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Health Determinants: Healthy People of the UAE 2025 – 2035 Plan

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**Health Determinants: Healthy People of the UAE 2025  
– 2035 Plan**



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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The goal of the Healthy People initiative is to improve the health of the nation as a whole by directing efforts that are made at the national level to promote health and prevent sickness (Healthy People, 2023).

**Methodology:** This been a white paper the study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. The current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** The study found out that promoting a healthier and more informed generation requires health literacy in youngsters. The study also found out that the reduction of obesity among police officers would enhance both their general well-being and their effectiveness at work. The study indicated that a comprehensive road safety program targeting car accidents should be implemented to reduce road accidents

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Primary school's teachers should integrate health education as a regular part of the curriculum, The police department should establish clear and realistic goals and incentives for police officers to participate in the health and wellness programs and drivers should undergo regular training and testing to ensure they follow the traffic rules and regulations. Education authorities should support and facilitate health literacy instruction in primary schools, by providing adequate resources and training, The United Arab Emirates (UAE) government should allocate more funds and resources to support individualized health and wellness programs for police officers, as well as to raise awareness about the risks of obesity and the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating. The government should develop and implement a national road safety strategy that sets clear goals and targets for reducing car accident fatalities and injuries. This strategy should be evidence-based and regularly updated.

**Keywords:** *Health Determinants, Healthy People, UAE*

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## **Healthy People**

The goal of the Healthy People initiative is to improve the health of the nation as a whole by directing efforts that are made at the national level to promote health and prevent sickness (Healthy People, 2023). Healthy People has been identifying science-based goals with targets every decade since 1980 in order to assess progress, encourage and focus action, and increase accountability (Healthy People, 2023). This healthy people initiative focuses on improving health by looking at what are the top hot topics in health to be improved and setting goals to fix them. In addition to raise the level of public awareness and comprehension of the factors that contribute to health, disease, and disability, as well as the possibilities for advancement (Healthy People, 2023). Engage multiple sectors in the process of taking actions to enhance policies and improve practices, and ensure that these improvements are driven by the greatest available evidence and information (Healthy People, 2023). Lastly, to determine the essential requirements for research, assessment, and data gathering (Healthy People, 2023).

## **Healthy Literacy Domain**

Increasing a population's level of health literacy is one of the most important things that can be done to improve health outcomes of the country as a whole (Paasche-Orlow and Wolf, 2007). Residents in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as residents in a large number of other nations, need to have a high level of health literacy in order to be able to take decisions regarding their own health and healthcare, based on knowledge. Health literacy also impacts individuals access to healthcare and patient-provider relationship, and self-care (Paasche-Orlow and Wolf, 2007).

## **Context**

Over the course of the last few decades, the United Arab Emirates has witnessed substantial economic growth and development, which has led to advances in the infrastructure and services of the healthcare sector. This fast economic growth also changed the way Emaratis lived or worked. In the past, they used to put in a lot of efforts to secure their shelter, food and life in general. This drastic change in the life style of the Emaratis and the complete movement towards a more sedentary led life resulted in a lot of diseases that were not there previously or were less seen due to the access of hospitals at that time. The diseases that are seen more due to this sedentary lifestyle are obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and hypertension. These diseases can be prevented by educating our patients more and increasing the overall health literacy of the population.

## **Current Burden and Problems**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to encounter several obstacles despite its attempts to enhance health literacy, only 42 percent of respondents in a poll that was carried out by the Dubai Health Authority displayed abilities that are considered appropriate for health literacy (DHA, 2019). There was similar to a study carried out in high income Arab countries were fewer than one-quarter of patients (23.9% of those surveyed, total of 2971) exhibited appropriate levels of health literacy (Nair, Sreedharan, Satish and Ibrahim, 2022). This implicates and reflects on health very badly, it leads to less compliance with medications and less understanding of the physician,

and delaying the hospital visits until a later time, which may lead to worsening of the medical conditions eventually straining the healthcare system.

### **Progress in the Domain**

The government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) understands the significance of health literacy and has therefore taken steps to solve the problem. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis placed on health promotion efforts, the utilization of a variety of media platforms, and the utilization of both traditional and digital means to convey information regarding health. Main health concerns are now announced directly through the national television channels of the UAE to ensure that the message reaches the entire population. We have seen this during the COVID-19 pandemic, all the announcements and the knowledge that was needed to control the pandemic were available on the national television. Furthermore, the UAE is educating its physicians now more in the UAE than in any other country, therefore the medical universities usually focus on teaching its healthcare providers on how to communicate with the patients in a simplified manner to ensure that they get the most out of the doctor's visit. This clear communication although very simple but does make a significant difference in the patient's health literacy, which reflects back on the population.

### **Challenges**

There are various challenges that are prohibiting the advancements of health literacy, but of course these challenges can be broken down and methods of improvement sorted out. One of the main challenges is the workers in the UAE which play the largest portion of the population and they are mostly not Emirati that means that some of them may be speaking other languages. Usually, Urdu is one of the languages that is advertised with Arabic and English in the important news. But, there are other languages that may be left out. Adding to that because health literacy is not yet completely incorporated into the educational curriculum, children will miss out the required education that they may build on and use to improve their health and overall wellbeing. Incorporating health literacy in the schools from an early age is the best method, because then it will be a norm for these children, ensuring they know what is better for their health. From experience as a physician when an individual has com-morbidities, no matter how simplified as a physician you make their conditions, they are not always listening due to the overwhelming data that they may need to fully grasp at once.

