

Middle East HEALTH

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Retooling healthcare in the Arab world

Arab Spring complicates
changing demands

Anaesthetic safety concerns

Large study shows increased risk
of mortality with Etomidate use

Breast cancer

Study shows Magnetic Resonance Imaging
Using Ultrasound better for diagnosis

On the frontline

MERS-Coronavirus kills
Saudi, UAE health workers

In the News

- Medical university, teaching hospital for Dubai Silicon Oasis
- Saudi Aramco, Johns Hopkins Medicine in joint venture
- Mafraq Hospital publishes region's first *Atlas of Hematology*
- Measles deaths reach record lows
- New Global Atlas calls for improved palliative care



Prognosis

Open for business

Speaking to medical device manufacturers and healthcare industry service suppliers from around the world at the Arab Health expo in January it was interesting to hear their perspective on doing business in the region. Generally it looks like 2014 is going to be a good year for business, particularly for those involved in the Saudi market. In a massive infrastructure development programme, the Saudi government is continuing to build many new hospitals across the vast desert kingdom, including a number of extensive medical cities. In the private sector there are a number of large, multi-billion dollar, multifaceted infrastructure projects being developed, some of which have healthcare as an anchor project within the development. This points to a massive growth in demand for all kinds of healthcare devices, healthcare IT solutions and hospital management partnerships in the kingdom. It is clear this is the market to be focussed on in this region.

Iraq, too, has massive potential and some companies are bravely venturing into this market, although insecurity continues to plague swathes of the country. Irbil in the north is the exception and appears to have found stability. With huge oil wealth, the government has the funds and is trying to rebuild its healthcare infrastructure. Nonetheless, it remains a place where 'fortune will favour the brave'.

In this issue we publish an interesting article which looks at research from the American University of Beirut on the effect the Arab Spring has had on shifting demands in the regional healthcare sector. It notes that health services in the Arab world are being forced to retool in the face of changing healthcare needs and chronic diseases linked to rising prosperity and ageing populations, even as the region grapples with political turmoil and uncertainty.

And in other news affecting the region, we run a report on the Jeddah Declaration in which Islamic scholars state that Islamic communities must provide safe access for health workers who are vaccinating children against polio. This is an important issue as in several parts of the Arab world, communities, out of fear and ignorance, have blocked, assaulted and even killed health workers who were trying to provide vaccinations for polio. Hopefully this Declaration will go some way to improving the situation.

As always there is more news, new product reviews and interviews in this issue.

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