



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF HEALTH & PREVENTION

DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

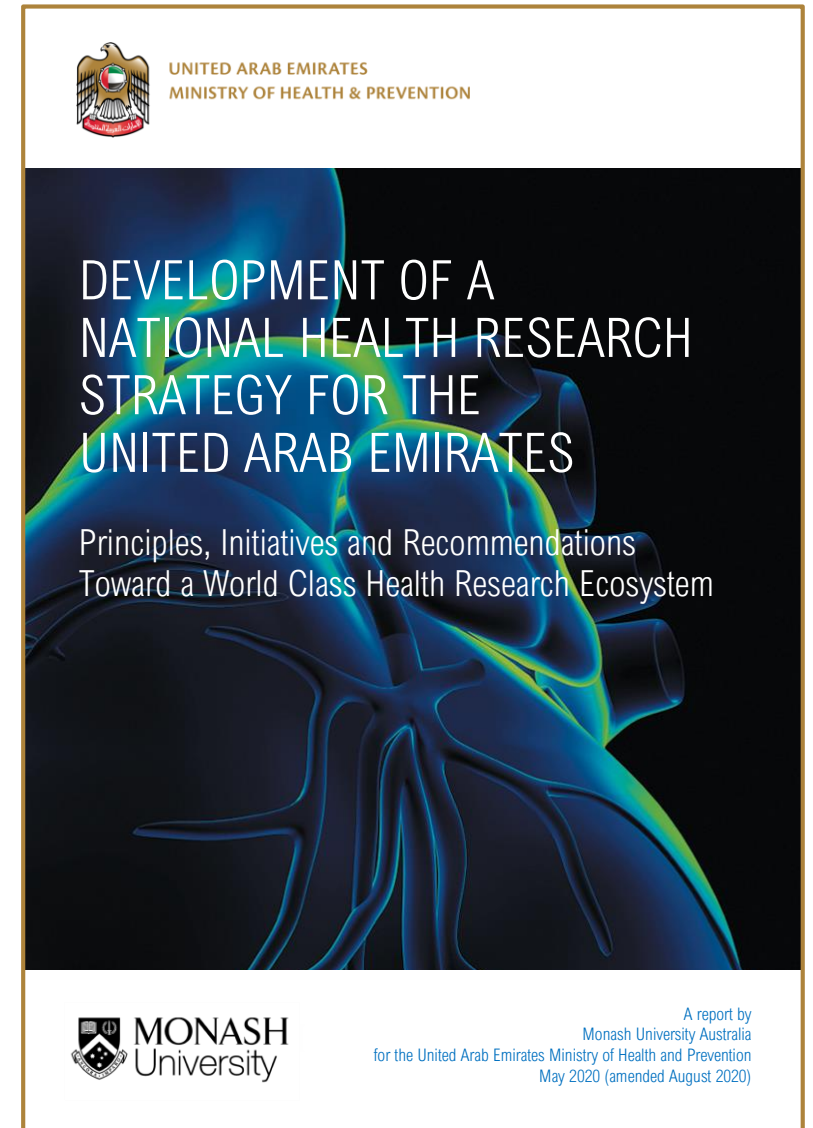
Principles, Initiatives and Recommendations
Toward a World Class Health Research Ecosystem

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY BY MONASH UNIVERSITY
AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
PREVENTION, MAY 2020 (AMENDED AUGUST 2020)

DEVELOPING A NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH STRATEGY

Principles, Initiatives and
Recommendations Toward
a World Class Health
Research Ecosystem

The *National Strategy* contains a range of ideas and suggestions on how to support the growth of the health research sector, including the establishment of a *National Centre for Health Research* and a better unified set of policies and procedures across the United Arab Emirates.



