

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION: Policy, Partnerships, and Systems Readiness

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REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Workshop Report



Date: July 2nd, 2025.

Location: Zewail City of Science and Technology, Cairo, Egypt.

Organisers:

The Global Health Network (TGHN)	 Enabling research by sharing knowledge
Zewail City of Science and Technology	
World Health Organization – Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO EMRO)	
American University of Beirut – Global Health Institute (AUB GHI)	 
HealthAI - The Global Agency for Responsible AI in Health	  The Global Agency for Responsible AI in Health
AI-Sarosh	

Supported by:

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)	 International Development Research Centre Centre de recherches pour le développement international
Foreign, and the Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)	 Partnership Progress Prosperity

1. Introduction

This regional workshop convened stakeholders from academia, government, NGOs, and international organisations to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can transform health systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The event provided a platform to showcase applied case studies, foster multisectoral dialogue, and map pathways for the responsible integration of AI in health systems.

2. Key outcomes and reflections

Drawing on the expertise and direct participation of the MENA and Asian Regional Coordinator for AI4GH, the following reflections capture the most significant outcomes of the meeting.

Participants collectively recognised the **urgent need for national and regional strategies** to guide the responsible adoption of AI in health. This was accompanied by a candid acknowledgment of **systemic gaps**, particularly in data availability, governance frameworks, and technical capacity, which must be addressed to enable meaningful progress.

There was a strong **emphasis on equitable design and participatory approaches**, ensuring that AI solutions are developed in ways that reflect the needs and contexts of diverse communities. Finally, participants expressed **high interest in ongoing knowledge exchange and cross-country learning platforms**, recognising their potential to accelerate best practice sharing and foster regional collaboration.

3. Agenda highlights

➤ Opening remarks delivered by:

- **Prof. Wael Akl** – Executive President, Zewail City of Science and Technology
- **Chaitali Sinha** – Senior Program Specialist, Global Health Division, IDRC
- **Prof. Trudie Lang** – Professor of Global Health Research & Director TGHN, University of Oxford
- **Dr. Shadi Saleh** – Founding Director, Global Health Institute (GHI) at AUB

➤ Key Presentations:

- **Prof. Trudie Lang** – *Global Health Research: Bridging the Gaps*
- **Dr. Awad Mataria** – Director, Universal Health Coverage/Health Systems, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO EMRO) – *Transforming Health Systems in EMR: Leveraging AI for UHC*
- **Prof. Arash Rashidian** – Director, Science, Information and Dissemination, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (WHO EMRO) – *Science Ecosystem, AI, and Enhanced Policymaking*

➤ Panel Discussion – Applied Case Studies in AI & Health

Panellists:

- **Prof. Shadi Albarqouni** – Professor of Computational Medical Imaging Research, University of Bonn
- **Ms. Yi-Roe Tan** – Country Implementation Manager, HealthAI
- **Dr. Eman Badr** – Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Zewail City of Science and Technology
- **Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad** – AI Consultant, PHC Global; Professor, University of Europe for Applied Sciences
- **Prof. Arash Rashidian** – Director, Science, Information and Dissemination, WHO EMRO

Moderator:

- **Mrs. Nour El Arnaout** – Associate Director, Global Health Institute (GHI) at AUB

➤ Interactive Workshop Session:

Participants explored the current landscape of AI in health in MENA, identified policy and implementation gaps, and brainstormed regional collaboration strategies.

4. Workshop in Pictures



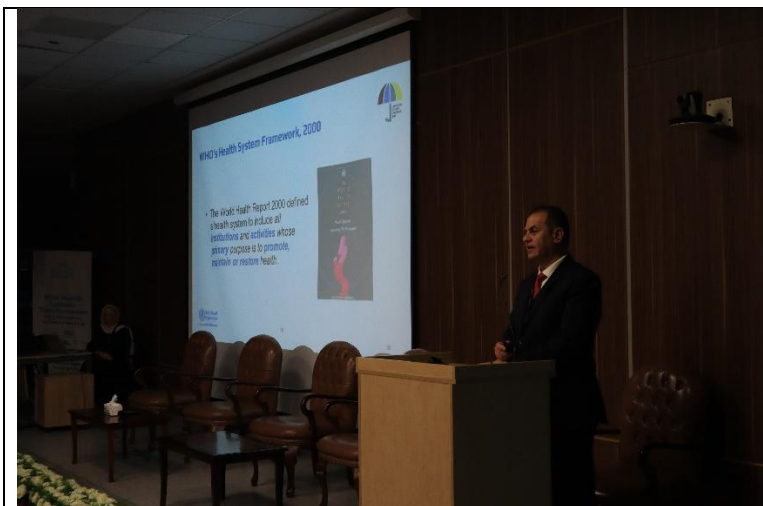
Group photo of speakers and organizers at the Workshop on Artificial Intelligence for Health Systems Transformation, held at Zewail City of Science and Technology



