

Ministry of Health & Prevention

National Policy for Promoting Women's Health

In the United Arab Emirates

Introduction:

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, may God protect him, has shown boundless commitment to supporting women, following in the footsteps of the late Sheikh Zayed and Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, may God bless their souls. This dedication is rooted in his belief in the crucial role of women in raising virtuous and conscious generations capable of facing and overcoming various challenges and contributing to nation-building. Women hold a prominent position in the UAE, receiving strong support and attention from the wise leadership, which has provided them with full opportunities, especially in the health sector, where they have proven their competence across all fields. Today, women are an integral part of the health system and one of its key pillars.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, the Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, stated: "Because women represent more than half of society and are the foundation of its progress—they are teachers, doctors, engineers, ministers, managers, judges, and the nurturing mothers of generations who build families, communities, and the nation, today, we approved a major package of new policies and legislation for Emirati women. This is a continuation and recognition of their journey of empowerment and leadership in all fields, enhancing their impactful role in both Emirati and international society. The national initiatives and policies for Emirati women take us into a new phase, building on the tools we provided over the past decade for women's empowerment. Today, we embark on a new phase, where we provide further tools to strengthen women's leadership roles in our society, increasing their participation and representation across all fields—locally, regionally, and internationally."

The UAE Constitution and other applicable laws in the country guarantee women's rights by establishing the principle of equality and equal opportunity for all, ensuring the enjoyment of rights without discrimination. This includes the right to health through the provision of healthcare. In addition, these laws secure social benefits specific to women.

It is worth noting the words of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, Chairwoman of the General Women's Union (GWU), President of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood (SCMC), and Supreme Chairwoman of the Family Development Foundation (FDF), who said, "In the UAE, we work under the wisdom and foresight of our wise leadership to envision the future of Emirati women and to strive for continuous development by adopting best practices that respect their unique identity. We conduct cutting-edge studies and innovative planning and provide decision-makers with comprehensive, documented information to assist them in establishing and enhancing strategies and policies. This ensures that women are sustainable, key partners in all areas."

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Women in most countries have become a dynamic force supporting societal development and transformation. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize the importance of supporting and promoting women's health by providing the highest quality of awareness, prevention, and treatment services, enabling them to effectively fulfill their roles. This includes affirming women's right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and protecting and promoting this right through health policies that reflect a commitment to women's health and respond to their important roles and responsibilities. Achieving the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right for women, without discrimination based on social or other factors.

The concept of women's health falls within the broader framework of community health as a whole. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." However, women's health differs from men's health in several areas due to gender-specific characteristics.

Women differ from men in certain aspects of health and disease, as gender significantly impacts human health due to unique biological, social, and behavioral factors between the genders. Biological differences range from the cellular to the physiological level, with women being more likely to develop certain diseases and health conditions and less likely to develop others.

The health and quality of life of both mother and child are closely interconnected, with both benefiting from early health interventions. Interventions during prenatal and early childhood stages have lasting impacts on outcomes throughout all later stages of life. Increasing evidence suggests that early life health and nutrition interventions significantly influence women's health across their lifespan.

National Policy for Promoting Women's Health General Framework

Vision:

Optimal Health and Well-being for Women

Mission:

To establish a national, multi-sector framework to promote women's health by ensuring access to the highest standards of preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative healthcare services throughout all stages of their lives in the United Arab Emirates.

Scope of Policy Implementation:

- The policy emphasizes the importance of women's health as a vital component of the overall health of the community.
- Target Group: Women at all stages of life.

Purpose of the National Framework:

The importance of adopting a more coordinated strategic approach to effectively advance women's health in the country is growing, as this responsibility spans all relevant levels and sectors. A national, multi-sector approach can result in more effective and efficient use of national resources by unifying efforts to encompass all aspects of healthcare sector enhancement. This allows for a focus on policy priorities and optimal resource utilization. The national framework can achieve greater effectiveness through integrated efforts without changing government responsibilities, as it involves a commitment from all parties to work together more effectively in areas of shared responsibility. This commitment includes improving coordination in public health functions, promoting women's health across all stages of their life cycle, coordinating planning and implementation, defining roles, and enhancing information sharing and innovation to create supportive initiatives for women's health.

The national framework also provides an opportunity for a mechanism to engage the non- governmental sector and the broader community at the national level. This leads to the desired goal of improving women's health as a vital part of society, as well as promoting competitiveness, achieving the country's strategic objectives and directions, and advancing gender equality.

