



BADRI

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The Vitals

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Medical Newsletter

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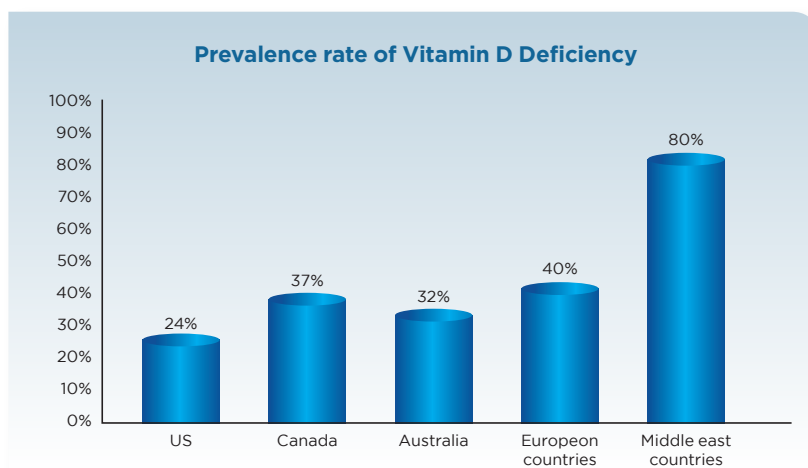
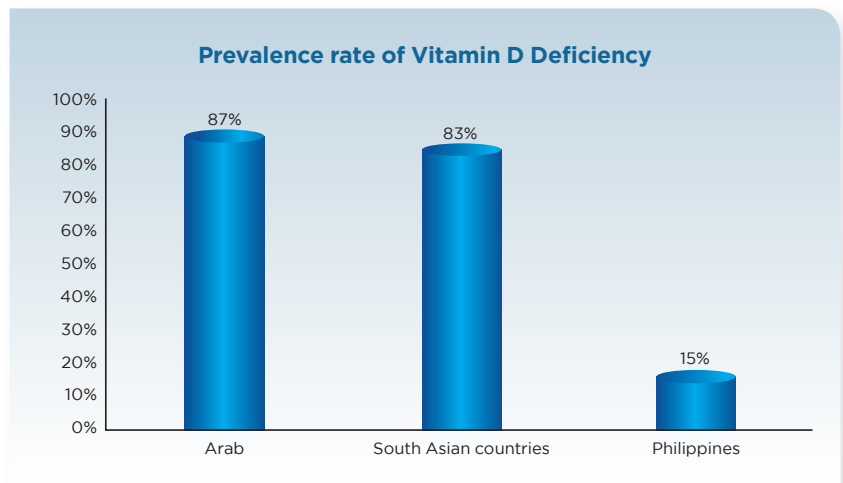
TOPIC 1

VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that plays an important role in calcium homeostasis and bone metabolism. Vitamin D is important for bone health, its deficiency is prevalent worldwide but is again most notable in Asia and surprisingly in the Middle East, despite its plentiful sunshine. Vitamin D could be linked to noncommunicable diseases, including cardiovascular disease. Common symptoms include body and bone pains and unexplained fatigue symptoms which includes fatigue, weakness, back pains, poor wound healing, hair loss, and symptoms of depression.

Vitamin D deficiency has been increased globally with high prevalence in some countries of UAE. Studies elucidated a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi. According to Dubai Health Authority (DHA), 1 in 10 ex-pats and 2 in 10 Emirates are overweight and could be at risk for vitamin D deficiency. People rarely expose their skin while out in the sun especially in the summer when temperatures top 40°C and humidity can reach 90%. Other lifestyle factors may play a role such as the degree of physical activity, clothing, and dietary habits that affect the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency.¹

According to a survey conducted among female (aged 18 years and over) migrants from the Philippines, Arab and South Asian countries residing in UAE results that vitamin D deficiency among women in Arab countries is the highest which is due to inadequate exposure of skin to sunlight due to a very conservative style of dress that covers most of the body when they are outdoor. The low prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in the Philippines as compared to the South Asian and Arabs might be due to the lower prevalence of both obesity and physical inactivity.