Group photo of participants, speakers, and organizers of the Workshop



Prof. Trudi Lang Delivering Her Presentation "Global Health Research: Bridging the Gaps" at the Workshop



Dr Awad Matari Delivering His Presentation “Transforming Health Systems in EMR: Leveraging AI for UHC” at the Workshop



Active Audience Engagement: Participant Raising a Question During the Discussion



Marina AlBada the AI4GH Coordinator Delivers the Opening Remarks and Introduces the Workshop Speakers



Panel Discussion Featuring Experts at the Workshop



Interactive Workshop Session Photos: Participants discussing AI in health in MENA, addressing policy gaps, and exploring regional collaboration opportunities



5. Participation Overview

The workshop attracted strong interest from across the region and internationally, with a **total of 443 registered participants**: **254** planning to attend in person and **189** joining online.

On the day of the event, **276 participants actively took part**, comprising **122** in-person attendees at Zewail City and **154** online participants from various countries. The participants represented **Egypt, Lebanon, India, the United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom**, reflecting the broad geographic reach and diverse perspectives brought to the discussions.

This strong engagement highlights both the regional and global relevance of the workshop themes, as well as the value of offering hybrid participation options. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of **registrations and actual attendance** by format.

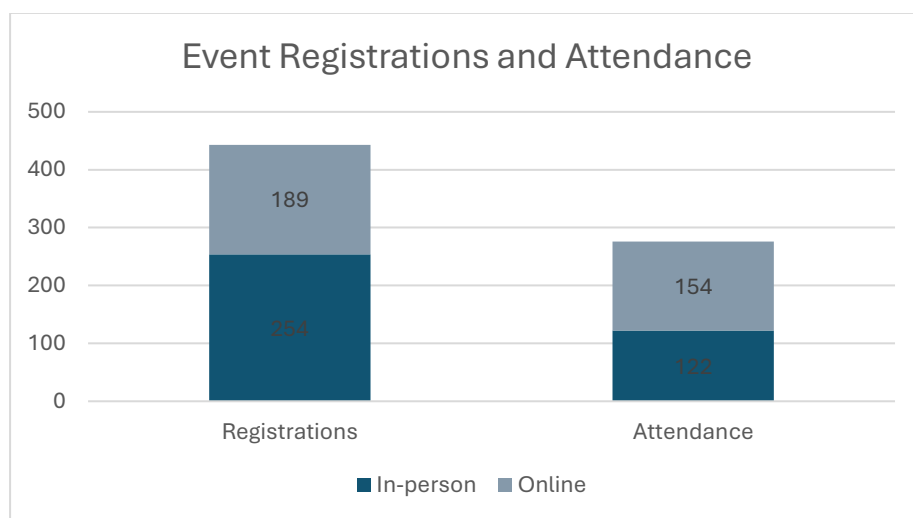


Figure 1. Breakdown of Workshop Registrations and Attendance (In-person vs. Online)

The workshop brought together a wide range of stakeholders, creating a rich mix of expertise and perspectives. The largest share of participants came from **academic institutions (262)**, followed by **government entities (67)** and **research institutions (52)**. Smaller but important contributions came from the **private sector (5)**, **UN agencies (4)**, **NGOs (2)**, **hospitals (2)**, and **other sectors (3)**.

This diversity in professional backgrounds reflects the multi-sectoral interest in applying AI to health systems transformation and the importance of engaging actors from policy, research, implementation, and service delivery. Figure 2 presents the detailed breakdown of participants by sector.