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Policy Principles

- Health Equity Between Genders
- Leadership and Governance Support
- Shared Responsibility
- Life-Course Approach to Health
- Breakthrough Initiatives
- Women Engagement and Empowerment
- Tolerance
- Quality and Inclusive Healthcare Services Provided to Women
- Women's Health in All Policies

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Women's Health Requirements

Adolescence	Reproductive years	Post-Reproductive and Menopause Years	
Vaccination Against Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	Maternity Vaccination Program and Completion of Routine Vaccinations		Specific Needs
Menstrual Health			
Prevention and Control of Reproductive System Diseases			
	Routine Vaginal Examinations		
Reproductive Health Awareness			
Awareness about Fertility, Sexual Health, Reproductive Health, Pregnancy, and Pre-Marital Screening			
	Maternal, Child Health, Pregnancy and Childbirth Services		
	Awareness about Early Menopause and Perimenopause	Perimenopause and Menopause	
	Breast Examinations for Breast Cancer Prevention and Awareness for Fighting Other Cancers		
Enhancing the Quality of Healthy Life: (Healthy Nutrition - Physical Activity - Tobacco Control)			
Promoting Mental Health			
Prevention and Control of Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases			
Combating Social Issues Related to Women's Health, Such as: Violence - Early Marriage - FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)			
	Bone Health		
	Prevention of Dementia and Memory Loss		
	Promoting the Health of Female Senior Citizens (Elderly Women)		

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National Policy for Promoting Women’s Health Explanatory Framework

National Policy for Promoting Women’s Health in the UAE

Vision	Optimal Health and Well-being for Women							
Message and Purpose	To establish a national, multi-sector framework to promote women’s health by ensuring access to the highest standards of preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative healthcare services throughout all stages of their lives in the United Arab Emirates.							Target Group : Women at all stages of life
General Approach of the Policy	Public health approach to the life stages focused on the importance of women's health as a vital part of community health							
Principles	Gender Equality in Health	Leadership and Governance Support, and Shared Responsibility	Life-Course Approach to Health	Tolerance	Breakthrough Initiatives	Women Engagement and Empowerment	Women’s Health in All Policies	
Policy Areas	1 Endorsement and Support for Governance and Leadership, and Building Partnerships to Empower Women in Health	2 Enhancing Maternal Health, Reproductive Health, and Sexual Health	3 Prevention and Combat of Chronic Diseases Affecting Women	4 Promoting Women’s Mental Health	5 Promoting Healthy Aging for Women	6 Combating the Health Effects of Violence Against Women and Girls	7 Strengthening Information Systems, Innovation, and Research Capacity in Women's Health	8 Creating Environments that Promote Women's Health in the Country
	Areas of Work and Detailed Procedures							
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	Executive Plan for the National Policy for Promoting Women's Health in the United Arab Emirates							

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Summary Table of the Key Areas and Action Domains of the National Policy for Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Areas	Action Domains
1- Endorsement and Support for Governance and Leadership, and Building Partnerships to Empower Women in Health	1-1 Building and Supporting Social, Financial, and Administrative Commitment to Empower Women
	1-2 Strengthening Coordination at All Levels – Effective National Partnerships, Networks, and International Cooperation to Promote Women's Health
	1-3 Developing Supportive Legislation to Enhance Women's Health in the Country
	1-4 Consolidating Institutional Capacities, Infrastructure, and Specialized Personnel of Relevant Authorities to Enhance Women's Health
2- Enhancing Maternal Health, Reproductive Health, and Sexual Health	2-1 Promoting Access to Reproductive and Sexual Health Services 2-2 Enhancing and Supporting Preconception and Perinatal Health, and Improving Access to Maternal Healthcare Services 2-3 Supporting Pre-Marriage Health Services
3- Prevention and Combat of Chronic Diseases Affecting Women	3-1 Primary Prevention of Chronic Diseases and Associated Risk Factors in Women
	3-2 Timely Screening and Effective Intervention for Chronic Conditions Affecting the Health of Women and Girls
	3-3 Integrating Health Services to Meet the Needs of Women and Girls within Essential Healthcare Services
4- Promoting Women's Mental Health	4-1 Developing, Enhancing, and Expanding Comprehensive and Integrated Mental Health Services Responsive to Women's Needs
	4-2 Promoting Prevention of Mental Disorders Specific to Different Life Stages of Women
5- Promoting Healthy Aging for Women	5-1 Adopting a Full Life-Course Approach to Achieve Healthy Aging for Women
	5-2 Addressing Key Risk Factors That Reduce Quality of Life for Women as They Age
	5-3 Identifying and Effectively Managing the Specific Health Needs of Elderly Women
	6-1 Raising Awareness of the Health Impacts of Violence Against Women and Girls
	6-2 Combating the Health and Related Effects of Physical or Psychological Violence

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6- Combating the Health Effects of Violence Against Women and Girls	6-3 Designing and Delivering Safe and Accessible Services for Women Who Have Experienced Physical or Psychological Violence
7- Strengthening Information Systems, Innovation, and Research Capacity in Women's Health	7-1 Generating Data and Statistics on Women's Health Services and Related Health Issues for Evidence-Based Decision-Making
	7-2 Enhancing High-Quality Research Procedures and Ways to Develop Them in the Field of Prevention and Addressing Health Issues Related to Women's Health
	7-3 Applying the Results and Recommendations of Research and Studies and Benefiting from Them to Formulate Appropriate Initiatives and Interventions to Enhance Women's Health
8- Creating Environments that Promote Women's Health in the Country	8-1 Providing Healthy Environmental Conditions and Ensuring Longevity for Women Based on Environmental Sustainability
	8-2 Providing Protection, Prevention, and a Supportive Environment for Women with Specific Needs, Especially Women with Disabilities
	8-3 Empowering Women and Enhancing Their Role as One of the Key Pillars of the Healthcare System

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1- Endorsement and Support for Governance and Leadership, and Building Partnerships to Empower Women in Health

The focus is on strengthening national capacity and adopting a multi-sectoral national policy, along with essential partnerships, to promote women's health by building capabilities, leadership, governance, and cross-sectoral partnerships. This approach aims to accelerate the country's response in this area.

