have you seen an increase in women under 30 choosing to freeze their eggs? If so, what's driving this trend?
Absolutely. More women are freezing their eggs in their late 20s and especially by 30s. Reasons include focusing on career, waiting for the right partner, or managing health issues like endometriosis. It's an empowering option that gives women more control over their future.

At what age do you recommend women consider egg freezing, and why? How does egg quality and quantity change over time?
The best time to consider egg freezing is between 27 and 35. Even in your 20s, egg quality starts to decline slowly, and by your mid-30s, both quality and quantity drop faster. Freezing eggs at a younger age gives you a better chance at a healthy pregnancy later.

At what age or stage should women with chronic reproductive health issues consider fertility preservation?
If you have conditions like endometriosis, PCOS, or need treatments like chemotherapy, it's wise to talk to your doctor in your 20s or early 30s. The

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Dr. Charles Badr Nagy Rafael
Consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist and Master Surgeon of Endometriosis, Medcare Women and Children Hospital

In this exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Dr. Charles Badr Nagy Rafael, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist and Master Surgeon of Endometriosis at Medcare Women and Children Hospital, emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis, personalized treatment, and compassionate care in overcoming infertility.

Dr. Charles highlights the importance of identifying underlying causes, such as endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and hormonal imbalances, all of which can impact fertility. With advancements in minimally invasive surgery and reproductive technologies, many cases are now treatable with great success.

He encourages open dialogue, education, and timely medical intervention to improve outcomes and support emotional well-being.

As more couples seek answers, raising awareness serves as a powerful reminder that fertility challenges are a medical condition – not a personal failure – and support and solutions are available.

He encourages individuals not to delay seeking help, noting that proactive care can preserve fertility and improve outcomes.

As the healthcare sector prioritizes infertility awareness, the message is clear: it's time to remove stigma, promote understanding, and offer hope to those on their journey to parenthood.

earlier we plan, the more options you'll have.

Do you think there's enough awareness among younger women about the biological clock and fertility risks?

It's getting better, but there's still a long way to go. With all the talk about IVF and egg freezing, many young women think they can hit pause on fertility but biology still plays by its own rules. Egg quality naturally declines with age, even if you feel perfectly healthy. That's why we encourage open, honest conversations early on so you can plan your future with confidence, not surprise.

What new perspectives are shaping today's fertility conversation compared to 5 or 10 years ago?

Today, there's more openness and less stigma. Women are asking questions earlier, exploring options like egg freezing, and understanding that fertility is a part of their overall health not just something to think about when they are ready to have kids.

What does Medcare Women & Children Hospital offer for women struggling with endometriosis and infertility?

At Medcare Women & Children Hospital, we understand how deeply endometriosis can impact a woman's ability to conceive. As a consultant obstetrician & gynecologist, the first and most important step is an accurate diagnosis and we are proud to offer patients over 90% diagnostic accuracy, helping us truly identify the root cause of their symptoms.

What sets us apart is our multidisciplinary approach. Women are supported by a dedicated team that includes fertility specialists, colorectal surgeons, radiologists, urologists, and pain management experts all working together to create a personalized and effective treatment plan.

We are also proud to be accredited by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) in the U.S. as a Center of Excellence for Endometriosis, a recognition of our commitment to advanced care, surgical expertise, and patient outcomes. At Medcare Women & Children, you are not alone we are here to guide and support you every step of the way.

Düsseldorf: Redefining Medical Tourism in the Heart of Europe

By: Laique Khan

Düsseldorf, the capital of North Rhine Westphalia, has emerged as one of Germany's top medical tourism destinations for patients from the Middle East, CIS countries, and beyond. With an unmatched concentration of world class health facilities, cutting edge diagnostics, bespoke international patient services, and luxurious urban lifestyle, it positions itself as a compelling alternative to Berlin or Munich.

A City Built Around Health Excellence

Düsseldorf boasts 15 major hospitals, over 80 specialized clinics, and more than 3,000 practicing physicians, covering virtually every medical discipline—including oncology, cardiology, orthopaedics, dermatology, ENT, plastic surgery, reproductive medicine and more. Among them, the University Hospital Düsseldorf, teaching center of Heinrich Heine University, treats around 45,000 inpatients and 300,000 outpatients annually, with globally ranked gastroenterology and oncology units. What truly elevates Düsseldorf is the density of excellence within a compact geography—earning it the nickname "Medical Valley on the Rhine" and positioning it alongside Munich and Berlin as a top-tier healthcare hub.

Health Tourism Düsseldorf, a municipal initiative, offers an information platform connecting international patients with top local providers in specialties like cardiology and oncology, while coordinating travel, accommodation, and concierge services for a complete experience.

Excellence in Medical Care & Innovation

What sets Düsseldorf apart is not just quantity but quality. Clinics integrate the latest research findings into practice, offering personalized treatment plans and cutting edge technologies—such as robotic surgery and 3D printed medical aids—for faster, more precise outcomes. The city is particularly strong in cardiology, cancer therapies, orthopaedics, bariatric surgery, endocrinology and prevention. Its University Hospital has significant academic ties and is a hub for innovation and training.

Focus on International & Middle East Region Patients

Many facilities in Düsseldorf offer international patient services, including multilingual support and coordinated travel and medical plans. The city's compact layout ("die Zehn Minuten Stadt") ensures airport, hotels, and clinics are within a ten-minute drive. Patients from the Gulf, CIS, and China frequently seek specialized care, often privately funding treatments averaging €9,000–12,000.

Seamless Care Ecosystem & Service Partners

Health Tourism Düsseldorf offers seamless medical travel, coordinating hospital transport, airport transfers, luxury accommodations, translation, and concierge services. Specialized travel agencies handle visas, medical scheduling, wellness extras, and post-treatment care for Middle East patients.

A City That Cares: Short Distances, High Comfort

Düsseldorf's compact urban layout allows swift transfers—clinics, hotels, shopping and dining are all close by. Patients and their families benefit from short travel times and low stress, critical factors during recovery. The city earned high rankings for liveability, including sixth place in Mercer's global index, further reinforcing a calming wellness environment.

Lifestyle & Leisure: Healing Beyond the Clinic

Medical visitors often extend their stays for leisure. Düsseldorf offers world-class shopping—especially on the famous Königsallee ("Kö")—a vibrant culinary scene, cultural landmarks, parks, riverside promenades and museums. These enrich the stay for patients and accompanying family members. Tourism and medical care merge harmoniously: as medical travelers stay in one of over 240 hotels, they also support boutique retail, cuisine, and city tours—creating positive ripple effects for the local economy.

Specialist Expertise & Reputation

Düsseldorf is widely known as Europe's capital of cosmetic surgery, with world-renowned specialists attracting patients from the Middle East, CIS and beyond. Mayo level dermatologists, plastic surgeons, cardiac specialists and regenerative physicians operate extensively in the city, offering procedures ranging from aesthetic surgery to complex stereotactic oncology and heart interventions.