According to one more survey regarding Vitamin D, it was analyzed that Middle east countries comprised the highest deficiency of vitamin D. It also shows lower prevalence among adults in developed countries, the United States has the lowest cases of vitamin D deficiency that is 24%. This can be indirectly attributed to the popularization and mass production of vitamin D fortified milk, butter, and yogurt, 37% in Canada, 32% in Australia, and 40% in European countries. Vitamin D deficiency of up to 80% was observed in Middle Eastern Arab countries despite the sunny weather.²



Treatment for Deficiency of Vitamin D

The following strategies are recommended regarding the emerging epidemic of vitamin D deficiency:

- Communities should promote outdoor lifestyle activities.
- Awareness platforms should introduce in schools that promote an active lifestyle, sun exposure, and intake of a vitamin D-rich diet.
- Government should start policies for food fortification with vitamin D.
- Media should involve in increasing awareness about the alarming prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in the UAE society and its serious consequences.
- In UAE, absorption of Vitamin D is possible in sunlight only from 10 am to 3 pm. People need to expose nearly 40% of their skin, avoid wearing sunscreen and face sunlight for 30 minutes a day within these hours.³



TOPIC 2

MONKEYPOX DISEASE

The monkeypox virus, which causes smallpox-like infection, is spreading around the world. It can be fatal in certain cases. Yet it is described as an “under-recognized” and “under-reported” emerging disease. Regarding this, WHO has reported that the current outbreak is spreading primarily through sexual contact. It says children are at higher risk and pregnant women who contract the virus may have complications, including stillbirth. The case-fatality ratio ranges from 1% to 10%, with most deaths occurring in younger age groups.

Other than this, WHO has stated that there are two main strains of the virus:

1. Congo strain

In Africa, the Congo strain is more severe “with up to 10% mortality” (even up to 15%), Death is more likely among kids.

2. West African strain

The West African strain is less severe and has a case fatality rate of about 1% of cases.

Four gulf countries have announced their position on the spread of the monkeypox virus, which causes a smallpox-like infection, in several countries around the world.

Saudi Arabia said that the possibility of monkeypox patients transmitting to the Kingdom is very weak.

The United Arab Emirates became the first Gulf country to announce a case of monkeypox. The country announced its readiness to deal with the disease and start early surveillance for it.

Qatari Ministry of Public Health added that it has taken a full set of public health measures for early detection of any suspected cases, if they appear, to contain any possible spread of the virus.

Kuwait’s Ministry of Health confirmed no cases of monkeypox cases were detected in the country yet.

The Ministry of Health says current COVID-19 prevention measures such as practicing physical distancing, mask-wearing, and frequent hand sanitization reduce the likelihood of transmission of the monkeypox virus. Furthermore, the Health Ministry says symptoms usually ease within 14 to 21 days. Symptoms include fever, chills, intense headaches, exhaustion, backache, muscle ache, swollen lymph nodes, rash, etc.⁴





Key highlights of the monkeypox disease

- Cases are expected to rise still, but experts say the overall risk to the broader population is “very low”.
- The virus is most common in remote parts of Central and West Africa. It is the largest outbreak outside of Africa in 50 years.
- The United States is in the process of releasing the monkeypox vaccine. The two-dose Jynneos vaccine (also known as Imvamune or Imvanex) is licensed to prevent smallpox and specifically to prevent monkeypox, according to US media.
- Germany has also placed orders for the first batch of smallpox vaccines which also work against monkeypox as a preventive measure.

How can you get infected with monkeypox?

The virus enters the body mostly through:



A bite by an infected animal, touching its blood, body fluids, or fur.



Eating meat from an infected animal that has not been cooked properly could expose a person to the virus.