Legislation, including laws, regulations, and decrees, serves as a crucial and necessary tool for achieving health policy goals to protect women's health as integral members of society. Consequently, these laws must be comprehensive, fair, and inclusive of women, while also keeping pace with scientific advancements and global and local developments.

Work Procedures for First Area:

1-1 Building and Supporting Social, Financial, and Administrative Commitment to Empower Women

- Ensure the integration of key aspects of the national policy for promoting women's health into government guidelines, enablers, and the national agenda, which forms the basis for all national strategies. This should align with the country's vision, the National Innovation Strategy, the 2050 Smart Government and Future Foresight Initiative, the UAE Centennial 2071, the National Strategy for Empowerment of Emirati Women, the National Strategy for Well-being 2031, and the Next 50' – Health Sector.
- Ensure that relevant authorities, decision-makers, and stakeholders advocate for a commitment to supporting the goals and key elements of the national policy for promoting women's health. This includes sustainable funding for each entity within their respective mandates, utilizing allocated budgets. Additionally, it is essential to develop and maintain the policy framework as part of the nation's health development vision, given its significant impact on the well-being of society, with women being a central part of it.
- Strengthen health systems and continue redirecting them toward the prevention and management of risks associated with unhealthy lifestyles for women, through healthcare focused on supporting women's health across their entire life cycle.

- Encourage and promote efforts to enhance and implement regional, national, and community policies and action plans aimed at improving health systems for women. These plans should be sustainable, inclusive, and actively involve all sectors, including civil society, the private sector, and the media.
- Ensure access to necessary resources through innovative financing mechanisms to support women's physical and mental health and lifestyle improvement programs, while optimizing the use of resources and investments in this area.
- Support women's health through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach by identifying key stakeholders, along with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Apply a gender equity perspective and an evidence-based approach in designing programs, interventions, and initiatives to enhance participation, increase fairness, and address gender biases within the health system.
- Integrate economic evaluation mechanisms, including investment feasibility assessments and cost analyses, into the decision-making process for investing in preventive and therapeutic interweaves related to women's health.
- Develop a multi-sectoral implementation plan for the national policy, establishing a set of desired national goals and indicators based on the national context. Additionally, create an evaluation and monitoring plan to ensure continuous improvement in quality, efficiency, and relevance.
- Develop a plan to integrate women's health into all policies.
- Encourage the adoption of digital technologies and innovation methodologies to accelerate the impact of the national policy, along with the effective plans and strategies derived from it.

1-2 Strengthening Coordination at All Levels – Effective National Partnerships, Networks, and International Cooperation to Promote Women's Health

- Support the role of the Ministry, health authorities, and relevant entities in implementing, overseeing, and monitoring services to promote women's physical and mental health within their respective mandates, and provide a conducive health environment in the country to implement related initiatives.
- Enhance the efficiency of the health sector by forming health partnerships with various international entities and global organizations that collaborate with the Ministry of Health and Prevention and relevant entities through cooperation agreements, memoranda of understanding, or memberships in international or regional organizations. International partnerships significantly contribute to fostering competitiveness and continuously improving the quality of health services to achieve a more effective and efficient health sector.

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- Strengthen advocacy and international cooperation, emphasizing the priority given to promoting women's health at the global, regional, and national levels.
- Establish effective and sustainable mechanisms to ensure coordination among health and non-health stakeholders involved in protecting and enhancing women's health, with clearer roles and responsibilities through a collaborative system focused on knowledge exchange and innovation.
- Provide a smart platform for knowledge sharing in public health, including areas dedicated to enhancing women's health. This platform will facilitate cross-sectoral problem-solving, innovation, and opportunities for establishing partnerships.
- Host annual conferences and specialized seminars on methodologies for enhancing women's health, inviting national, regional, and global professionals and researchers to meet and encourage best practices in this field.
- Facilitate the sharing of essential information and cooperation on comprehensive initiatives across various sectors involved in the development and implementation of the national policy.

1-3 Developing Supportive Legislation to Enhance Women's Health in the Country

- Review existing legislation related to supporting women's physical and mental health and update these laws to align with local and global trends, developments, and advancements.
- Introduce new legislation as needed to further enhance women's health.
- Work on implementing and activating provisions of legislation (laws, decisions, regulations) that support the fight against risk factors, diseases, and unhealthy lifestyles specific to women's health and well-being, in cooperation with relevant entities and partners.
- Establish regulatory decisions derived from relevant health legislation.
- Ensure that all health services and professionals in the health sector adhere to human rights, ethical, and professional standards, as well as gender-sensitive guidelines when providing healthcare services aimed at women. This includes ensuring responsible, voluntary, and informed consent, and encouraging the development and implementation of codes of conduct that are in line with existing international medical ethics and principles governing healthcare professionals.
- Ensure that health services provided to women, particularly preventive services, are covered by insurance, especially for women from specific groups such as people of determination.

