



Confronting Health Needs in Conflict and Natural Disasters"

Vancouver, Canada June 30th-July 2nd, 2023







Dear SAMS Colleagues,

We are honored to have your attendance at SAMS 21st Conference, "Research in Hybrid Crisis: Confronting Health Nee and Natural Disasters" in Vancouver, Canada, June 30th – July Marriott Parq Vancouver.

Our conference brings together SAMS Members, physicians, he thought leaders, SAMS staff, and of course our dedicated SA and supporters. The conference includes a one-day Scient CME-accredited by the University of Chicago. This year, of Program focuses on utilizing research and medical education for change in crisis. The program includes sessions on treatment barriers and advancing research in disaster ne effects of crisis on mental health, data science innovations in research, medical education during conflict and natural disasters.

on SAMS specialty programs, the ethical problems of triage in wartime, and much more. The conference will feature lectures by esteemed professionals and includes upwards of 6 hours of CME credit!

On Saturday evening, SAMS will hold our Annual Gala Dinner, from 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM. We invite you, your families, and colleagues to join us to get to know SAMS humanitarian work more, hear from SAMS leadership and special speakers, and to receive an update on SAMS latest efforts. Please reach out to the conference organizers to purchase tickets.

We hope that the conference and social provide a venue for reconnection and refocusing of our collective mission to enrich SAMS Members' academic and educational endeavors and to continue to strengthen our humanitarian efforts in Syria and beyond. As always, thank you all for your constant dedication to SAMS, our Members, and the communities and people we serve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amjad Rass SAMS President

Amjad Rass



Friday 06/30/2023

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Conference Registration

6:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Opening Ceremony

8:00 PM – 11:00 PM: Dinner & Social, Paramount Fine Foods Vancouver

Saturday 07/1/2023

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM: Breakfast

8:30 AM – 12:15 PM: Scientific program

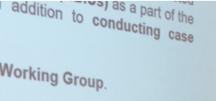
12:15 PM – 1:15 PM: Lunch Break

1:15 PM – 4:30 PM: Scientific program 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM: Evening Gala Dinner

Sunday 7/2/2023

5:00 PM: Sailaway, Alaska Glacier Experience

Royal Caribbean, Brilliance of the Seas





July 1st, 2023

Start	End	Scientific Program			
8:30 AM	8:45 AM	Introduction and Welcome			
Start	End	SESSION 1: Research in Natural Disasters: Challenges and Opportunities	Speaker		
8:45 AM	9:00 AM	Overcoming Treatment Barriers & Advancing Research in Disaster Nephrology	Sami Alasfar, MD, MPH		
9:00 AM	9:15 AM	The Effects of Crisis on Children's Mental Health	Yassar Kanawati, MD		
9:15 AM	9:30 AM	Breaking Barriers, Saving Lives: Exploring Data Science Innovations in Hybrid Crisis Research	Fares Alahdab, MD, MSc		
9:30 AM	9:45 AM	Medical Education During Conflict and Natural Disasters	Faizal Haji, MD, PhD, FRCSC		
9:45 AM	10:00 AM	Q&A			
10:00 AM	10:30 AM	COFFEE BREAK			
KEYNOTE					
10:30 AM	11:00 AM	Ethical Problems of Triage in Wartime	Raphael Pitti, MD		





July 1st, 2023

Start	End	SESSION 2: Research in the Syrian Conflict: A Catalyst for Change	Speaker		
11:00 AM	11:20 AM	The R4HSSS Project: A New Approach for Operational Research Projects in the Syrian Context	Abdulkarim Ekzayez, MD, MSc, PhD		
11:20 AM	11:40 AM	Strengthening SAMS Operational Research Portfolio	Mohamed Hamze, DDS, MSc		
11:40 AM	12:00 PM	SAMS Oncology Programs: Service Delivery and Operational Research	Haifaa Abdulhaq, MD		
12:00 PM	12:15 PM	Q&A			
12:15 PM	1:15 PM	LUNCH BREAK			
KEYNOTE					
1:15 PM	1:45 PM	Confronting the Vulnerability of Care in	Leonard Rubenstein, .ID. LLM		