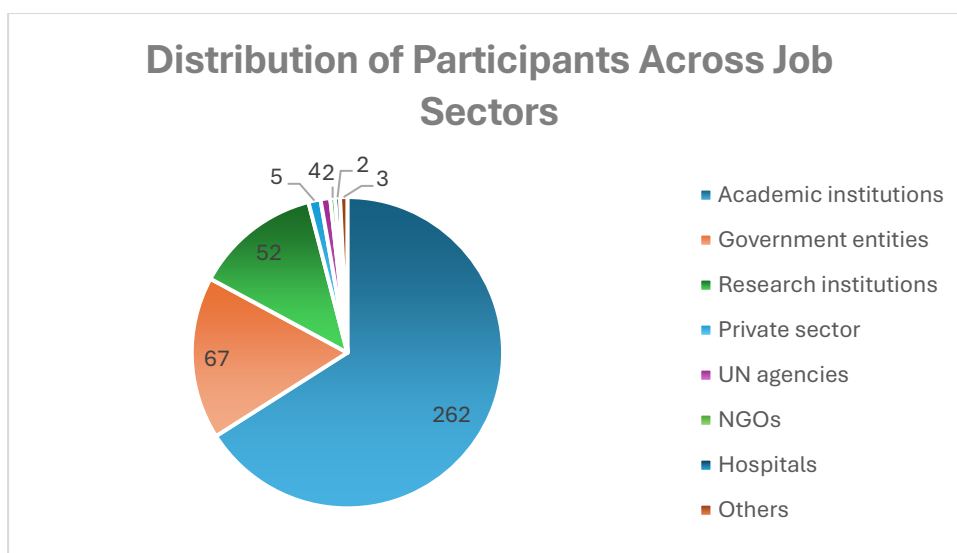


Figure 2. Distribution of Workshop Participants Across Job Sectors

6. Participant Testimonials

"The discussion focused on identifying opportunities and challenges in healthcare and how responsible AI can overcome those barriers. The outcomes will benefit professionals, researchers, and stakeholders in adopting AI in healthcare, especially in low-resource settings."

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad - AI Consultant, PHC Global and Professor, University of Europe for Applied Sciences

"We couldn't be any happier hosting this event. It connects disciplines and geographies, planting the seeds for future collaboration with the Global Health Network."

Professor Mohammad Al Hadidy - Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Director of Center for Genomics (CG), and Vice Director of Teaching Effectiveness Office (TEO) at Zewail City for science and technology at Zewail City of Science and Technology

"It was amazing to be at Zewail City with such prestigious speakers. I truly hope we can develop an Egyptian solution for AI in healthcare and change the landscape."

Dr. Mahmoud Fayed Orthopaedics in Cairo Governorate, Heliopolis

"The event was perfectly organised. The panel had so much audience engagement. I believe many collaborations and opportunities can come out of this."

Dr. Eman Badr - Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Zewail City of Science and Technology

"AI is everywhere. This workshop helped build national and regional capacity for AI in health. I truly appreciate the opportunity to participate."

Professor Sungsoo Chun - Professor at the Institute of Global Health and Human Ecology (IGHHE) at The American University in Cairo (AUC)

"This event has been absolutely fantastic for The Global Health Network. It's been wonderful to be in Egypt and hear so many stories from researchers here but also think about how the application of AI could really transform connecting up health researchers... it's been a great opportunity for connecting up researchers across the Middle East and North Africa."

Professor Trudie Lang - Director, The Global Health Network (TGHN); Professor of Global Health Research, University of Oxford

7. Materials

All workshop presentations, recordings, and panel discussions are available on the AI4GH Knowledge Hub hosted by The Global Health Network (TGHN).

Visit the Hub to revisit key moments, explore shared resources, and stay updated on upcoming activities: [Artificial Intelligence for Health Systems Transformation: Policy, Partnerships, and Systems Readiness • AI for Global Health Research](#)

8. Agreed next steps: Rapid Review to Map the AI Policy Landscape in EMRO

As a direct follow-up to the workshop, partners will conduct a rapid review and policy mapping exercise to understand the AI policy and regulatory landscape across the EMRO region. This work will:

- Identify existing AI-related healthcare policies and regulations in both clinical care and public health.
- Assess alignment with international principles for Responsible AI (WHO, OECD, UNESCO).
- Pinpoint policy, capacity, equity, implementation, and monitoring gaps.
- Develop practical, context-specific recommendations to advance responsible AI governance.

The findings will be validated with key stakeholders and disseminated through a policy brief and targeted publications. This process will ensure that the adoption of AI in health across the EMRO region is ethical, inclusive, and sustainable.