1-4 Consolidating Institutional Capacities, Infrastructure, and Specialized Personnel of Relevant Authorities to Enhance Women's Health

- Build institutional capacity and innovative infrastructure for health authorities and relevant entities to mobilize resources, develop initiatives and programs, and monitor their implementation.
- Ensure the availability of sufficient trained workforce, particularly in the preventive health sector, and increase the number of professionals in public health and other specialties concerned with enhancing women's health.
- Develop the necessary human resources for the health sector focused on promoting women's health through appropriate education and continuous training.
- Transition from the traditional concept of a physician to that of future doctors and life quality advisors.
- Enhance public health programs by supporting preventive and health promotion initiatives to combat diseases affecting women at all stages of life.
- Encourage specialization in health education and preventive health for women.
- Adopt community support groups in all areas related to women's health.
- Provide appropriate technical support to build national capacity in planning and implementing national operational plans, adapting these plans to local conditions for effective implementation.
- Train healthcare professionals to work with women of determination, including those with specific needs, such as women with hearing impairments who communicate using sign language, and women with visual impairments.
- Ensure the sustainability of health services supporting women's health in various areas during emergencies, disasters, and pandemics.

2- Enhancing Maternal Health, Reproductive Health, and Sexual Health

Good sexual and reproductive health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters related to the reproductive system. This includes the ability to enjoy a satisfying and safe reproductive and sexual life, the ability to have children, the freedom to make decisions regarding childbearing, safe pregnancy and childbirth, and healthy children.

Maternal health, reproductive health, and sexual health are among the top priorities for women and girls' health. These areas must be understood within the social and cultural context of a woman's healthy life. It is not merely the absence of disease, but a state of physical, mental, and social well-being throughout a woman's life. This includes factors that contribute to enhancing women's health, such as strengthening their role in society, helping them take control of their health, supporting them in making positive health choices, and promoting healthy lifestyles. There is also a critical need to provide safe, effective, affordable, and accessible healthcare services in the areas of motherhood, reproduction, and fertility.

Interventions during the pre-birth and early childhood stages have lasting impacts on outcomes throughout life. Evidence increasingly shows that early health and nutrition interventions, including those aimed at improving the health and nutrition of potential mothers and pregnant women, have a significant impact on health, education, income, and productivity levels throughout life. A mother's current health and her health during childhood significantly affect the quality of life for the next generation.

To maintain sexual and reproductive health, individuals need access to accurate information and safe and effective family planning methods, as well as protection from sexually transmitted diseases. Reproductive health is no longer only a concern for married women of childbearing age, and it is not synonymous with family planning alone. The concept of reproductive health is broader; it is a responsibility for everyone at all life stages.

Promoting the concept of self-care, defined as "the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent illness, maintain good health, and manage illnesses and disabilities with or without the support of a healthcare professional," is a fundamental pillar in empowering women to manage their health independently and improve their sexual and reproductive health.

Work Procedures for Second Area:

2-1 Promoting Access to Reproductive and Sexual Health Services

- Provide students and parents with access to educational resources to raise awareness about sexual and reproductive health during different educational stages.
- Introduce and update school curricula to include information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), access to appropriate medical tests, long-term impacts of STIs on health and fertility, and the importance of safe and legal sexual practices.
- Enhance the availability of health information, screening services, and self-management tools to encourage healthy behaviors related to women's sexual and reproductive health.
- Educate healthcare providers and the community to improve the diagnosis of sexual and reproductive health conditions, as well as to address unrecognized reproductive health risks.
- Develop regulatory mechanisms to ensure equitable and universal access to reproductive health and family planning services.
- Support the country's goals to increase fertility rates among citizens to avoid demographic challenges (arising from continuously declining fertility rates and low birth rates).
- Strengthen the integration of family planning and fertility programs into broader reproductive health and other health initiatives, (considering the impact of health status on reproductive capability).
- Develop legislation for assisted reproductive Technologies for cases of infertility, ensuring the preservation of fertilized eggs or embryos for couples and the preservation of eggs for unmarried women facing fertility challenges.
- Enhance equitable access to medically assisted reproductive technologies, including evidence-based in vitro fertilization (IVF) for individuals with fertility issues or infertility.
- Guarantee smooth referral processes between primary healthcare services and specialized services, and develop referral protocols.
- Invest in the development and expansion of telemedicine services and develop and support innovative healthcare delivery models.
- Provide training and education for doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to deliver comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.
- Promote and update digital health services related to this field.
- Ensure universal access to preventive healthcare for breast and cervical cancer through improved coverage of screenings and the necessary infrastructure to provide high-quality services to all target women.

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- Develop methods for sharing information and improving access to sexual and reproductive health services for women with limited access to regular medical channels, such as those in remote areas, using mobile and digital services.
- Provide prevention and treatment services for diseases transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy.
- Enhance access to healthcare services for less common reproductive health conditions, such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, vaginismus, early menopause, and urinary incontinence.