July 1st, 2023

3:00 PM

4:00 PM

4:20 PM

3:30 PM

4:20 PM

4:30 PM

Start	End	SESSION 3: Armed Conflict and the Health System	Speaker
1:45 PM	2:05 PM	Analyzing Health of Displaced Populations Through an Integrated Clinical-Ecological Lens	Muhammad H. Zaman, PhD
2:05 PM	2:25 PM	New Models of Health System Governance in Conflict	Munzer Alkhalil, MD
2:25 PM	2:45 PM	Health impacts of Attacks on Health in Syria: Research and Advocacy	Aula Abbara, MBBS BSc MD DTMH
2:45 PM	3:00 PM	Q&A	

Start	End	SESSION 4: Strengthening Medical Education During Conflict	Speaker	
3:30 PM	3:45 PM	Advanced Quality Learning for Mental Health in Northern Syria	Dana Townsend, PhD	
3:45 PM	4:00 PM	Globalization Discourses in Medical Education: The Case of War-Torn Countries	Kusai Alsalhanie, MD, MHPE	

SAMS Institute of Medical Education:

Update

COFFEE BREAK

Q&A

Shanaz Sulejmanovic,

MEd



Sami Alasfar, MD, MPH

Sami Alasfar is a board-certified nephrologist with expertise in transplant nephrology. He is also an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Mayo Clinic School of Medicine. Dr. Alasfar is a senior associate consultant at Mayo Clinic Arizona since 2022. He did medical school training at University of Damascus in Syria. After completing residency at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA, he completed Nephrology and Transplant Nephrology fellowships at Johns Hopkins University in 2016, where he stayed as faculty and director of the transplant nephrology fellowship until 2022. He also completed master in public health at Johns Hopkins University and his capstone was about improving dialysis services in areas of conflict. He received funding from the world health organization for quality improvement project "Improving dialysis services in NW Syria"

Dr. Alasfar is involved in global humanitarian projects to improve care of kidney disease patients in armed conflict settings. In addition, he is passionate about studying cardiovascular disease and kidney transplantation and rejection of the kidney transplant.

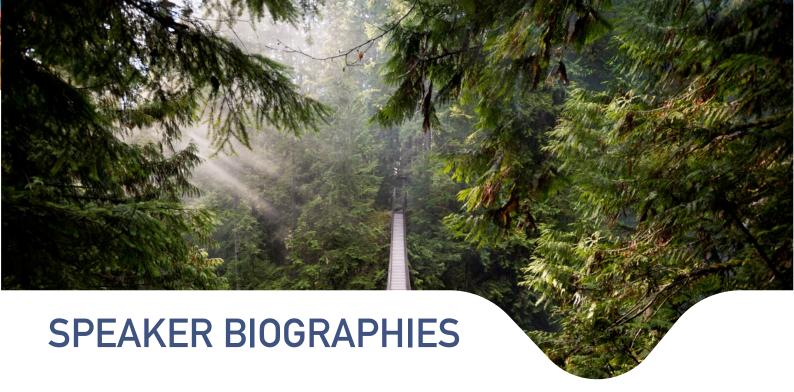
Yassar Kanawati, MD

Dr. Yassar Kanawati is Child/Adolescent/Adult and Addiction Psychiatrist. She has worked in private practice in Atlanta, GA since 2014. She is originally from Damascus, but has been in the USA for more than 30 years. She completed her Psychiatry Residency and Fellowship at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She has been involved with the Syrian Crisis since it started in 2011 through SAMS and has contributed to building Psychosocial programs for Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey. She also worked with Syrians inside the besieged areas in Syria via Skype. Additionally, she's worked with Iraqi, Somali and African Refugees for over ten years in Clarkston Georgia USA at the Center for Trauma and Torture Survivors. She is an Adjunct Professor at Emory Medical School in Atlanta. She was the Medical Director of Family Intervention Specialists in Hiram, GA and Medical Director of Devereux Residential Treatment Center. Among her areas of expertise are depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, drug abuse and addiction treatment, and the effects of trauma and war on family members, particularly on children.

Fares Alahdab, MD, MSc

Dr. Fares Alahdab is a research scientist and faculty at the Houston Methodist Academic Institute and the Weill Cornell Medical College. An alumni of Damascus University and Mayo Clinic, he has been active in research for more than 12 years and he has published over 180 peer-reviewed publications, including at the Lancet, Circulation, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, among others. He has extensive expertise in research methodology, evidence synthesis, guideline development, and biomedical informatics. Much of his current focus is on the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in cardiology as well the concept of fairness in AI. He serves as associate editor in BMJ EBM, BMC Medicine, BMC Medical Research Methodology, and PLOS ONE. When he is not spending time with his family, he enjoys reading nonfiction as well as running and cycling.