The University Hospital (UKD) further strengthens the medical cluster, serving tens of thousands of inpatients and outpatients annually across more than 30 clinics and institutes.

Events & Industry Leadership

Düsseldorf hosts prominent health tourism events, including the annual Health Tourism Forum and Health Tourism Summit. In October 2024, the Forum convened experts in international patient mediation, including members from Health & Care Medical Prevention, hospital administration, hotels and travel agencies—fostering collaboration and highlighting Düsseldorf's appeal as a medical destination.

What It Means for the Middle East Market

For patients from the GCC and the broader MENA region, Düsseldorf offers everything one seeks in medical tourism: German standard medical care, international clinician teams, full service travel logistics, luxury hospitality, rapid access and a healing urban environment. Understanding the cultural and linguistic needs of Gulf patients—such as language support, dietary preferences, privacy and family accommodation—is central to its appeal.

Düsseldorf delivers a world class healthcare tourism experience anchored in medical excellence, seamless logistics and urban sophistication. Through the Health Tourism Düsseldorf platform, international patients are connected with elite German medical providers—and enjoy fully coordinated, high comfort care. Especially for the Middle East market, Düsseldorf stands as an outstanding choice for combining trusted German medicine with cultural sensitivity, convenience and upscale leisure.

Dimitri Belov is the Head of Health Marketing at Visit Düsseldorf and Düsseldorf Convention, municipal subsidiaries, dedicated to promoting the city as a global destination. With over a decade of experience in strategic marketing, MICE, and tourism, Dimitri has played a central role in positioning Düsseldorf as a hub for world-class medical services. Since joining Visit Düsseldorf in 2016, he has held key roles, including Deputy Head of Market Development, and officially stepped into his current leadership role in March 2022. His work bridges healthcare, innovation, and international collaboration—building strong partnerships with leading medical institutions and creating comprehensive strategies to attract medical travelers, particularly from the Middle East and other global regions.

In an insightful discussion with Mediworld Middle East, Dimitri Belov, shares how Düsseldorf is transforming into a premier destination for medical tourism, especially for international patients seeking high-quality care, innovation, and comfort.

Belov highlights the "Ten-Minute City" concept as a defining advantage for medical tourists, offering unparalleled convenience by placing clinics, hospitals, and hotels within a 10-minute radius of the airport and city center.

Belov shares that Düsseldorf's leadership in research and innovation, evidenced by over 500 active clinical trials, directly benefits medical tourists.

Dimitri Belov emphasizes Düsseldorf's commitment to culturally sensitive care through multilingual support and partnerships that address diverse cultural, dietary, and religious patient needs.

This integrated approach, championed by Visit Düsseldorf, makes the city a top choice for those seeking world-class medical care in a welcoming, patient-focused environment.

How does Düsseldorf's "Ten-Minute City" concept enhance the medical experience for international patients?

Düsseldorf Health's "Ten-Minute City" concept significantly enhances the experience for international patients by ensuring that convenience and efficiency are at the heart of their medical journey. In fact, the Medical Tourism Experience begins the moment patients arrive at Düsseldorf International Airport. From there, it takes just 10 minutes to reach the city center and their hotel—strategically located amidst cultural landmarks and premier shopping destinations. This central location means that Düsseldorf's most renowned hospitals, including the University Hospital, St. Martinus, and VKKD facilities, are all within a 10-minute drive. Even more conveniently, many check-up and plastic surgery clinics are either within walking distance or located directly in the hotel itself. This seamless accessibility allows international patients to focus entirely on their health and recovery, without the stress of long commutes or complicated logistics.

How does Düsseldorf's strong research and innovation ecosystem, with over 500 clinical trials, enhance care for medical tourists and involve Düsseldorf Health?

Düsseldorf's commitment to research and innovation—evident in its more than 500 active clinical trials—directly enhances the quality of care available to international patients. This strong research foundation ensures that medical tourists benefit from the latest advancements in diagnostics, therapies, and medical technologies, including cutting-edge treatments in fields such as oncology, cardiology, and robotic surgery. Düsseldorf Health Tourism by Visit Düsseldorf plays a vital role in connecting international patients with these innovations. It acts as a central platform that not only promotes the city's world-class healthcare infrastructure but also facilitates access to specialized clinics, Centers of Excellence, and research-driven hospitals. By offering multilingual support, curated medical travel services, and partnerships with top-tier institutions, Düsseldorf Health Tourism ensures that patients receive personalized, state-of-the-art care in a welcoming and well-organized environment.

How does Düsseldorf Health ensure culturally sensitive care and support for international patients throughout their medical journey?

Düsseldorf's rich cultural landscape is a key element in its appeal to international patients, and Düsseldorf Health Tourism by Visit Düsseldorf ensures that culturally sensitive care is a cornerstone of the medical experience. The city welcomes patients from around the world with a wide range of support systems designed to meet diverse cultural and linguistic needs. Düsseldorf Health Tourism provides multilingual assistance, including materials and guidance in languages such as English, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, and Dutch. This ensures that patients feel understood and supported throughout their medical journey. The program also collaborates with a network of luxury hotels and healthcare providers that are experienced in catering to international guests, offering personalized services that respect cultural preferences—from dietary requirements to religious considerations. Moreover, the city's medical institutions are well-versed in international standards of care and often work with medical tourism facilitators who specialize in culturally sensitive patient management. These facilitators help bridge any cultural or communication gaps, ensuring that every patient receives respectful, dignified, and personalized treatment. By combining world-class healthcare with a welcoming, inclusive environment, Düsseldorf Health Tourism creates a seamless and reassuring experience for patients from all backgrounds.

How do Düsseldorf Health's partnerships with transport and travel providers enhance the medical tourism experience from arrival to recovery?

Düsseldorf Health Tourism by Visit Düsseldorf collaborates with a wide network of service partners – including transport companies, travel organizers, and premium hotels—to create a seamless and stress-free experience for international patients from arrival to recovery. From the moment patients land at Düsseldorf International Airport, they benefit from coordinated airport transfers and concierge-level transport services that ensure quick and comfortable access to their accommodations and medical appointments. These partnerships help eliminate logistical challenges, allowing patients to focus entirely on their treatment and well-being. Travel organizers and partner agencies also play a key role by offering tailored medical travel packages that include visa support, multilingual assistance, and personalized itineraries. This ensures that every aspect of the patient's journey – from pre-arrival planning to post-treatment recovery – is handled with care and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, Düsseldorf Health Tourism works closely with luxury hotels that are experienced in hosting medical guests. Many of these hotels are located near top medical facilities and even offer in-house medical check-ups or wellness services, further enhancing the recovery experience in a comfortable, supportive environment.