Touching clothing or towels used by someone with the rash.



Touching monkeypox skin blisters or getting too close to coughs and sneezes from an infected person etc.

Worldwide cases of Monkeypox⁵

Countries	Confirmed Cases	Countries	Confirmed Cases
United Kingdom	910	Ghana	18
Spain	736	Israel	16
Germany	676	United Arab Emirates	13
Portugal	348	Sweden	13
France	330	Australia	13
Canada	235	Denmark	13
Netherlands	211	Poland	12
United States	173	Hungary	12
Italy	127	Brazil	11
Belgium	77	Mexico	9
Switzerland	55	Slovenia	8
Ireland	28	Czech Republic	6
Austria	20		

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TOPIC 3

HEALTH UPDATES IN MENA REGION

New Mandatory Health Insurance Law in Qatar

In one of the recent steps in the continuous journey of development in the state of Qatar, a new health insurance scheme was introduced in November 2021 by-law number 22 of 2021 regulating the health services in Qatar. Under the new law, employers are required to provide basic health care coverage for their employees. The policy includes coverage for basic services and emergency cases for those under 60 years of age as well as coverage for chronic illnesses. According to the rating agency Standard & Poor's, the new plan is expected to generate a premium ranging from 1 billion to 1.5 billion QAR.⁶



Expatriates, current businesses, and visitors to Qatar will be affected by the new requirements provided in the law.

- As per Article (8) of the law, both expatriates and visitors must have health insurance to acquire basic healthcare services. Business owners are enabled to provide additional healthcare services accordingly.
- Article (10) of the law emphasizes the mandatory health Insurance as it states that:
 - ✓ Basic Health Insurance coverage is required for the issuance of entry permits, residence permits, and expatriates' employment.
 - ✓ Basic Health Insurance coverage is required for the renewal of both entry and residence permits.
 - ✓ The coverage's duration shall extend to cover the stay/ residence duration.



- Article (11) of the law provides that both sponsors and employers must cover visitors / non-Qatari employees and their families in the mandatory health insurance through contracts with registered insurance companies.
- Article (13) of the law obliges employers to pay the insurance fees of the employees and their families, provide them with a Health Insurance card and demonstrate that their workers are covered by the mandatory health insurance. The same applies to sponsors. However, Visitors shall either pay their health insurance fees or prove that they have international health insurance that is valid in Qatar.

As per the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) announcement on the matter; the new health insurance system will reduce waiting times in the government health facilities in the country and provide appointments for medical consultations within a time that meets the health needs of citizens at the highest level of quality i.e., will lead to the development of the health sector and the services provided to the public.

Fines and penalties:

Article 28 & 29	Up to 500K QAR fine.	Unregistered healthcare providers delivering healthcare provider refusing to deliver healthcare services in cases of accidents and emergencies.
Article 30	Up to 200K QAR fine.	Insurance Companies that deal with unregistered healthcare providers or insurance mediators.
Article 31	Up to 250K QAR fine.	Registered Healthcare providers refusing to deliver any agreed-on service.
Article 32	Up to 300K QAR fine.	Employers / sponsors refusing to cover their workers, pay their insurance fees, or collect any amount of money relevant to the insurance fees.

Insurance companies have been preparing for the compulsory health insurance scheme since the start of this year, for example, they have been designing medical insurance packages. Among other functions, the MOPH will register healthcare service providers, determining the services each of them is authorized to provide and registering insurance companies, claims management companies, and insurance brokers. They will set the rules for transferring health insurance coverage from one insurance company to another.⁷



