

[June 4, 2020] 12:30 – 13:30

Meeting Minutes

Attending (list not exhaustive)

Dr. Thanos Gargavanis, Emergency Care Technical Officer, WHO (TG)

Dr. Abdullatif Al-Haj, Director of ICD Gaza, MoH (Dr. AA)

Dr. Abdelnaser Soboh (Dr. AS)

MSF F

MSF B

MDM Sp

PHR

UNRWA

Agenda:

Summary of partners' feedback on the Covid 19 impact on Trauma-related activities

Trauma preparedness in Covid 19 times

AOB

Discussion

- **TG:** Summary of the challenges faced by partners and MoH regarding delivery of trauma services amidst the COVID 19 pandemic in Gaza.
- **Dr. AA:** MoH EDs are always 100% operational, all 7 major hospitals are providing trauma care services 24/7. In parallel, the respiratory disease management Centers are in the process of finalization, so that they are ready if there is spread of the COVID 19 in community level. MoH is having a plan in place, to respond to any possible escalation and surge of trauma casualties, regardless of the cause, be it fence protests, or clashes because of a possible annexation of WB parts by Israel. Part of the plan is the pause of elective operations, and allocation of health staff from hospitals to the levels of care in need.
- **PHR question:** How is the MoH planning to mitigate the new COVID 19 cases detected in the quarantine facilities?

- **Dr. AA:** The MoH is already having an established COVID 19 response protocol. The people close to the newly detected cases in the quarantine centres are going to be repeatedly tested, to reassure that they are not infectious. If overall the number of cases exceeds the capacity of Raffah field hospital, then next phase of the plan is to evacuate EGH and convert it to COVID 19 dedicated facility, as it has been previously explained to the partners.
- **UNRWA question:** If the MoH Limb reconstruction activities are ongoing, why then the UNRWA rehabilitation centres have not received any patient, as it had been agreed with the WHO Rehabilitation specialist Emily?
- **Dr. AA:** The MoH Limb reconstruction Unit is backed by WHO and continuous to perform critical limb salvage operations. The head of the LRU is Dr. Mattar, a limb reconstruction surgeon. The MoH is willing to share the contact details with UNRWA, to discuss regarding rehabilitation.
- **TG:** WHO, with the assistance of Hospital component technical officer, is willing to facilitate coordination and communication between UNRWA and LRU, to better address any obstacles in the patient rehabilitation pathway.
- **Dr. AA:** MoH is willing to coordinate with all partners working in limb reconstruction activities, like WHO, MAP UK, MSF F and MSF B, Al Ahli Arab Hospital, and agree on the steps of treatment, as well as on the gaps that need to be covered.

- **TG: Trauma preparedness in Covid 19 times, 2nd issue of the agenda**

- **Dr AA:** As said before, MoH is ready to respond to any trauma surge. There is a plan available in Gaza, from the Prehospital level to the Tertiary care level. Gaz has an accumulated experience.
- **Dr. AS question:** Is the MoH ready to respond to any surge of casualties, on top of the COVID 19 pandemic? Are the available human resources enough? What is the plan for expat EMTs in case the COVID 19 situation continues and there is a trauma surge?
- **Dr. AA:** MoH is planning to keep the clinical staff working in the COVID 19 health facilities separate from the clinical staff responding to the trauma casualties. To support this, they intend to mobilise staff from other MoH Hospitals. As it has been said earlier, the plan for the conversion of EGH to a COVID 19 dedicated facility is ready, and if need it will be triggered.

Regarding foreign EMTs, while their value is doubtless, their presence is of question: How are they going to endure the necessary quarantine/isolation period upon their arrival to Gaza, in the middle of a surge of casualties?

Gaza response will be based to the accumulated experience of previous escalations.

Distance support will be highly valued.

Action points:

- WHO to facilitate the coordination between UNRWA and MoH LRU
- Partners to share their distance training plans
- Partners to share their trauma preparedness plans.

We would like to thank profoundly all partners that have taken place to the TWG, and highlight once again that coordination among partners is of utmost importance during these times of pandemic.