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Al Qassimi Hospital Performs Middle East's First Pulmonary Hypertension Treatments Using Catheter Ablation Technology

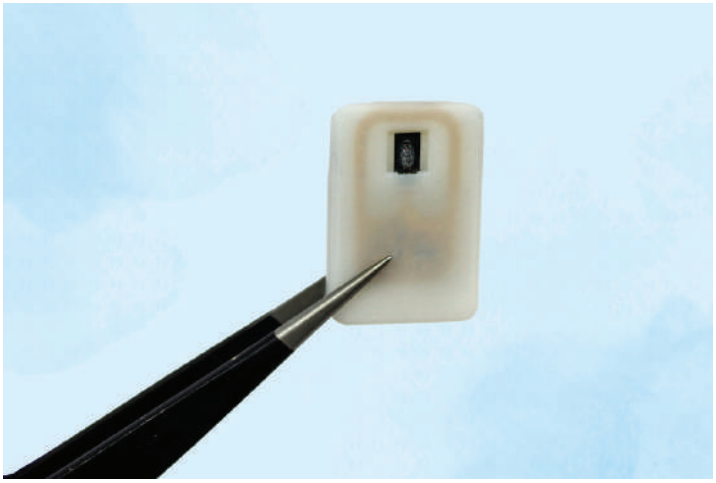
In a major regional breakthrough, the Cardiology Centre at Al Qassimi Hospital, part of the Emirates Health Services (EHS), has successfully performed three advanced procedures, known as Pulmonary Artery Denervation (PADN), to treat pulmonary hypertension using catheter ablation. This cutting-edge intervention marks a transformative shift in addressing the chronic condition, which previously relied on intensive drug therapies with limited outcomes.

The new technique, utilized in approximately 1,000 cases worldwide, offers a more effective, economical, and sustainable treatment alternative for patients battling chronic symptoms that severely impact their quality of life. The procedures were conducted by a local medical team from Al Qassimi Hospital's Cardiology Center, supported by experts from China. All patients were discharged the following day in stable condition, with no reported complications.

Dr. Arif Al Nooryani, Director of Al Qassimi Hospital in Sharjah, commented: "The adoption of catheter ablation for pulmonary hypertension represents a practical leap toward enhancing the lives of patients with complex chronic conditions, who previously had limited treatment options. Introducing such advanced procedures underscores our commitment to accelerating the integration of innovative therapies and empowering local medical teams to deliver world-class precision care." He emphasized that these successes reinforce patient trust and bolster the UAE's leadership in building a healthcare model focused on tangible outcomes, aligning with the "We the UAE 2031" vision and the UAE Centennial Plan 2071.

This milestone adds to Al Qassimi Hospital's legacy as a leading cardiac care hub under EHS. By adopting state-of-the-art technologies and sourcing skilled national professionals, the hospital continues to strengthen the UAE's competitiveness in advanced healthcare regionally and globally.

Implantable Device Offers New Lifeline for Diabetics Facing Low Blood Sugar



A new implantable device developed by MIT engineers could revolutionize emergency care for people with Type 1 diabetes. Designed to prevent life-threatening hypoglycemia—when blood sugar levels drop dangerously low—the device holds a powdered dose of glucagon that can be released under the skin without the need for manual injection.

About the size of a quarter, the implantable reservoir is made from 3D-printed polymer and sealed with a shape-memory alloy that changes shape when heated. Once triggered—either manually or automatically via a wireless signal—it releases the powdered glucagon, which is stable for long-term storage, into the bloodstream. This release rapidly reverses low blood sugar symptoms, especially in situations where patients may be unaware of their condition, such as during sleep.

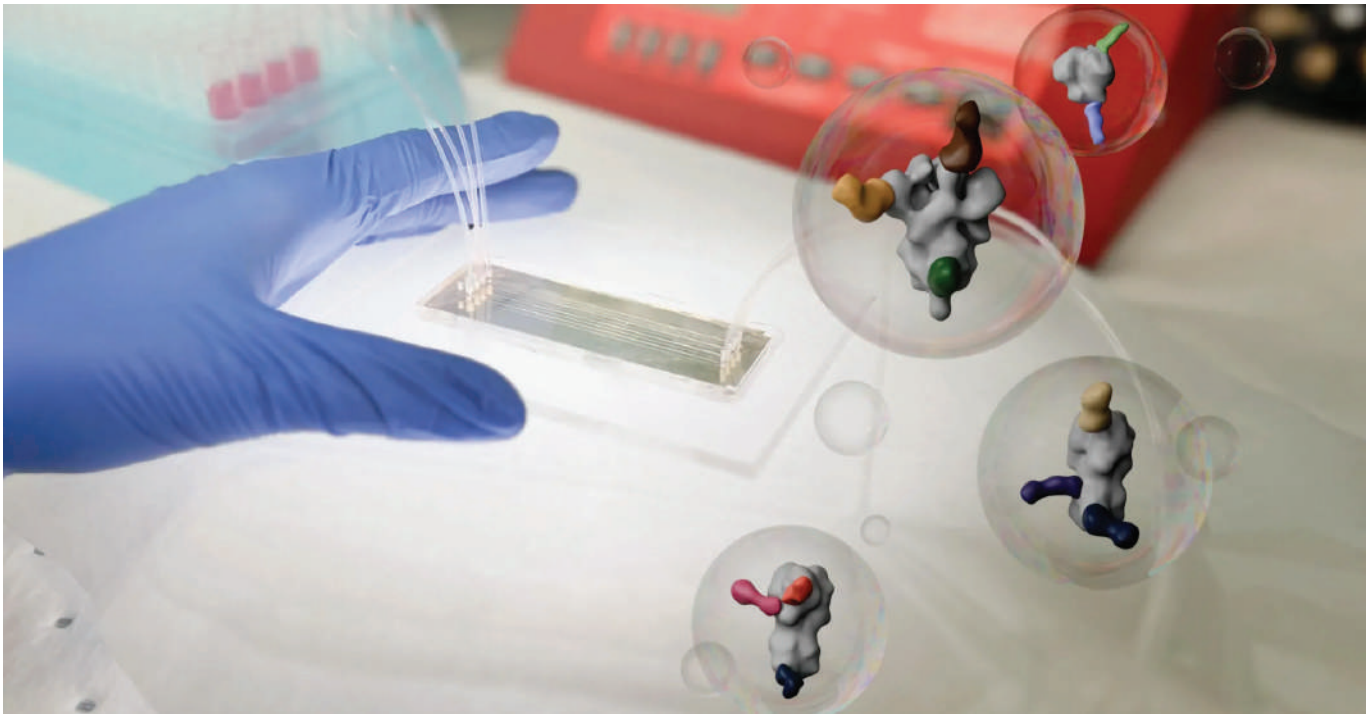
"This is a small emergency device that can stay under the skin and act instantly," said Dr. Daniel Anderson, senior author and MIT professor. "Our goal is to reduce the fear of hypoglycemia, especially in children and caregivers."

The system is designed to interface with continuous glucose monitors, allowing automatic drug delivery when glucose drops below a safe threshold. In preclinical trials on diabetic mice, the device successfully stabilized blood sugar within 10 minutes of activation.

Researchers also tested the device with epinephrine, a life-saving drug used for heart attacks and severe allergic reactions, showing similar effectiveness.