UAE to introduce QR code on medicine pack

UAE is the first country in the world to introduce AR-powered drug packs with a QR code for paperless access to drug-related information easily and innovatively. Patients can interactively read the drug information on the medicine box by simply scanning a QR code. The objective is to develop and apply modern technologies in the health sector, by linking the entire drug information to an electronic source on the Internet to provide complete data about the drug upon scanning the code, using smartphones, thus facilitating access to the drug information interactively. When reading the QR code using artificial intelligence, an interactive



service is obtained, where the virtual assistant appears in a three-dimensional form and provides the patient with all information about the drug class. This will help improve treatment outcomes and avoid medication errors. Also, it will further help facilitate patients' access to medicines to ensure their adherence to treatment plans.⁸

DHA upgrades electronic medical record system 'Salama'

Dubai Health Authority's (DHA) Electronic Medical Record System, Salama, has been updated to ensure that patients visiting DHA hospitals have access to a maximum number of healthcare services digitally and to enhance the patient experience through the DHA app. Salama systems have more than 5 million patient medical records and it ensures that the patients visiting DHA health care facilities have access to their records digitally from their homes enabling them to see the medications, upcoming appointments, online appointment facilities, and availability of clinical results. Telehealth and teleconsultations are enabled for patients ensuring that the care is provided to patients at their ease.

The upgraded features include delivering medicines to patients' rooms, maintaining medicine stocks according to the required levels, classifying medicines according to colors, and documenting them accurately. Moreover, from a patient's point of view, patients can use the DHA app and access their medical records or their family member's medical records. Moreover, the systems allow doctors and staff to deliver medicine to patients' rooms, maintain medicine stocks to the required levels, document and classify medicines accurately, add comments and notes, review, and audit documents, and provide medical orders as required by the patients. For specialist doctors, the enhanced feature can allow tracking of the progress of the mother during labor.⁹



UAE: New drug approval to bring hope to breast cancer patients

UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention has authorized the use of a new drug developed by MSD Pharmaceuticals that is set to bring hope to triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC) patients. This makes the UAE the world's second country to approve the drug after the United States.

Breast cancer accounts for 21.4% of the number of new cancer cases in the UAE, according to the World Health Organization data from 2020, with TNBC constituting 15% of total breast cancer cases globally. The launch of this new drug offers a renewed sense of hope for patients with TNBC. They will now have access to this immuno-therapy across public and private clinics. The approved drug is taken along with chemotherapy. The recommended dosage of the drug for TNBC is 200 mg every three weeks or 400 mg every six weeks as an intravenous infusion over 30 minutes. It is administered in combination with chemotherapy for neoadjuvant treatment for 24 weeks, and then as a single agent for adjuvant treatment for up to 27 weeks. It is stated that the reoccurrence rate of TNBC was reduced under the drug when compared with just chemotherapy. This drug would speed up patients' treatment plans, improve their quality of life and offer better outcomes to the UAE's TNBC patients. The drug reduces the risk of aggressive cancer reoccurrence after surgery by more than a third.¹⁰

Launch of a "Sphere" system

The UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP) has launched an e-public health system called Sphere. Sphere provides a unified national database that enhances disease prevention, by sharing and exchanging information locally, regionally, and globally. It includes the reporting of communicable diseases, pathological syndromes, chemical poisoning cases, injuries, and vaccination records. Sphere has a lot of features, such as epidemiological analysis, identifying patterns and seasons of diseases, calculating relevant indicators, using them to make decisions, and creating epidemiological maps to deal with potential threats in the future. In addition to monitoring data and information to evaluate the burden of health risks, prioritize public health actions, and monitor the impact of control measures, the new system supports research that helps determine the bases and standards for the development of public health policies and strategies. It is a preventive and proactive health strategy adopted by the Ministry that will significantly help to maintain public and community health. The new platform targets all concerned health cadres in government and private health institutions.¹¹