Raphael Pitti, MD

Raphaël Pitti is an intensive care anaesthetist and associate professor of emergency and disaster medicine at the Val de Grâce. He began his career in the French Army Medical Corps, where he held the rank of general medical officer until 2004. He was then appointed head of intensive care in a number of French hospitals, while at the same time teaching. His experience in the field covers countries on several continents, from the Middle East to Africa, North Africa, South America, the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine. He has worked as an expert for a variety of national and international institutions (NATO, ICDO Geneva, etc.). Most of his experience over the last ten years has focused on humanitarian action around the world, both in the field and on missions such as defending the Bulgarian nurses and helping to care for migrants in Lampedusa (Italy). His main achievement and commitment since 2012 with UOSSM (now Mehad) has been to set up an emergency medicine training programme for doctors, medical students, nurses, midwives and first-aiders in Syria, which has trained more than 34,000 people to date. This has involved 33 trips to Syria to set up four training centres and develop the training of future trainers, despite the constant bombing and destruction of hospitals. He is a local councillor in Metz, where he initiated the friendship charter signed in 2013 between the city of Metz and the Aleppo Civil Committee. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, he has travelled to the Polish border to repatriate 236 refugees at the initiative of the Mayor of Metz, and to Ukraine to set up a war medicine training centre. To date, a war medicine training centre has been opened in Lviv and Kharkiv, and mobile training courses will be deployed across the country. To date, these training centres have trained more than 1,000 medical personnel.

Abdulkarim Ekzayez, MD, MSc, PhD

Dr Ekzayez is a Health System Expert at the Centre for Conflict and Health Research at King's College London. He is a Co-Investigator of a four-year NIHR funded project, Research for Health System Strengthening in Northern Syria (R4HSSS). His prior experience includes various academic and consultancy roles with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, American University of Beirut, Chatham House, Chemonics International, Blumont International and Integrity Global. He has also led major humanitarian health programmes for Save the Children International and Expertise France, with involvement in polio eradication programmes, Primary Health Care, health information systems and health governance initiatives. He specialises in Health Systems Strengthening, Humanitarian Health, Health Security, Epidemiology, the public health impacts of conflict and building health research capacity in conflict settings. His medical background includes clinical experience in neurosurgery. In 2013, Dr Ekzayez guitted his training to work in field hospitals providing war-related trauma care in Northwest Syria. Dr Ekzayez has authored over 25 academic journal articles and contributed to four chapter books on topics related to health and conflict. He is the General Secretary of the Syrian British Medical Society, Deputy Chair of the Syria Public Health Network, Board Member of the Syrian British Consortium, Trustee at Shafak Syria and Amna (Refugee Healing Network). He was awarded his MD from Aleppo University and his MSc in Epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He recently completed his PhD on health systems and conflict at King's College London.



Faizal Haji, MD, PhD, FRCSC

Dr. Faizal Haji is a pediatric neurosurgeon at the BC Children's Hospital and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Haji is also co-lead for the Surgical Education Research Interest Group and Associate Director of the Global Surgery Lab within the Department of Surgery at UBC. Dr. Haji completed undergraduate studies followed by medical training at McMaster University. After graduating from medical school in 2008, he completed his neurosurgical residency at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada. During residency, Dr. Haji obtained a PhD from the Institute of Medical Science at the University of Toronto, alongside completing research fellowships at the Ronald R. Wilson Centre for Research in Education at UHN and the Learning Institute at the Hospital for Sick Children. His dissertation focused on the effect of fidelity, complexity and cognitive load on learning and transfer of procedural skills for novices engaged in simulation based education. Upon completing neurosurigical residency and becoming a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in 2018, Dr. Haji completed a postgraduate fellowship in pediatric neurological surgery at the Children's Hospital of Alabama and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where his research focused on capacity development for postgraduate surgical training in resource-limited settings. After training, Dr. Haji spent two years as a pediatric and adult neurosurgeon at the Kingston Health Sciences Centre and Medical Education Scholar at Queen's University. Dr. Haji's academic interest is in health professions education, with his program of research focusing on three areas: (i) optimizing the design of simulation-based education for medical and surgical skills training with particular focus on cognitive load and learner engagement; (ii) surgical decision making and factors influencing the quality of education and assessment during surgical training; and (iii) translating innovations in health professions education to facilitate surgical capacity development in resource-limited settings through global surgical partnership.

