



Qatar Health 2021: An online conference to prepare for a mass gathering sporting event while still addressing the pandemic

Guillaume Alinier^{1,2,3,4*}, Sandro Rizoli^{3,5}, Hassan Al Thani⁵

ABSTRACT

It feels like yesterday that we wrote the editorial related to the previous issue of the Qatar Health 2020 Conference¹. 2020 is clearly a year to remember globally as a challenging one and this probably contributed to time passing so rapidly, keeping everyone so busy caring for patients and conducting research². COVID-19 has had a big impact on all aspects of our lives, from the way we deliver patient care and work, to how we socialize and plan for the future in general. The past year has certainly provided an opportunity for the State of Qatar to demonstrate its resilience, its ability to rapidly adapt to new circumstances, and to find effective solutions to new problems^{3,4}. Although very concerned by the current pandemic, our focus needs to also concentrate on the forthcoming FIFA World Cup in 2022 and every possible health related aspects, to ensure the event is safely hosted for everyone's enjoyment. This has been clearly reflected in the Qatar Health 2021 conference program and call for abstracts (Table 1) which was organized into four parallel tracks fully hosted online for everyone's safety. This issue of the Journal of Emergency Medicine, Trauma and Acute Care contains an extensive selection of 38 out of the 94 abstracts that have been accepted for oral or poster presentation during the conference. The abstract themes are summarized in Table 2 and range from the impact of the pandemic on delivering primary care to Qatar's preparedness to dealing with hazardous and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents^{5,6}. Notably 48 (51.06%) of the abstract titles contained the word COVID-19 or pandemic while only 4 abstracts (4.25%) were related to mass gatherings and sporting events. The later topics were primarily covered by multiple invited speakers with the relevant experience and proved to be the most attended conference sessions. It is worth noticing that the event attracted just over of 5,400 delegates and speakers from a total of 40 countries and has received highly positive feedback. We look forward to welcoming everyone again next year as we come closer to the FIFA World Cup 2022, with many more topics, partner organizations, and attendees.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, mass gathering, major incident, preparedness, Qatar Health, conference

¹Ambulance Service, Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar
²School of Health and Social Work, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, UK
³Weill Cornell Medicine Qatar, Doha, Qatar
⁴Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
⁵Trauma Surgery Section, Hamad General Hospital, Hamad Medical Corporation, Doha, Qatar
*Email: galinier@hamad.qa

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Table 1. Topics announced as part of the call for abstracts for the Qatar Health 2021 Conference

Call for abstract topics:
– Incident and outbreak response and management
– Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic
– Impact of pandemics on healthcare services
– Pandemic mitigation and control in the community
– Prevention of infectious diseases during mass gatherings
– Patient care in the COVID era
– Big data, public health surveillance and epidemiology, and alert systems
– Emergency and disaster preparedness
– Health promotion and lifestyles
– Crowd and environmental management during mass gatherings
– Sports medicine and management of sporting events

Table 2. Topics addressed through the abstracts accepted for presentation during the Qatar Health 2021 Conference

Topics	Number of related submissions (n = 94)
– Impact of COVID-19 (mass gatherings, out-of-hospital cardiac arrests, clinical staff absenteeism and risk perception, N95 face masks stock variation, ...)	12
– Medicine and healthcare practice (COVID-19 antibodies, fixation of mandibular fractures, community acquired pneumonia, narcotics, hemodialysis, AIDS, post-bariatric surgery malnutrition and neuromuscular complications, status epilepticus in childhood, ...)	18
– Disease transmission and prevention (immunization program, COVID-19, ...)	5
– Service assessment and transformation (pandemic response, teleconsultation, hazardous healthcare waste management, expanding the clinical pharmacy service, ...)	19
– Case reports (COVID-19, tinnitus, paroxysmal supraventricular tachycardia, ruptured liver abscess, solid organ transplant recipients, nursing, physiotherapy, ...)	11
– Safety (COVID-19, hand hygiene, needle stick injuries, sepsis, adverse events, patient transport, personal protective equipment, ...)	15
– Technology and science (cyber security, COVID-19, clinical trials, ...)	5
– Education (online visually enhanced mental simulation, interprofessional education, virtual reality, continuing professional development, ...)	5
– Screening and testing (serology, COVID-19, medical imaging, candida auris)	4

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