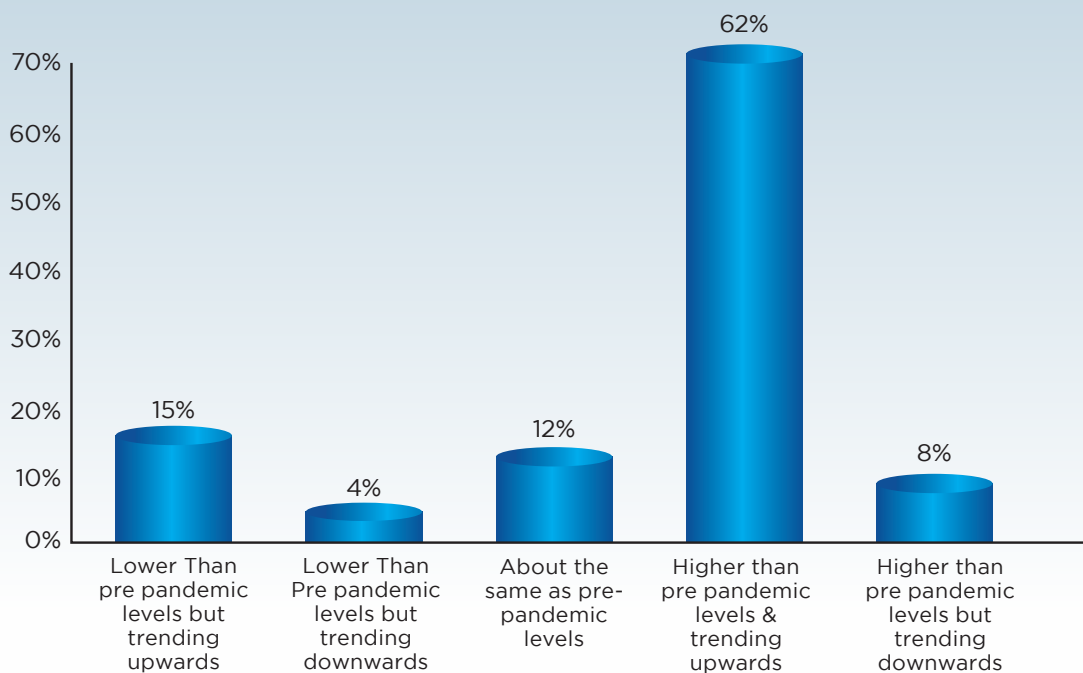
Medical costs are on the rise in 2022 across the Middle East and Africa Region

To identify the key trends that are shaping the future of health and benefits around the world, a survey was conducted from 210 insurers across 50 countries, including the MEA region. A key contributor to medical cost increase is rising claims activity. 62% of insurers surveyed in the MEA region are expecting claims to rise and potentially exceed pre-pandemic levels. The key aspects that are driving increases in claims activity across MEA are non-communicable diseases and Covid-19 related claims.

Top drivers of claims across MEA

- **Non-communicable diseases:** In the MEA region, chronic condition occurrences remain very high in comparison to global standards, with respiratory conditions, diseases of the circulatory system, and endocrine and metabolic diseases accounting for the top three chronic conditions driving claims activity.
- **Covid-19-related claims activity:** During the pandemic, insurers and employers experienced a substantial reduction in claims activity because of lockdown restrictions and deferred elective procedures. Claims activity is now rebounding and seems to be exceeding pre-pandemic levels as many patients need more extensive and expensive medical treatment due to delayed care and lack of access to preventative screening during the pandemic.¹²