Haifaa Abdulhaq, MD

Haifaa Abdulhaq, M.D. is Clinical Professor in Hematology and Oncology at UCSF, the director of hematology at UCSF Fresno and the director of Hematology/Oncology fellowship program at UCSF Fresno. She is board certified in hematology and medical oncology with expertise in Malignant Hematology including Lymphoproliferative neoplasms, Myeloproliferative neoplasms, Acute Leukemia, Multiple Myeloma and interest in Stem Cell transplantation. Dr. Abdulhaq completed her residency in internal medicine and fellowship in hematology & oncology at Western Pennsylvania Hospital and Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is a member of The American Society of Hematology, the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Society of Blood and Bone Marrow Transplantation. Dr. Abdulhaq has special interest in medical education. She is a recipient of Henry Kaiser Award for Excellence in teaching at UCSF. She is also interested in clinical research and serves as the principal investigator on many clinical trials in malignant hematology.



Leonard Rubenstein, JD, LLM

Len Rubenstein is Professor of the Practice in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Interim Director of its Center for Public Health and Human Rights. He is also a core faculty member the Berman Institute of Bioethics and the Center for Humanitarian Health at Johns Hopkins University. Prior to coming to Johns Hopkins, Professor Rubenstein was a Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace and before that President of Physicians for Human Rights. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the American Public Health Association's Sidel-Levy Award for Peace. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University and Harvard Law School. He founded and chairs the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition and is the author of Perilous Medicine: The Struggle to Protect Health Care from the Violence of War (Columbia University Press, 2021).

Muhammad H. Zaman. PhD

Muhammad Hamid Zaman is an HHMI professor of Biomedical Engineering and Global Health at Boston University. He received his master's and PhD from the University of Chicago. In addition to five books and over 130 peer-reviewed research articles, Professor Zaman has written extensively on innovation, refugee and global health in newspapers around the world. His newspaper columns have appeared in over 30 countries and have been translated into eight languages. He has won numerous awards for his teaching and research, the most recent being Guggenheim Fellowship (2020) for his work on antibiotic resistance in refugee camps.

Munzer Alkhalil, MD

Dr. Munzer Alkhalil currently serves as a research fellow at the Research for Health System Strengthening in North West of Syria (R4HSSS) Project, the LSE IDEAS Conflict and Civicness Research Group, and the Syria Public Health Network. His research endeavours are deeply about (re)building health Systems in conflict-affected areas, focusing on Syria. His career in the health sector started in 2011 when he functioned as an orthopedist and manager of various hospitals in the Idlib province until 2015. From 2013 to 2020, he served as the General Manager at the Idlib Health Directorate. Dr. Alkhalil's noteworthy contributions to healthcare include founding the first field hospital in northern Syria in 2011, Alamal Hospital for Orthopaedic Surgery in 2013, Idlib Health Directorate in 2013 and many central health desks. Dr. Alkhalil holds an MSc Health Policy, Planning and Financing certificate from the University of London (LSHTM + LSE). Beyond his work in the medical and research fields, Dr. Alkhalil has been actively engaged in social empowerment initiatives, constructing local councils, documenting war crimes and crimes against humanity, including chemical attacks on civilians, and running advocacy campaigns to stop attacks on health facilities and personnel.

Dana Townsend, PhD

Dana Townsend, PhD is the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Specialist at SAMS headquarters where she helps strengthen MHPSS programming, develop new proposals, and lead mental health research for the Foundation. She received her doctorate in Psychology and Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame, studying the impact of armed conflict on youth and families. Prior to that, she led international communications at the American Psychological Association.



Aula Abbara, MBBS, BSc, MD, DTMH

Aula Abbara is a consultant and researcher in Infectious Diseases/ General Internal Medicine at Imperial College London. She has volunteered with the Syrian American Medical Society since 2012 in various capacities including direct clinical work in Jordan, teaching Syrian healthcare workers in Turkey and leads their research committee. She was Project Lead for their response in Greece between 2016 and 2018 where they provided more than 30,000 primary healthcare consultations. Other humanitarian work includes on the Thai-Burmese border, refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria (pre-conflict), the Rohingya crisis and in Sierra Leone with MDM for the ebola response. Research projects include an MRC grant on Health Systems Research in Syria, an R2HC grant on Public Health impact of Attacks on Healthcare and a collaboration on AMR in conflict. She is co-founder of Health Professionals for Global Health and the Syria Public Health Network and now serves on their committee. She works part time as Infectious Diseases/ Malaria advisor for MSF.