The team now aims to extend the implant's duration from several weeks to a year or more and plans to begin clinical trials within three years. The research was funded by the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, the National Institutes of Health, a JDRF postdoctoral fellowship, and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering. This work was carried out, in part, through the use of MIT.nano's facilities. This innovation could eventually serve as a platform for delivering other emergency drugs, setting a new standard in wearable medicine.

From Weeklong Tests to 90 Minutes: How a Tiny Chip Could Redefine Vaccine Research



A team of scientists at Scripps Research has developed a revolutionary microchip that can analyze how the human immune system responds to viruses—using just a drop of blood. This cutting-edge technology, called microfluidic EM-based polyclonal epitope mapping (mEM), compresses what used to take an entire week of lab work into just 90 minutes. It could transform the way researchers track immune responses and develop vaccines.

Published on June 3, 2025, in Nature Biomedical Engineering, the study details how mEM offers researchers a rapid, high-resolution view of how antibodies recognize and bind to viruses such as SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and HIV. Most importantly, it does this with only four microliters of blood—a fraction of the sample volume required in traditional methods.

"This allows us to capture a snapshot of antibody activity as it evolves in real time after a vaccination or infection," said Dr. Andrew Ward, professor at Scripps Research and the study's senior author. "We've never had this kind of speed or required so little blood before."

When a person is exposed to a virus or receives a vaccine, their immune system generates a variety of antibodies—some of which are highly effective at neutralizing the virus, while others are less so. Identifying which antibodies are most protective, and which parts of the virus they bind to, is key to creating more effective vaccines.

"If we can pinpoint the most protective antibodies, we can design vaccines that specifically trigger their production," explained Leigh Sewall, a graduate student at Scripps Research and lead author of the study.

Back in 2018, Ward's lab introduced electron microscopy-based polyclonal epitope mapping (EMPEM)—a powerful method to visualize how antibodies attach to viral proteins. However, it required significant volumes of blood and took nearly a week to produce results.

The need for faster, more efficient tools became especially urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We knew we had to build something new from the ground up," said Alba Torrents de la Peña, a staff scientist at Scripps Research who co-led the project.

The result was mEM—a microfluidic chip system designed to streamline the process. Here's how it works: a tiny amount of blood is passed through a reusable chip where viral proteins are fixed to a surface. As the blood flows through, antibodies bind to those proteins. The chip then gently releases the viral protein-antibody complexes, which are prepared for imaging using standard electron microscopy. The entire process, from blood input to imaging preparation, takes just 90 minutes.

To test its capability, the team used mEM on blood samples from humans and mice exposed to viruses or vaccines, including influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and HIV. Not only was the process faster than EMPEM, it was also more sensitive. In fact, it revealed previously undetected antibody binding sites on coronavirus and influenza proteins—offering deeper insight into immune responses.

In a key experiment, the team tracked how antibodies changed over time in individual mice post-vaccination, something previously impossible due to the blood volume requirements of EMPEM. "Being able to track antibody evolution in a single animal over time opens up exciting new avenues," said Sewall.

Looking ahead, the researchers aim to automate and scale up the system to process dozens of samples simultaneously. They believe mEM could become a standard tool in vaccine development, especially for emerging pathogens like coronaviruses and even complex diseases like malaria.

"This system is invaluable when working with limited sample volumes or when early results are needed fast," added Torrents de la Peña. "As we simplify and streamline the technology, we hope it becomes widely accessible."

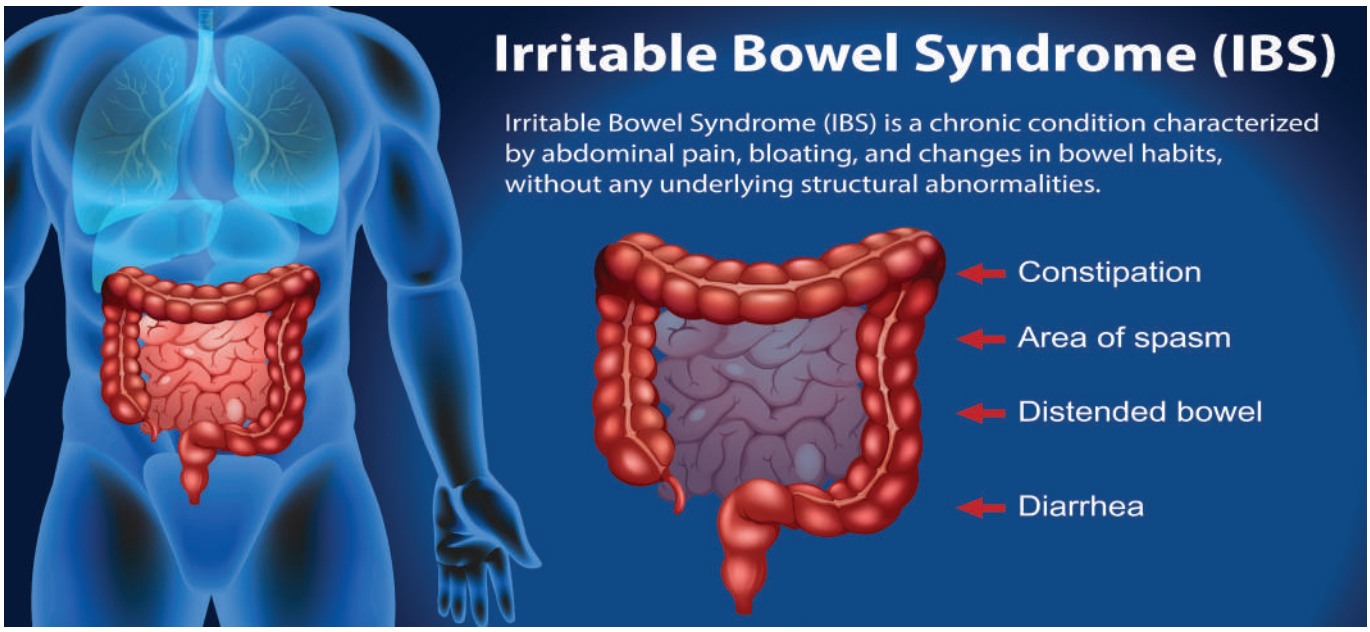
The study, titled "Microfluidics Combined with Electron Microscopy for Rapid and High-Throughput Mapping of Antibody-Viral Glycoprotein Complexes," included collaborators from the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard, as well as Yale University School of Medicine.

Funding was provided by the National Institutes of Health (grants AI136621, AI089992, and AI144462) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (INV-002916).

Source: Scripps Research Institute.

MEDIWORLD Middle East

Gut Hormone INSL5 May Explain 40% of Chronic Diarrhea Cases- and Offer a Cure



A newly uncovered role of a little-known gut hormone may help explain why millions suffer from chronic diarrhea, often misdiagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhea (IBS-D). In a groundbreaking study, scientists at the University of Cambridge have identified the hormone Insulin-Like Peptide 5 (INSL5) as a key player in a condition called bile acid diarrhea—a disorder that may affect up to 40% of those with IBS-D symptoms.