2-2 Enhancing and Supporting Preconception and Perinatal Health, and Improving Access to Maternal Healthcare Services

- Ensure equitable access to essential routine healthcare services for mothers and improving their performance, including preconception care, antenatal care, obstetric and neonatal care, emergency care, and postnatal care.
- Guarantee comprehensive health coverage for pregnancy and reproductive care services at healthcare centers to enhance the concept of a positive pregnancy experience.
- Adopt preconception care for prevalent congenital disorders that lead to morbidity and neonatal mortality by implementing a preconception care package, including cost-effective, evidence-based interventions.
- Ensure the availability of medications and health products specific to women's health.
- Strengthen the work of the National Committee for Maternal and Children Health.
- Improve the quality of reproductive healthcare by adopting standards, guidelines, and innovative protocols based on global best practices.
- Maintain and support the skills and capabilities of healthcare providers for women by enhancing in-service training, refresher training, and post-training follow-up.
- Expand the concept of child-friendly hospitals to include mother-and-child-friendly hospitals.
- Ensure the provision of preventive screenings, routine and seasonal vaccinations, and maternal immunizations.
- Create clear pathways for women to access relevant services to prevent or reduce the impact of pre-existing chronic health conditions or conditions that may arise due to pregnancy, as well as planning for future pregnancies.
- Raise awareness about gestational diabetes as an indicator for type 2 diabetes later in life and supporting women in making healthy life choices. Also, increasing awareness of the link between pregnancy-induced hypertension and the risk of cardiovascular diseases later in life.
- Support preconception and perinatal healthcare services to enable women to reduce pregnancy-related risks.

- Support women's ability to establish and maintain breastfeeding and facilitating access to breastfeeding information.
- Educate healthcare providers to guide women during the perinatal period to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding, with the possibility of reviewing related legislation to ensure mothers can access the required period for exclusive breastfeeding.
- Ensure comprehensive access to health insurance coverage for essential women's health services.

2-3 Supporting Pre-Marriage Health Services

- Develop strategies for pre-marriage screening, including genetic and genomic tests as per the country's approach, along with screenings for risk factors related to chronic health conditions, and periodically update relevant health legislations.
- Promote the importance of good health for women before marriage and pregnancy, particularly regarding nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and raising awareness about the connection between childhood obesity, infertility, and health complications during pregnancy.
- Achieve better reproductive health by involving both men and women in family planning decisions and offering these concepts to young people at an early age through pre-marriage services.
- Raise awareness about routine vaccinations specific to this stage.
- Develop genetic counseling programs for cases that require them.

3- Prevention and Combat of Chronic Diseases Affecting Women

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of illness, disability, and death globally, placing a significant burden on individuals, families, healthcare providers, and health systems. Chronic diseases, such as breast, lung, and colon cancers, cardiovascular diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, arthritis, and asthma, are responsible for most deaths among women aged 60 and older worldwide. Many health issues faced by older women arise from risk factors that develop in adolescence and adulthood, including smoking and unhealthy lifestyle patterns such as physical inactivity and poor diet.

Opportunities for preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) arise at various stages of a woman's life. Interventions conducted during the early stages of life often offer the best chances for primary prevention. Initiatives, plans, and services aimed at NCD prevention and control must consider the health and social needs across all life stages. This begins with maternal health, including pre-pregnancy, prenatal, and postnatal care, as well as maternal nutrition and reducing exposure to environmental risk factors. It continues through practices that promote healthy infant nutrition, including breastfeeding, and the health of children, adolescents, and young adults, thereby fostering a healthy working life and well-being in old age.

Work Procedures for Third Area:

3-1 Primary Prevention of Chronic Diseases and Associated Risk Factors in Women

- Invest in positive prevention and early intervention from childhood, focusing on gender-specific social drivers of health and female-centered comprehensive care from the start of life.
- Focus on genetic determinants of women's health to customize diagnostics, treatments, and provide proactive, tailored healthcare.
- Increase awareness and primary prevention of chronic diseases and major risk factors for women and girls, (including reducing unhealthy food consumption, combating physical inactivity, and fighting tobacco use).
- Promote access to up-to-date guidelines and evidence-based recommendations for maintaining and improving health, achieving well-being, and quality of life, along with introducing the available services in this field.
- Ensure healthy nutrition in early childhood and childhood stages, including promoting breastfeeding and healthy nutrition during pregnancy stages.

- Activate virtual health services by implementing preventive virtual clinics (virtual healthy lifestyle promotion clinics within healthcare institutions) to prevent lifestyle-related risk factors.
- Encourage behavioral incentives toward healthy food choices, improving access to and variety in healthy food options, and guiding women on healthy food preparation methods.
- Adopt public health programs according to global best practices to promote physical activity for women in line with social, cultural, and economic determinants across various environments.
- Promote physical activity through daily life activities as an important part of women's daily routine in collaboration with relevant sectors (promoting physical activity within workplaces).
- Adopt public health programs in accordance with the best international standards to fight tobacco use among females, aligning with social, cultural, and economic determinants across different environments. The aim is to prevent the initiation of tobacco use, reducing morbidity and mortality resulting from tobacco-related complications.
- Utilize innovative opportunities to boost health education and modify risky health behaviors, especially among adolescent girls.
- Strengthen preventive health programs against disability.