Shanaz Sulejmanovic, MEd

Shanaz Sulejmanovic, M.Ed is a highly experienced professional with a strong background in international medical education and program operations. With a master's degree in International Education at George Washington University, she has dedicated her career to improving the quality of international medical education and promoting global health initiatives.

Currently serving as the Medical Education Manager at the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), Shanaz is responsible for enhancing the quality of training initiatives and creating the operational strategic plan for the launch of the SAMS Institute in collaboration with board members and internal stakeholders to foster sustainability, and building the capacity of the local healthcare workforce.

Shanaz spent over 12 years at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), where she managed two academic mobility programs encompassing more than 400 medical schools, academic health centers, and NGOs in the United States and over 40 countries. She advised international medical schools on best practices for implementing exchange programs, conducted site visits to evaluate program quality, and collaborated with university leaders to establish faculty physician networks and foster research collaboration.

Additionally, Shanaz has demonstrated a commitment to humanitarian work and has provided higher education guidance to displaced refugees from conflict and post-conflict zones. She has been involved in the career development for refugees from Bosnia, Chechnya, Syria, and Afghanistan offering mentorship and guidance.

Kusai Alsalhanie, MD, MHPE

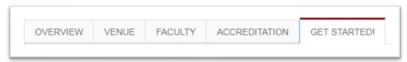
Kusai is an internationally trained physician and a scholar activist. He had the privilege to complete medical school in multiple countries across different continents. Shortly after finishing his medical training, he completed his masters in Health Professions Education. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in medical education at the University of British Columbia, and his research focuses on the disruption of medical education in contexts with geopolitical conflicts. Having survived war-displacement during his medical school, Kusai is interested in supporting and empowering the refugee medical student.



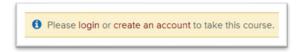
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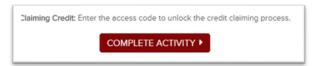


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Hani Atassi; Senior Portfolio Manager- Wealth Management Advisor:

With 25 years in the financial services industry, Hani joined Merrill Lynch Wealth Management as a financial advisor in 1996. He received his bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from University of Texas at Austin in 1991 and his MBA in Finance from Loyola University, Chicago in 1994.



Hani Atassi, CFP ®, CPM First Vice President Wealth Management Advisor Senior Portfolio Manager

He focuses on serving Health Care Professionals, following a disciplined process that begins with taking the time to get to know each client and the client's family, financial situation, and what matters most to them.

Hani holds the Certified Portfolio Manager from Columbia University, and Certified Financial Planner™ certificate.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH SAMS:

Merrill has been a partner and an ardent supporter of SAMS since its inception. Atassi & Associates is proud and honored to sponsor SAMS International Conference. The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) continues to endeavor a pivotal and leading role in saving lives and alleviating suffering in Syria and beyond. The heroic work of SAMS Foundation reveals a society that has manifested a commitment to philanthropy and service to others.

We support clients who believe that their investments should be consistent with the causes, issues and beliefs that are important to them.

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·Where there's a bull, there's a way-



Syrian Forum, a non-profit organization established in **2011** in Türkiye, works to rebuild Syrian lives through five programs. Well beyond providing only direct temporary relief, our programs are focused on **360-degree** holistic approach that are designed to empower displaced Syrians within Syria and Syrian refugees in Türkiye, securing lasting and sustainable change. Our

mission is to rebuild Syrian lives from an emotional, financial, and humanitarian angle.

We provide a comprehensive and functional alternative to the sense of defeatism and desperation. **Syrian Forum** is composed of over **1,500** dedicated full-time employees and professionals who are mostly from the region, speak the dialect, and understand the cultural and political nuances on the ground. They are bound together, determined to uplift their

compatriots into acquiring the necessary competence and skill set to rebuild, develop, and sustain their families.

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Conference Committee:

- Aula Abbara, MBBS, BSc, MD, DTMH
- Wareef Kabbani, MD
- Mohamed Hamze, DDS, MSc
- Fares Alahdab, MD, MSc
- Lina Murad, MD
- Shanaz Sulejmanovic, MEd
- Hazar Jaber, DDS, MBA
- Kusai Alsalhanie, MD, MHPE

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