Published in the journal Gut, the research sheds light on a biological mechanism long overlooked in clinical settings and offers new hope in the form of a potential blood test and drug treatment—including an existing anti-nausea medication.

A Hidden Culprit Behind Misdiagnosed IBS

When we eat, the liver releases bile acids to help break down fats in the small intestine. These bile acids are typically reabsorbed before reaching the large intestine. However, in people with bile acid malabsorption (also known as bile acid diarrhea), this process fails, allowing bile acids to spill into the colon, where they cause irritation and sudden, watery diarrhea. While it affects about 1 in 100 people, the condition is often overlooked and misdiagnosed as IBS due to the absence of a standard clinical test.

Experts estimate that up to one-third of IBS-D patients actually suffer from undiagnosed bile acid diarrhea.

Enter INSL5: The "Poison Sensor" Hormone

Previous animal studies suggested a link between chronic diarrhea and the gut hormone INSL5, produced by specialized cells at the far end of the colon and rectum. These cells appear to release INSL5 when exposed to irritants like bile acids. Now, researchers at Cambridge's Institute of Metabolic Science have confirmed that this phenomenon also occurs in humans—thanks to a newly developed antibody test by pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly, which can detect tiny amounts of INSL5 in blood samples.

Proof in Human Trials

In an earlier study at the University of Adelaide, healthy volunteers were given bile acid enemas to examine the gut's response. The treatment unexpectedly triggered diarrhea. When Cambridge scientists revisited blood samples from that trial, they discovered a sharp spike in INSL5 levels immediately following the enema. Crucially, higher INSL5 levels correlated with a faster onset of diarrhea, confirming its role as a trigger.

Further analysis of patient samples from Professor Julian Walters at Imperial College London revealed elevated INSL5 levels in those with diagnosed bile acid diarrhea, while healthy volunteers showed almost no trace of the hormone. The more INSL5 present, the looser the stool consistency, establishing a direct biological link.

A Diagnostic and Therapeutic Breakthrough?

Lead researcher Dr. Chris Bannon described the findings as a "very exciting discovery" with multiple implications. Not only does it explain the symptoms experienced by many IBS-D sufferers, but it also opens the door to a simple blood test that could finally diagnose bile acid diarrhea accurately.

"Chronic diarrhea is difficult to diagnose," said Dr. Bannon. "Doctors often rule out food intolerances or infections, but gut hormones haven't been given much attention. This research shows they play a significant role in both digestive health and disease."

Repurposing an Existing Drug

Even more compelling is the potential for an existing medication to treat the condition. Dr. Bannon's team examined samples from a clinical study led by Professor Robin Spiller at the University of Nottingham, where IBS patients were given ondansetron, a common anti-nausea drug. In mouse studies, ondansetron has been shown to block the effects of INSL5.

The Cambridge analysis found that about 40% of those patients had elevated INSL5 levels—despite not having bile acid malabsorption—and they responded best to ondansetron. Though the exact mechanism remains unclear, the findings suggest ondansetron—or similar drugs—could offer relief to a subset of IBS-D patients who currently have few effective options. One known side effect of ondansetron is constipation, which may counterbalance the hormone's effects.

The Body's Alarm System Gone Rogue

So why would the body produce a hormone that causes diarrhea? According to Dr. Bannon, INSL5 likely evolved as a defense mechanism—a "poison sensor" designed to flush irritants like bile acids out of the colon.

"Bile acids aren't meant to be in the colon—they're irritating and toxic to the gut microbiome," he explained. "It makes sense that the body has a way to detect them and expel them. The problem arises when this sensor is triggered too often."

The research team, led by Professors Fiona Gribble and Frank Reimann, now plans to investigate the hormone further, aiming to refine diagnostic tests and develop more targeted therapies.

The study was funded by the Medical Research Council, Wellcome, and the NIHR Cambridge Biomedical Research Centre, with industry collaboration from Eli Lilly.

WHX Dubai and WHX Labs Dubai to Combine in 2026 to Form the World's Largest Healthcare Event

WHX Dubai (formerly Arab Health) and WHX Labs Dubai (previously Medlab Middle East) are set to unite under one global platform in 2026, as Informa announces the launch of the world's largest healthcare event. Taking place from 9-13 February 2026, the two flagship events will run simultaneously, bringing together over 270,000 healthcare professionals from 180 countries and more than 4,800 exhibitors. This landmark event will transform Dubai into a global healthcare hub, positioning it as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and medical advancement.

For decades, these events have positioned Dubai at the center of global healthcare discussions. Co-timed in 2026, under the patronage of the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention, they will combine to create the world's largest healthcare event – a city-wide opportunity for dealmaking, networking and knowledge-sharing that addresses universal healthcare and laboratory challenges.

WHX Dubai will be held from 9-12 February at Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC) in Expo City Dubai, marking the first time in its 50-year history that the event will take place outside the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

The show will attract an international audience and serve as a global platform for innovation, enabling exhibitors to showcase solutions across nine diverse product sectors, including medical devices, imaging and diagnostics, and healthcare infrastructure.

The 50th edition of the event, which took place earlier this year, generated a record-breaking USD 2.57 billion in business value, with each exhibitor experiencing an average impact of USD 2.14 million.

WHX Dubai 2026 is set to advance global health with a forward-thinking programme that includes seven CME-accredited conferences and over 250 speakers. This edition will introduce four new certified boot camps and three dedicated stages: the Future X Stage for cutting-edge ideas; the Frontiers Stage, which will present the latest advancements in science, wellness, and life sciences; and the Visionary Stage, where global leaders will share insightful perspectives on investment, leadership, artificial intelligence, and ESG.

As it celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2026, WHX Labs Dubai will be held from 10-13 February at DWTC. Under the banner of "25 Years of Laboratory Innovation: Uniting Communities for Better Health", the event will showcase excellence in laboratories, diagnostics and precision medicine.

Last year, the WHX Labs Dubai generated USD 621 million in business. It served as a platform connecting key buyers, government ministries, and decision-makers who are driving diagnostics-related innovation and investment in the Middle East.

WHX Labs Dubai will highlight the latest advancements from across the medical lab ecosystem through eight product pillars. Additionally, the 25th Annual Laboratory Management and Medicine Congress will feature eight CME-accredited scientific conference tracks with 250 global thought leaders and laboratory specialists. Attendees can also engage in industry-defining conversations at the WHX Labs Roundtables and participate in two new clinician conferences: the Precision Health Global Forum and the Antimicrobial Resistance Leadership Global Summit.

Solenne Singer, Senior Vice President at Informa Markets, said: "WHX Dubai and WHX Labs Dubai are both well-established events with a proven track record of advancing knowledge and trade at both regional and global levels. We are delighted to host them concurrently to form the world's largest healthcare event, which will transform Dubai into a hub for the global healthcare ecosystem for five enlightening days.

"Dubai's unique position will enable bold ideas and breakthroughs to cross borders rapidly, accelerating the spread of solutions from one market to another while reinforcing the UAE's status as an international centre for healthcare transformation. By hosting the world's largest healthcare event, our attendees will make a significant contribution to future advances in medical excellence and innovation in the UAE and beyond."