3-2 Timely Screening and Effective Intervention for Chronic Conditions Affecting the Health of Women and Girls

- Design targeted campaigns and programs aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of screenings for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and cancer.
- Provide access to appropriate screenings for cancers that affect women, especially for those at higher risk.
- Raise awareness of the importance of the HPV vaccine and provide other relevant vaccination services.

3-3 Integrating Health Services to Meet the Needs of Women and Girls within Essential Healthcare Services

- Promote the concept of women's health in all policies to address the social determinants of health.
- Design programs, interventions, and initiatives specifically for women to increase their health awareness.
- Develop platforms and programs to support peer groups and support networks among women with chronic diseases, encouraging them to share information and success stories.
- Implement a "Women's Health Day" for working women across various workplaces, providing access to preventive screenings on that day through supportive regulations.

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4- Promoting Women's Mental Health

Women and girls face several critical life stages, such as puberty, pregnancy, motherhood, and menopause. These critical stages also encompass health challenges like infertility, perinatal depression, and the continuous caregiving role for family members of various ages and categories. Additionally, women are at risk of experiencing violence, abuse, discrimination, unemployment, isolation, widowhood, divorce, or social and economic deprivation, all of which can contribute to mental health issues and disorders. Furthermore, a variety of situations often associated with women can lead to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and eating disorders at higher rates than men.

Women's mental health is an integral part of their overall health and well-being, as: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or disability." Mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can contribute to their community."

Work Procedures for Fourth Area:

4-1 Developing, Enhancing, and Expanding Comprehensive and Integrated Mental Health Services Responsive to Women's Needs

- Activate the strategic plan for women's mental health services by implementing the associated action plan and executing its national programs.
- Expand community mental health services with a focus on early diagnosis, early intervention, and integration of mental health services for women, including human development and life skills programs.
- Strengthen the role of strategic partnerships in promoting women's mental health.
- Build the capacity of mental health service providers for women and ensure service availability.
- Enhance and support accessible digital mental health services.
- Develop additional specialized programs to address the unique mental healthcare needs of women and girls, such as issues related to early childhood experiences, trauma, body image concerns in adolescence, and eating disorders.
- Provide specialized mental health programs during the perinatal period, including care for women who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Facilitate access to high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate rapid-response services for women and girls experiencing depression crises that may lead to suicidal thoughts, including immediate care and crisis support.

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- Offer psychosocial support to women caring for family members with mental disorders and promote supportive community groups, particularly to combat social stigma.
- Ensure that women's mental health services are included in health insurance coverage.

4-2 Promoting Prevention of Mental Disorders Specific to Different Life Stages of Women

- Shift from a purely medical model to an integrated biopsychosocial model that considers women's social, economic, and cultural contexts to provide them with appropriate healthcare through multifaceted services and care.
- Enhance and develop mental health awareness programs tailored for women.
- Support research and establish a database focused on variables and disorders related to women's mental health.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to create early screening opportunities for girls to detect mental health disorders and emphasize early intervention.
- Promote community engagement and highlight global events dedicated to women's mental health.
- Strengthen and support positive mental health messaging to combat stigma, discrimination, and misinformation affecting women and girls.
- Promote the mental health of women with psychological/emotional disabilities.

5- Promoting Healthy Aging for Women

The concept of healthy aging, along with related ideas such as "positive aging" and "aging productively," has evolved over the years in response to global demographic changes. Healthy aging is defined as "the process of developing and maintaining physical and mental functional ability that enables well-being in older age." Healthy aging begins even before conception with healthy mothers, continues through birth, and throughout the life cycle. It involves improving the health and well-being of old women and engaging them by creating opportunities and supportive health-promoting environments.

With significant advancements in medical science, the impact of certain major conditions (such as early mortality from chronic diseases) has been reduced, but this also increases the likelihood that more women will live longer with multiple health conditions and disabilities. With rising life expectancy and a growing number of elderly women, their health concerns now require special attention.

Work Procedures for Fifth Area:

5-1 Adopting a Full Life-Course Approach to Achieve Healthy Aging for Women

- Develop targeted interventions related to healthy aging at various stages of the life course.
- Reduce reluctance and fears surrounding discussions about aging in earlier life stages.
- Support preventive approaches that promote self-care and health enhancement during the aging process.

5-2 Addressing Key Risk Factors That Reduce Quality of Life for Women as They Age

- Identify critical intervention points throughout the life course to better address and respond to relevant risk factors.
- Establish social support initiatives for elderly women and promote evidence-based community interventions, such as peer support, health education, and psychological support programs for older women.
- Increase awareness and provide appropriate training for individuals who provide healthcare to elderly women, whether family members or live-in caregivers.