THE NATIONAL STRATEGY
DESIGN
PRINCIPLES

- Alignment with existing UAE policies, vision statements, priorities and legislation
- Positioning the UAE to produce world class research to the highest of standards
- Harnessing expertise and resources in a more coordinated fashion
- Facilitating a research environment that opens up new opportunities for funding, innovation and collaboration

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The overarching aim of the National Strategy is to better unify the health research landscape of the UAE

- Establish a clear role for MoHaP as the government agency responsible for national vision, strategy and controls – through the establishment of a National Centre For Health Research
- Establish the policies and regulations to regulate and license health research in the UAE according to best international standards and practice
- Develop the regulations, standards and expectations for national health research ethics
- Identify national health research priorities
- Build national research capacity for conducting health research consistent with international trends and priorities

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

THE STUDY

Completed in May 2020,
with amendments in August
2020 following stakeholder
feedback

ASSESSING HEALTH RESEARCH PRIORITIES

- Aligning institutional and national priorities for a more cohesive approach

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

- Supporting talent, environment, collaboration, priority projects and research translation
- Policies for a national health research ethics framework

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

- The National Centre For Health Research

NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH PRIORITIES

UAEs universities, healthcare providers and regulators were assessed for alignment with national strategies to develop a list of ten priority areas where capacity exists.

There are opportunities to better coordinate activities, as well as flexibility to consider emerging health areas such as nuclear, space, big data and AI.



CANCER



INFECTIOUS DISEASES



CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE, DIABETES AND OBESITY



NEUROSCIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND EMERGENCIES



ROAD SAFETY AND TRAUMA



GENETICS AND PERSONALISED MEDICINE



SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE



HEALTH SYSTEMS



WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

ALIGNMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Summary of Recommendations

SETTING NATIONAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES

- Institutions should continue to have the freedom to pursue their own research priorities but should also demonstrate alignment to the UAEs national research priorities, perhaps through incentives. National priorities should be determined by MoHaP and other relevant authorities, with flexibility to respond to changing needs and technologies.

DATA AND BENCHMARKING

- Health data collection for local and international benchmarking should be coordinated by MoHaP. Data collection should be extended to health research institutions, possibly in parallel with academic benchmarking exercises. Accurate and up to date data will also facilitate comprehensive benchmarking against international data.

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

FIVE PILLARS

The components that form a modern, innovative and globally connected research ecosystem can be broadly categorised along five tightly inter-linked and synergistic strategic ‘pillars’



TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH
RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

TALENT

Building capacity,
expertise and career
paths for UAE
researchers

DIRECT CAREER SUPPORT

- National research scholarship and fellowship scheme to improve retention of best local discovery and clinical researchers, students, and also attract foreign talent

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Promoting local/regional peer review opportunities to build networks and promote a culture of quality

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS AND MORE COLLABORATION

- Sharing expertise through national professional networks (training, mentorship); new collaborative opportunities
- Promoting professional standards and ethical conduct
- Professional accreditation schemes; recognition of excellence and leadership

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH
RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

COLLABORATION

Local and international
connectivity to ensure
the best partnerships for
the benefit of the UAE

DOMESTIC COLLABORATION

- Encouraging more partnerships across the Emirates by introducing national guidelines and policies; national professional networks

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

- UAE researchers encouraged to seek out partnerships with quality foreign institutions
- Leveraging the networks of the expatriate researchers for new institutional partnerships and student exchanges

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

- Broadening the scope of health research through collaboration with researchers from other disciplines, improving impact and access to new expertise and funding

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH
RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

ENVIRONMENT

Providing the
infrastructure and
regulatory framework to
support researchers

A CULTURE OF QUALITY

- Professional networks to promote national policies, standards, integrity, expertise, and major initiatives
- Measuring research performance (impact, benchmarking)

WORLD CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

- Assess existing facilities to identify capabilities and gaps
- Establish national facilities or technology ‘platforms’, reducing duplication and attracting industry

A UNIFIED REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

- National guidelines for approving and conducting health research to the highest ethical and professional standards
- Better organised and networked clinical trials activity

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

FLAGSHIPS

High profile projects and initiatives showcasing UAE strengths and addressing national priorities