MEDIWORLD Middle East

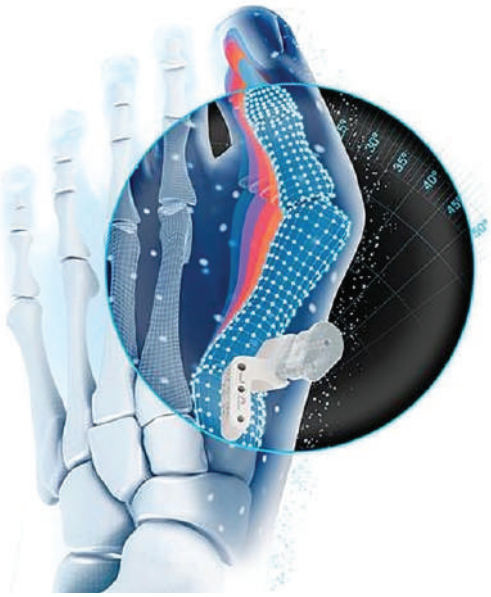
Johnson & Johnson Introduces AI-Powered VIRTUGUIDE™ for Advanced Bunion Surgery

Johnson & Johnson MedTech, a global leader in orthopedic innovation, has launched the VIRTUGUIDE™ System, an AI-powered, patient-specific solution designed to support Lapidus procedures—a surgical technique used to correct bunions by fusing the first metatarsal and medial cuneiform bones. Developed in collaboration with PeekMed®, the system leverages advanced pre-operative planning software to evaluate each patient's condition and provide tailored correction recommendations.

Bunions are among the most common foot problems, affecting nearly one-third of adults in the U.S., yet traditional Lapidus surgery to treat the condition is often challenging. The VIRTUGUIDE™ AI Lapidus System addresses this by enabling a streamlined approach and reducing surgical complexity. Early users estimated procedural time savings of at least 30 minutes when using the system compared to their previous technique.

"VIRTUGUIDE™ has completely transformed my approach to bunion surgery, making a complex Lapidus procedure significantly easier and faster. Since adopting VIRTUGUIDE™, my surgical corrections have been spot-on—what I plan preoperatively is exactly what I achieve in the operating room," said Michael Campbell, M.D., FAAOS, a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon at Atlantic Orthopaedic Specialists. "This improved accuracy leads to better outcomes, and the ability to present the pre-operative plan to my patients helps address their questions and ease their concerns."

"The VIRTUGUIDE™ System is a pivotal advancement in AI-powered surgical precision for treating bunion deformities—a common, painful, and potentially debilitating condition affecting nearly one-third of Americans," said Oray Boston, Worldwide President of Trauma, Extremities, Craniomaxillofacial, Animal Health and Sports Medicine, Orthopaedics, Johnson & Johnson MedTech. "This milestone marks an important step forward, as VIRTUGUIDE™ becomes the latest addition to our growing portfolio of VELYS™ Enabling Tech solutions. By automating surgical planning and tailoring instrumentation to each patient, the system helps reduce complexity in the operating room and helps surgeons to achieve the intended correction."



ADIA to Invest USD 200 Million in India's Medical Device Firm Meril

ADIA – The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, has announced a strategic investment of USD 200 million in Meril, India's fast-growing medical device company valued at USD 6.6 billion. This landmark investment underscores ADIA's confidence in India's expanding healthcare sector and Meril's potential to become a global leader in medical technology.

Meril, headquartered in Vapi, Gujarat, has rapidly emerged as a prominent innovator in the medical device industry with a broad portfolio spanning cardiovascular devices, orthopedics, and surgical equipment. The company's commitment to cutting-edge research and development, alongside its robust manufacturing capabilities, has positioned it as a vital player in India's healthcare ecosystem and an increasingly influential exporter to global markets.

The capital infusion from ADIA will enable Meril to accelerate its product innovation pipeline, expand manufacturing capacity, and strengthen its international footprint. This partnership aligns with India's national vision to boost domestic medical device production and reduce import dependency, thereby enhancing healthcare accessibility and affordability across the country.

Dr. Arun Garg, Founder and Chairman of Meril, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating that the company is honored to welcome ADIA as a strategic partner. He noted that the investment validates Meril's vision to pioneer advanced medical technologies aimed at improving patient outcomes globally. With ADIA's support, Meril plans to accelerate growth and innovation, driving transformative change in healthcare.

Ahmed Al Dhaheri, Senior Managing Director at ADIA, highlighted that India's healthcare market offers compelling long-term growth opportunities. He noted that Meril's strong leadership, technology-driven approach, and alignment with India's healthcare priorities position the company as an ideal investment. He expressed ADIA's commitment to supporting Meril's journey toward becoming a global medical device powerhouse.

Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi Performs Life-Saving Double Lung Transplant for Guatemalan Patient

Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi has successfully performed a double lung transplant on a 66-year-old patient from Guatemala, reinforcing its global reputation for advanced, life-saving care. Oscar Romero López Guillén, diagnosed with end-stage pulmonary fibrosis, had sought treatment across four continents before being referred to the hospital through the Cleveland Clinic global network.

After exhausting all options in Latin America, South Asia, Europe, and the U.S., Oscar arrived in Abu Dhabi dependent on oxygen 24/7 and facing a bleak future. Within weeks of evaluation, the hospital's multidisciplinary lung transplant team identified him as a suitable candidate, and a matching donor became available soon after. In early 2025, Oscar underwent a successful double lung transplant and was discharged just 10 days later, breathing independently and regaining normal function.

"This is more than just a clinical success," said Dr. Georges-Pascal Haber, Chief Executive Officer at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi. "It reflects our commitment to providing world-class care to patients regardless of nationality, supported by the UAE's Hayat organ donation program."

Dr. Usman Ahmad, Chair of Thoracic Surgery and Lung Transplantation, noted Oscar's remarkable recovery and praised the hospital's coordinated approach: "From the operating room to post-operative care, our multidisciplinary team delivered seamless, high-quality treatment."

Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi is home to one of the region's most comprehensive lung transplant programs and is among the few globally welcoming a growing number of international patients. In 2024, the hospital recorded a 35% increase in international patient volume, with visitors from the USA, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Bahrain, and Kuwait.

Now living in the UAE for follow-up care, Oscar expressed deep gratitude: "After years of being tethered to oxygen, I feel reborn. Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi gave me my life back."

Oscar's story highlights the hospital's growing impact as a global hub for complex care, aligning with the UAE's vision to lead in medical innovation, access, and excellence.

Siemens Healthineers and Prisma Health Deepen Partnership with $50M Radiation Therapy Investment

Siemens Healthineers and Greenville-based Prisma Health are expanding their Value Partnership to enhance cancer care in South Carolina and Tennessee. As part of a USD 50 million investment, Prisma Health will acquire the Ethos adaptive radiotherapy system from Varian, a Siemens Healthineers company. This advanced AI-powered technology enables real-time adjustments to treatment plans, tailoring therapy to tumor and anatomical changes while minimizing damage to surrounding healthy tissue—offering patients more precise, personalized care.