5-3 Identifying and Effectively Managing the Specific Health Needs of Elderly Women

- Provide services that offer comprehensive, integrated care for elderly women with chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and others.
- Improve access to assistive technologies and support for elderly women with disabilities or limited functional abilities.
- Support programs focused on improving musculoskeletal health in women to achieve long-term prevention of frailty and fractures, as well as neurological health to prevent associated health issues.
- Enhance access to dental care and services for hearing and vision impairments, including the provision of hearing and vision aids.
- Ensure screening for dementia risk factors in all older women and provide treatment when detected.
- Address and manage specific health needs for elderly women that may be sensitive, such as urinary incontinence.
- Activate partnerships in aging health to create a safe environment for the elderly, such as providing walking trails and specialized community centers.
- Develop smart programs for elderly services and telemedicine support.

6- Combating the Health Effects of Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women is defined as "any act of violence that results in harm or suffering to a woman, whether physical, sexual, or psychological, including the threat of such acts, coercion, exploitation, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether it occurs in public or private life."

Violence against women (physical, sexual, and psychological) leads to significant physical, psychological, sexual, and reproductive health problems, both in the short and long term, and also affects the health and well-being of their children. This violence results in increased social and economic costs borne by women, their families, and their communities. It can lead to consequences such as suicide, injuries, unwanted pregnancies, induced abortions, women's health problems, sexually transmitted infections, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, other anxiety-causing disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and health issues such as headaches, pain syndromes (chronic back pain, abdominal pain, and pelvic pain), gastrointestinal disturbances, limited mobility, overall health deterioration, and an increased likelihood of smoking, substance abuse, alcohol use, and engaging in risky health behaviors. It is also associated with both committing and being a victim of violence.

Although preventing and addressing violence against women requires a multi-sectoral approach, the health sector plays a crucial role in this regard.

Work Procedures for Sixth Area:

6-1 Raising Awareness of the Health Impacts of Violence Against Women and Girls

- Advocate for the rejection of violence against women and address it as a global public health issue.
- Design awareness campaigns to promote positive relationships and educate both genders about the negative health effects of violence against women, affecting them, their families, and communities as a whole.
- Develop and implement awareness campaigns and platforms that empower women to speak out about their experiences with sexual or domestic violence or harassment.
- Integrate the concept of combating violence and raising awareness about it into school curricula.

*In case of any misinterpretation, the Arabic version of this policies prevails.

6-2 Combating the Health and Related Effects of Physical or Psychological Violence

- Create safe environments that enable the disclosure of all forms of violence, including domestic violence, and combat the social stigma that may prevent victims from reporting their experiences of violence.
- Develop innovative service models to address the health impacts of violence against women and girls, especially those from vulnerable groups.
- Involve affected women (and their families) in designing and redeveloping these services to ensure that they meet the needs of the users.
- Combat harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, which pose serious health risks to women.

6-3 Designing and Delivering Safe and Accessible Services for Women Who Have Experienced Physical or Psychological Violence

- Increase the capacity of healthcare practitioners to identify, diagnose, and address the physical and psychological health effects of violence against women, with special attention to services for pregnant women, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women with disabilities, and elderly women affected by violence.
- Closely link services for treating and rehabilitating the effects of physical and sexual violence with mental health support services and family counseling programs.
- Develop smart and digital services for addressing and rehabilitating women and girls who have experienced violence, enhancing privacy.
- Include treatment and rehabilitation services for cases of violence in health insurance packages.
- Develop a monitoring system for violence through health authorities.
- Coordinate and establish connections between relevant organizations, such as shelters for women and girls affected by violence, and health authorities.

7- Strengthening Information Systems, Innovation, and Research Capacity in Women's Health

Providing high-quality, comprehensive, and easily accessible data on women's health is crucial for deepening our understanding of it. This includes coordinating roles and responsibilities for consistent data collection processes, and adopting effective methods for managing and analyzing this data. Enhancing research and capacity in women's health requires focusing on high-quality studies and supporting research capabilities, enabling effective planning, decision-making, and the development and evaluation of appropriate, evidence-based, and timely health policies.

Globally, statistical health data collection, sorting, and analysis by (gender), socio-economic status, demographic subgroups, and other relevant variables are often not conducted consistently. Reliable, up-to-date data on women's mortality, morbidity, specific health issues, and diseases affecting women, as well as data on healthcare services for girls and women and their patterns of service utilization, are sometimes unavailable. Additionally, the impact of disease prevention programs and health improvement outcomes for women are not always adequately tracked. Research topics significant to women's health are also underexplored and not always addressed in a gender-specific way. Notably absent are clinical trials conducted on women to establish basic information on drug dosages, side effects, and efficacy. Many treatment protocols and medical interventions for women rely on research conducted on men, without adjustments for biological and behavioral differences between genders. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen information systems, innovation, and research capacity in the field of women's health.

Work Procedures for Seventh Area:

7-1 Generating Data and Statistics on Women's Health Services and Related Health Issues for Evidence-Based Decision-Making

- Utilize existing national datasets (demographic, health, and social) to conduct regular analysis and monitor health conditions affecting priority groups of women and girls.
- Strengthen the risk factor monitoring system for diseases related to unhealthy lifestyle habits among females.
- Improve the processes for maintaining, reviewing, and updating national records on chronic diseases, with particular focus on cancer registries.
- Ensure equal protection for girls and women regarding the right to privacy, informed consent, and confidentiality of information.