MAJOR NATIONAL PROJECTS

- Based on areas of capacity, expertise and infrastructure; addressing national priorities
- Building national esteem and international reputation; attracting new talent, collaboration and investment

CENTRES FOR HEALTH RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

- Overseen by MoHaP as drivers of major projects, with flexibility to align with changing national priorities
 - CANCER
 - CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES, DIABETES AND OBESITY
 - HEALTH SYSTEMS RESEARCH including electronic medical records, and Artificial Intelligence as an enabling technology
 - GENETICS in Emirati society, including rare diseases
 - ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY AND TRAUMA

TOWARD A UNIFIED HEALTH
RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

TRANSLATION

Converting discoveries
into new products,
better practice and new
economic opportunities

BETTER CO-ORDINATED CLINICAL TRIAL ACTIVITY

- Better organised and nationally networked clinical trials activity; reducing duplication, improving cross-recognition of studies, and attracting new collaborations with industry and improving end-user engagement

A NATIONAL INNOVATION PIPELINE

- Examine international models for a national system that aims to translate and commercialise academic research, to develop a capable translational research workforce in the UAE, and to support industry growth through the success of new companies and investment
- Joint venture between researchers and their public or private funders

TOWARD A UNIFIED NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

Summary of Recommendations

CO-ORDINATED INITIATIVES FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE

- Develop programs that support a better connected national ecosystem, including workforce development, strategic partnerships, research environment, areas of research excellence, and translation.
- A set of national guidelines should be issued to enable a nationally consistent ethical and scientific review of human research being performed across the UAE.
- MoHaP can consider policies required to support a more coordinated, national clinical trials framework for the UAE
- MoHaP should consider whether a national innovation pipeline based on models from other countries may be useful in developing a translationally-savvy health research workforce in the UAE.

IMPLEMENTING THE
NATIONAL STRATEGY

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

Formally approved by the
UAE Cabinet in January
2020 and described in
Ministerial Decree No.
(250) of 2020, in May 2020

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a national health research strategy, including policies, regulations and standardised health research ethics
- Identify national health research priorities and establish Centres for Health Research Excellence
- Provide a national database of research and health data
- Co-ordinate co-operation with local and international government/non-government organisations dedicated to setting health research policy
- Enhance collaborative research between academic, healthcare and industry organisations through local and international partnerships
- Support programs for the translation of health research into policy, products or services to improve healthcare services

IMPLEMENTING THE
NATIONAL STRATEGY

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

Summary of
Recommendations

CONTINUOUS STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- MoHaP should establish a regular consultation process on the NCHR to ensure it delivers outcomes to the national benefit. This can include consultation with an international advisory panel.

BEST PRACTICE

- The NCHR should examine international models for partnerships between academia, healthcare authorities and providers, and industry for adoption to the Centres for Health Research Excellence.

INSTITUTIONAL EXPECTATIONS AND INTEGRITY

- The NCHR should be responsible for setting expectations for UAE health research institutions in receipt of national funds, including standards for research integrity.

NEXT STEPS

TURNING LEGISLATION INTO PRACTICE

The National Strategy recommends a two-phased approach to implementation through broad stakeholder engagement.

GOVERNMENT
Federal and Local
Authorities

ACADEMIA
Researchers
and Clinicians

HEALTHCARE
PROVIDERS

PRIVATE SECTOR
Industry and
Philanthropy

SOCIETY
Patient and
Cultural Groups

PHASE 1 PRIORITISING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

PRIORITIES GROUP to consider the recommendations through the lens of MoHaP/NCHRs priorities, plans and resources, to create a priority list for action on selected initiatives and a work plan for implementation

PHASE 2 IMPLEMENTING THE FIRST INITIATIVES

NCHR MODEL GROUP develops detailed working model

NCHR INITIATIVES GROUP develops specific projects to be implemented

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ADVISORY TEAM

Monash University commissioned the National Strategy by MOHAP in collaboration with the Health Research Strategy Team at the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention.

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The *National Strategy* was developed through collaboration between the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention and Monash University in Melbourne, Australia:



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