In 2021, Siemens Healthineers and Prisma Health entered into a 10-year value partnership to improve care, promote innovation, and develop the local workforce. The expanded relationship will integrate next-generation technology and specialized clinical oncology and professional services, new tools and time-saving workflows. The goal of the Value Partnership is to advance more personalized, efficient, and accessible care for the communities Prisma Health serves.

"Since entering into the Value Partnership with Siemens Healthineers, Prisma Health has expanded access to imaging services and introduced new technologies and care locations to better serve our communities," said Clarence Sevillian, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Prisma Health. "Our priority is ensuring that patients have access to care that is both compassionate and informed by the latest clinical insights. This next phase of the partnership reflects a continued spirit of collaboration, integrating advanced oncology tools and support services that may help streamline operations and enhance the patient experience."

Added John Kowal, president and head of the Americas at Siemens Healthineers: "Working with Prisma Health to establish a full continuum of cancer care—from screening and diagnosis through survivorship—is an enormous point of pride for our organization. Combining the power of diagnostic imaging, radiation therapy, and post-treatment monitoring with professional services to manage complex oncology operations helps to ensure that advances in patient care are consistent and sustainable over time."

Gulf Capital Sells Stake in ART Fertility Clinics' Middle East Business to IVI-RMA Global

Gulf Capital, one of the largest private equity firms investing from the GCC to the rest of Asia, has announced that it has sold its majority stake in ART Fertility Clinics' Middle East operations to IVI-RMA Global, the world's largest assisted reproduction group. The transaction is expected to generate a significant return on invested capital, making it one of Gulf Capital's most successful exits to date.

Since its acquisition in 2020, ART Fertility Clinics has undergone a period of significant growth and transformation. Under Gulf Capital's ownership, ART expanded from a UAE-focused business into a regional fertility platform with 15 clinics, including 3 in the UAE, 1 in Saudi, and 11 in India. The scope of the transaction includes the clinics located in UAE and Saudi Arabia, while the India operation will remain under the ownership of Gulf Capital. In the Middle East alone, ART Fertility Clinics has delivered substantial revenue and EBITDA growth since 2020, with profitability quadrupling over the last five years. This strong financial performance has been underpinned by ART's reputation for clinical excellence, rapid regional expansion and some of the highest success rates in IVF treatments across the region.

Dr. Karim El Solh, Co-Founder and CEO of Gulf Capital, highlighted the firm's role in transforming ART Fertility into a regional leader in reproductive medicine. Under Gulf Capital's stewardship, the company expanded significantly, launched a state-of-the-art genetic testing lab in Abu Dhabi, and published over 220 medical studies. Its strong performance and global sale underscore Gulf Capital's ability to grow and exit high-value healthcare platforms successfully.

Suresh Soni, CEO of ART Fertility Clinics, emphasized the clinic's reputation for clinical excellence and exceptional patient outcomes. He credited the success to scientific rigor, a leading medical team headed by Prof. Dr. Human Fatemi, and Gulf Capital's support in regional expansion and genetic services. He expressed enthusiasm about joining IVI-RMA's global platform to further serve the GCC community.

Hazem Abu Khalaf, Managing Director and Head of Healthcare Investments at Gulf Capital, highlighted ART Fertility as a strong example of the firm's ability to drive growth in high-impact sectors. He noted the platform's transformation into a profitable, scalable, and clinically advanced business, and expressed confidence in its continued success under IVI-RMA's ownership.

GE HealthCare and Ascension Launch Partnership to Advance Care Through Innovation

GE HealthCare and Ascension has announced a new strategic collaboration designed to enhance clinical and operational outcomes across Ascension's national network. This collaboration, focused on patient access and experience, supports Ascension's Mission to serve all, with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. It aims to deliver high-quality, respectful care using advanced technology and integrated solutions, with a shared focus on patient experience and safety.

"GE HealthCare brings advanced technology and expertise that make a real difference for our patients and our teams," said Eduardo Conrado, President of Ascension. "Together, we are taking important steps to improve care, drive new solutions, and deliver better results for the people who rely on us. This partnership is also about shaping the future of healthcare—making sure our caregivers are equipped with the right technology, in the right place, at the right time, so we can deliver better care for all."

The collaboration leverages a comprehensive portfolio of GE HealthCare technologies across multiple modalities—including computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance (MR), X-ray, Nuclear Medicine, and Ultrasound segments such as Cardiovascular, General Imaging, Women's Health, and Point of Care. The partnership will expand patient access to the latest GE HealthCare imaging technology, which may lead to shorter scan times, reduced wait times for care, and greater accuracy in diagnosis.

"This joint effort represents a shared investment in advancing technology and care delivery," said Catherine Estrampes, president and CEO, U.S. and Canada at GE HealthCare. "By working alongside Ascension, we're helping to enable their clinicians and caregivers with innovative solutions that elevate patient experience, safety, and care."

The agreement reflects the long-term relationship between Ascension Health and GE HealthCare and Ascension and lays the groundwork for a multi-year strategic collaboration. Both organizations are committed to exploring opportunities that further advance patient care and access across Ascension's footprint, including key markets.

Kuwait Advances Healthcare Transformation Through Strategic Infrastructure Expansion

Kuwait is rapidly transforming its healthcare landscape through a major infrastructure expansion aligned with its national development vision. Guided by strong government leadership and the Ministry of Health's strategic framework, the country is investing heavily in modernizing hospitals, enhancing capacity, and adopting cutting-edge technologies to improve care quality, accessibility, and efficiency.

Among the flagship projects is the newly completed Maternity Hospital in the Sabah Medical Zone. Built to global standards, the facility offers comprehensive maternal and neonatal services and incorporates environmentally sustainable design principles.

Another major initiative is the new Al-Sabah Hospital, currently under construction. The 88,710-square-metre facility will offer both general and specialized services. It features three towers with 512 inpatient beds, 105 ICU beds, 72 outpatient clinics, and a helipad—positioning it as a self-sufficient medical hub.

The Communicable Diseases Hospital, spanning 74,000 square meters, further strengthens Kuwait's infectious disease preparedness. It includes emergency, radiology, pharmacy, and support departments, and houses 224 inpatient beds.

In oncology care, the Kuwait Cancer Control Centre stands out as a regional benchmark. Located in the Sabah Medical Zone, it spans 303,536 square meters. The main hospital, split into two towers for inpatient and outpatient services, offers 618 beds and is fully equipped with advanced mechanical and electrical systems for specialized cancer treatment.

The expansive New Al-Adan Hospital complex is also underway. It comprises seven buildings linked via underground tunnels, including a 226,369-square-metre maternity and pediatrics facility with 637 fixed and 471 mobile beds. Other facilities include a surgical and central services building, a rehabilitation center, district administration offices, and multi-level parking structures.

These projects reflect Kuwait's unwavering commitment to achieving Vision 2035 objectives, especially in elevating healthcare standards. The Ministry of Health continues to foster international collaboration, attract medical expertise, and build local talent through training, scholarships, and academic partnerships—ensuring a robust, future-ready healthcare system.