*In case of any misinterpretation, the Arabic version of this policies prevails.

- Generate data on effective measures and the extent of women’s health issues through population surveys, including specific issues such as violence against women in current demographic and health surveys, as well as in surveillance and health information systems.

7-2 Enhancing High-Quality Research Procedures and Ways to Develop Them in the Field of Prevention and Addressing Health Issues Related to Women's Health

- Strengthen national research capacities in the country to identify gender-specific characteristics of health conditions and diseases for effective treatment.
- Boost partnerships with academic institutions to create formal opportunities for sharing research, continuing education, and bridging gaps in research and data collection to strengthen and broaden research capacities.
- Establish a Women's Health Research Center within select academic institutions to study various medical, surgical, social, behavioral, and psychological issues affecting women across age groups, using advanced scientific methods.
- Invest in long-term studies on women's health to deepen understanding of trends across life stages, focusing particularly on critical phases and priority groups.
- Use non-traditional data collection methods, including qualitative, ethnographic, and narrative approaches, to understand the impact of social and behavioral health determinants and the lived experiences of women and girls, especially those with mental health challenges.
- Encourage clinical trials to ensure women are effectively and equally recruited alongside men in relevant research.
- Close gaps in research topics related to women's health, ensuring updated statistics on the prevalence and interventions for issues affecting women.
- Support research on assisted reproductive technologies, fertility enhancement, and infertility treatment.
- Promote a community culture of participation in health research, including female engagement.
- Provide financial support for health research and innovations, with safeguards for intellectual property rights for medical research and innovations.
- Support research on healthcare systems, operations, and economics to improve access to quality services, ensuring adequate support for women, studying patterns in women’s healthcare provision, and their service utilization.
- Encourage research on human genetics and the human genome from a women’s health perspective.

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- Conduct specialized studies on different stages of women's lives, such as educational courses on promoting healthy aging and preventive initiatives.

7-3 Applying the Results and Recommendations of Research and Studies and Benefiting from Them to Formulate Appropriate Initiatives and Interventions to Enhance Women's Health

- Improve data collection, data categorization, and current and future research to develop a better understanding of health outcomes, enabling evidence-based policy and strategy design.
- Expand research on the use of genomic testing and genetic medicine to support improved and early diagnosis of conditions, as well as potential targeted treatment options for women's health issues.
- Publish scientific research findings in the field of women's health.

8- Creating Environments that Promote Women's Health in the Country

This focus area aims to establish environments that promote women's health across various age groups and abilities, enabling them to benefit from the health-promoting environments provided at a national level. This is achieved through coordinated actions across relevant sectors on a national scale.

Women, like men, face increasing environmental health risks due to environmental disasters and degradation. However, women have different sensitivities to various risks, pollutants, and environmental agents, resulting in unique effects from such exposures.

Moreover, empowering and including women with specific needs to support their health is a cornerstone of policy. This includes removing all obstacles that hinder or prevent vulnerable women and women with special needs from accessing appropriate services to improve their health, thus reducing their opportunities for growth and well-being. Vulnerable or high-needs women in society include those requiring extra protection and care, such as divorced women, widows, elderly women, female heads of household, homeless women, and women of determination with physical or mental developmental delays, disabilities, or learning difficulties. They also include poor women and women who are otherwise limited in capacity. These groups are among the most in need of targeted empowerment and inclusion programs within healthcare and developmental support systems.

Work Procedures for Eighth Area:

8-1 Providing Healthy Environmental Conditions and Ensuring Longevity for Women Based on Environmental Sustainability

- Promote community engagement that supports women's health.
- Reduce exposure to environmental pollutants by improving women's living environments, including (addressing outdoor and indoor air pollution, climate change impacts, and other factors).
- Ensure a healthy workplace environment for women.
- Create environments that promote healthy lifestyles for women.
- Develop suitable infrastructure that accommodates the needs of women across various groups, allowing them to engage in diverse activities, including physical exercise.
- Designate sports centers for women and girls to engage in physical activities.
- Provide health-supportive environments that adhere to inclusive design principles, as outlined in the UAE Universal Design Code.

*In case of any misinterpretation, the Arabic version of this policies prevails.

8-2 Providing Protection, Prevention, and a Supportive Environment for Women with Specific Needs

- Prioritize and support the development of tools and initiatives addressing the health issues faced by women and girls experiencing health inequalities, particularly women of determination.
- Focus on social, cultural, and economic determinants of health to understand the needs of various subgroups, delivering culturally and linguistically responsive, safe care.
- Continuously support high-quality healthcare services directly targeting priority populations, especially women of determination and vulnerable groups.

8-3 Empowering Women and Enhancing Their Role as One of the Key Pillars of the Healthcare System

- Support women's participation and work in the health sector.
- Empower female healthcare providers to develop health plans, positioning them as strategic and central partners in future-oriented health pathways.
- Launch national strategies and legislation supporting nursing and midwifery professions.
- Optimize the use of information technology and research to enhance the skills of healthcare professionals.
- Promote gender balance in the recruitment of women in the health field.