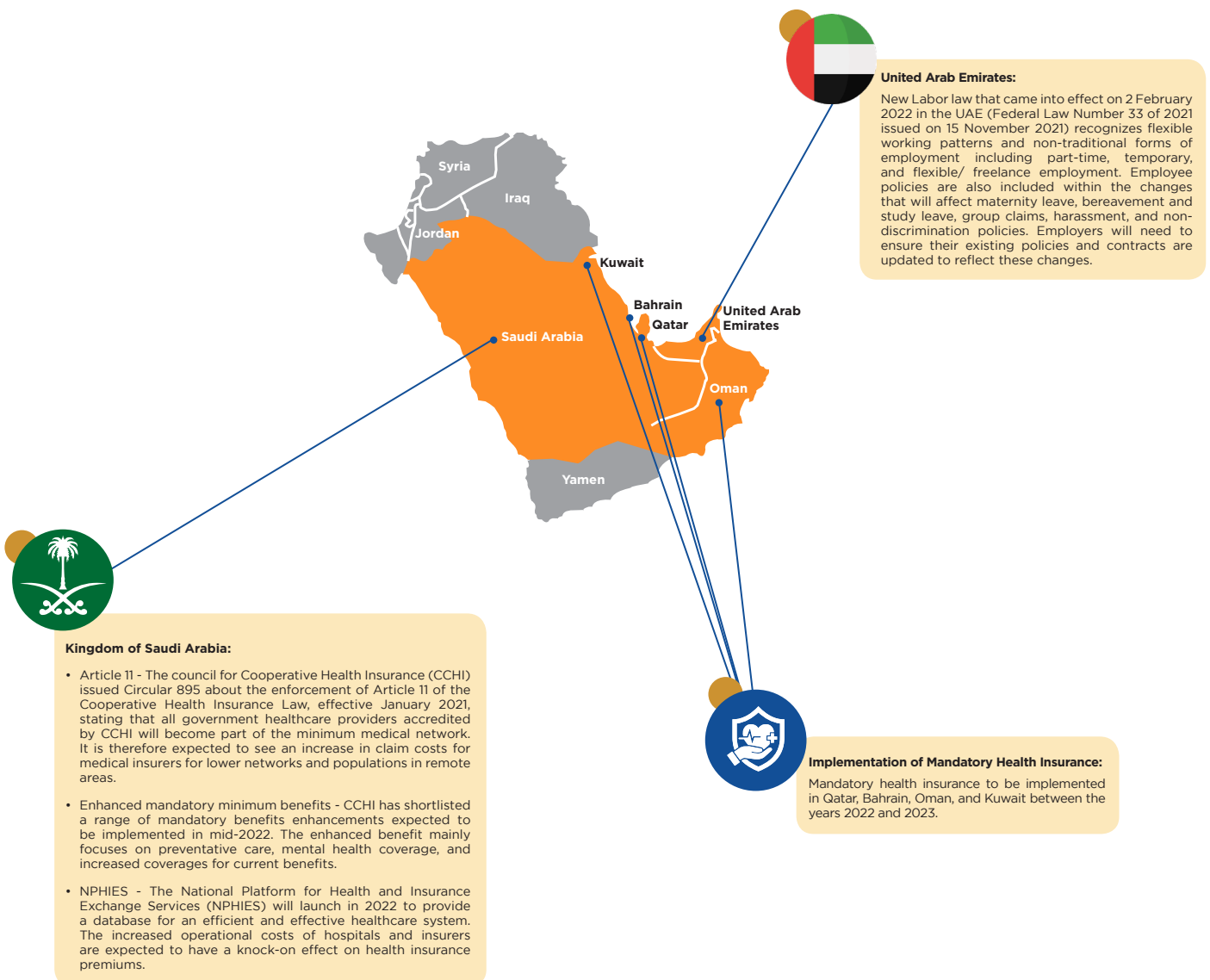
Current medical claims trending Middle East and Africa





Top regulatory updates across MEA Region

With rising medical trend rates in the MEA region, businesses are experiencing challenges navigating such a dynamic health and benefits landscape. One of the challenges that businesses face is the regulatory updates that have been or will soon be, introduced in countries across the region. While changes to legislation concerning employee health and benefits can contribute to increased medical costs for employers, new regulations can also present businesses with opportunities to diversify their benefit offerings to retain, attract and engage top talent.¹³





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How we can help



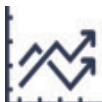
Pricing and predictive analysis



Fraud Waste and Abuse



Cost Containment Alternatives



Performance Monitoring and Analytics



Profit Optimization



Provide Network Structure

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