Philips Partners with Epic to Advance Ambulatory Cardiac Monitoring

Royal Philips, a global leader in health technology, today announced a collaboration with Epic to integrate Philips' suite of cardiac ambulatory monitoring and diagnostics services with Aura, the specialty diagnostics suite of the leading electronic health record (EHR) company. This collaboration will offer the broadest cardiac care portfolio of any single service provider integrating with Aura to date. Philips will deliver a new level of interoperability between its ambulatory monitoring technologies and Epic—helping providers enhance the diagnostic process and improve patient outcomes.

With Philips' technology available through Aura, health system IT teams could significantly reduce the time it takes to connect with Philips and give interested provider organizations the ability to order and review patients' ECG results directly in Epic. This cuts out the need for manual order and data entry, which enhances workflows for providers and streamlines data-driven care decisions.

"With this collaboration, we are advancing cardiac care in a way that simultaneously improves the clinician and patient experience," said Stefano Folli, Business Leader, Ambulatory Monitoring & Diagnostics, Philips. "Together, Philips and Epic can help enable workflow efficiencies that lighten cardiac care teams' load, so they can spend more time focusing on what matters most – providing direct patient care."

The Philips-Epic collaboration can also streamline cumbersome administrative tasks by automating patient activation, staff notifications, and charting – giving valuable time back to cardiology teams to spend with patients.

"When a physician prescribes a cardiac monitor, it allows patients to be evaluated for heart conditions as they go about their daily lives, even before they see a cardiologist," said Leah Johnson, vice president of cardiology and imaging diagnostics, Epic. "Through this collaboration, we're streamlining the clinical experience for both patients and physicians, reducing administrative overhead and ensuring that detailed diagnostic reports are readily available in the patient's comprehensive health record."

The Philips ambulatory monitoring portfolio features flexible remote monitoring and enterprise ECG management solutions designed to advance a new standard of cardiac care. By arming healthcare organizations with data and actionable insights that can transform workflows to diagnose and manage patient populations proactively, Philips' products and services help enable care delivery in the right setting, at the right time.

Exactech Appoints Dr. Richard J. Friedman as Chief Medical Officer

Exactech, a global leader in medical technology, has announced the appointment of Richard J. Friedman, MD, FRCSC, as its new Chief Medical Officer (CMO). In this role, Dr. Friedman will oversee clinical and regulatory functions, focusing on product safety, surgeon education, and providing medical insights for product development. He will also serve as a key resource for surgeon partners and patient education initiatives.

Dr. Friedman brings extensive expertise in joint replacement surgery. He previously served as Chief of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery and Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), where he is currently Vice Chair of Research. He has also held an adjunct professorship in Bioengineering at Clemson University.

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Friedman during this dynamic phase for Exactech," said Darin Johnson, President and CEO. "His deep knowledge of joint surgery and long-standing collaboration with Exactech, supported by decades of research and publications, will further strengthen our surgeon-focused mission."

Dr. Friedman succeeds Sharat Kusuma, MD, who recently became President of JointMedica, a global hip arthroplasty company collaborating with Exactech on advanced hip resurfacing technology.

Dr. Friedman, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon, completed his medical education at the University of Toronto and advanced training at Johns Hopkins, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Harvard Medical School. He has authored over 400 peer-reviewed articles and delivered more than 700 presentations worldwide.

Awad Al-Omari Appointed CEO of Almana Medical Group

Almana Medical Group, one of the Kingdom's most established private healthcare networks, has announced the appointment of Dr. Awad Al-Omari as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective immediately.

Dr. Al-Omari brings a distinguished track record in healthcare leadership, having most recently served as Chief Medical Officer at Dr. Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Group for over 12 years, and as CEO of Critical Care Company (Rawabt Medical) for more than five years. His career began at the Security Forces Hospital in Riyadh and has since encompassed numerous leadership and academic roles.

In his new position, Al-Omari will lead Almana Medical Group's strategic transformation, with a focus on four core priorities:

• Geographic Expansion – extending the Group's footprint across new regions in Saudi Arabia.

• Integrated Care Models – launching patient-centered, outcome-driven services.

• Digital Innovation – adopting smart technologies to optimize operations and service delivery.

• Clinical Excellence – elevating care quality through empowered medical teams and enhanced patient experiences.

"It is with great pride and gratitude that I take on the role of CEO at Almana Medical Group," Al-Omari said. "With a legacy of over 70 years, the Group operates five hospitals and three medical centers across four major cities, with more than 1,300 beds—making it one of the largest private healthcare networks in the region."

Dr. Al-Omari also holds several esteemed positions, including Chairman of the Board at the Saudi Critical Care Society, Professor of Medicine at Alfaisal University, and Board Member of the Saudi Federation of Sports Medicine.

His contributions to healthcare have been recognized with numerous accolades, including the Ada'a Health Award 2024 (Ministry of Health), the National Patient Safety Award 2024 (Saudi Patient Safety Center), and a Guinness World Record for the Largest Tele-ICU (2019).

At Dr. Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Group, he was instrumental in launching several pioneering programs, including the Tele-ICU, Tele-Stroke, and Tele-Cardiology services, the ECMO program, the Rapid Response Team, and the Dr. Sulaiman Al Habib Medical Academy—as well as the region's first medical journal dedicated to the private healthcare sector.

"I extend my sincere thanks to the Board of Directors and our partners at Sanabil Investments for their trust," he added. "This new chapter is not just a personal milestone, but a commitment to innovation, impact, and patient-first care."

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEDIWORLD Middle East

8-10 September 2025 — **Dubai**
World Health Expo TECH

13-14 September 2025 — **Abu Dhabi**
Abu Dhabi Annual Anesthesia Congress

13-17 October 2025 — **Dubai**
GITEX Global 2025

22-24 October 2025 — **Nairobi**
World Health Expo (Medic East Africa)

24-25 October 2025 — **Abu Dhabi**
7th Abu Dhabi International Vascular Conference

27-30 October 2025 — **Riyadh**
Global Health Exhibition

31 Oct-2 November 2025 — **Dubai**
Excellence in Oncology Care (EIOC)

9-12 February 2026 — **Dubai**
World Health Expo (Arab Health)

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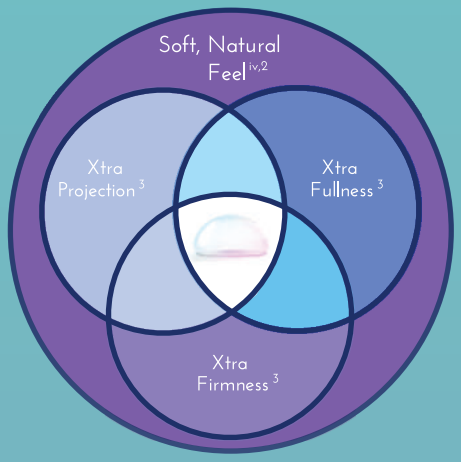

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