### **Objective**

Incorporate health literacy education into the primary school curriculum in the United Arab Emirates, with a focus on children aged 6 to 12 years old, in order to address the determinant of early health education in the process of constructing a foundation for lifelong healthy habits. A study was conducted in India to determine the level of knowledge and habits of oral health held by secondary school students, found out that only by tailoring health programs to directly touch on the attitudes of targeted populations, particularly school-aged children, in whom healthy behaviors can be inculcated easily and be maintained for long periods of time, would it be possible to boost the efficacy of oral health education and make it more effective (Blaggana et al., 2016). This may be applied in the UAE on health literacy about any topic that must be changed in the

population, for instance obesity. The rationale for this objective is that education at a young age in the areas of health literacy and nutrition is extremely important in molding the perspectives and actions of children with regard to their health. Children are able to learn key abilities in interpreting health information, making healthy choices, and implementing preventative behaviors when health literacy subjects are included in the curriculum of primary schools.

### **Health Literacy Achievable Target & Indicator to Measure the Progress**

At the conclusion of the current school year, at least 20 percent of primary school children in the United Arab Emirates between the ages of six and twelve will demonstrate improved health literacy skills this will be our achievable target. These skills will be measured by an evaluation of the children's capacity to comprehend and apply health information, as well as their capacity to make well-informed decisions regarding their own health and effectively communicate with healthcare providers. The topics will be simple and appropriate for this age groups assessment, such as asking them about healthy food identification, exercise and for example oral hygiene like the study that was carried out in India by Blaggana et al. (2016). Their will be a pre-intervention at the beginning of the school year and post-intervention evaluation at the end of the school year.

The attainable goal focuses on determining how effective the health literacy education program is at teaching elementary school children the fundamentals of health literacy and passing on those abilities to the students. The fact that there has been a 20% rise in the number of children who can demonstrate these skills is a concrete indication of the program's efficacy in enhancing children's comprehension of health-related ideas and encouraging behaviors that are beneficial to their health.

If this indicator is measured and monitored on a regular basis, it will provide useful insights into the success of the health literacy program, highlight areas in which improvements can be made, and guarantee that the goal of promoting health literacy among primary school students in the UAE is being realized.

### **Conclusion**

Promoting a healthier and more informed generation requires health literacy in youngsters. Health literacy instruction in primary schools can help 6–12-year-olds make health decisions. Early health literacy instruction empowers youngsters to own their health and build lifelong healthy habits. As we work to improve health literacy skills among UAE primary school children by 20%, we build a healthier, more resilient population that can navigate modern healthcare systems and live healthier lives.

### **Morbidity Domain**

The percentage of a population that is sick or suffering from an illness is referred to as the morbidity rate, and it is an essential component of public health that indicates the overall health status of a population. Morbidity is affected by a variety of causes in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), just like many other nations, these factors include changes in lifestyle, access to healthcare, and demographic trends.

## **Context**

The United Arab Emirates has a low illness burden from infectious and parasitic conditions as a result of advances in both the quality and availability of health care services as well as in the style of living (Loney et al., 2013). Furthermore the UAE has one of the world's lowest rates of childhood communicable diseases, this is largely because of the immunization program that is in the UAE (Loney et al., 2013). Before being granted resident status, prospective foreign workers are subjected to a medical examination that includes testing for communicable diseases (Loney et al., 2013). On the other hand, noncommunicable diseases are on the rise due to the changes that happened in the UAE, these diseases are obesity, diabetes, cancers and cardiovascular diseases (Loney et al., 2013).

## **Current Burden & Problems**

Figures for the year 2010, showed that cardiovascular diseases are the cause of death for 29% of all people who passed away in the emirate of Abu Dhabi and the second because that accounted for 17% of death in the UAE is injuries (Loney et al., 2013). The injuries that were looked into at that time were traffic car accidents, falling and drowning (Loney et al., 2013). The third on our list of death causes in the UAE is cancer which represents in the year of 2010 a percentage of sixteen (16%) of all causes of death (Loney et al., 2013). This increase in cancer is still considered less than the Western countries, it is attributed due to aging and the advancement in health which allowed the nation to grow older increasing the cases of cancer (Loney et al., 2013). The most common cancer in females is breast cancer followed by lung cancer in males, and then combining both genders together the most common type is colon cancer (Loney et al., 2013). Another very common morbidity that is seen very commonly by physicians in hospitals are respiratory infections it accounted for roughly 15% of all interactions across all healthcare institutions (Loney et al., 2013).

## **Progress in the Domain**

The government of the United Arab Emirates has shown that it is dedicated to reducing the increasing burden of morbidity. The UAE's ability in controlling the communicable diseases may also be done to the noncommunicable diseases, although it might be more challenging for the healthcare system. The National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031, supporting the UAE Centennial 2071 have the main key components and targets set basing it on the individual, society and country (National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031, 2023). The main priorities of these programs are the fight against noncommunicable diseases, focusing on public health and preventative measures (National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031, 2023). In an effort to raise awareness and encourage better lifestyles, many initiatives have been put into place. Some of these initiatives include health promotion campaigns, preventive screenings, and disease management programs you can see all of these all around the country in the malls, public events and national celebrations.

## **Challenges**

The fight against morbidity in the UAE has seen tremendous success, but there are still a number of obstacles to overcome. Maintaining behavioral changes throughout the population is a challenging endeavor, since it calls for concerted and ongoing efforts to encourage better routines

and discourage risky behaviors. In addition, ensuring equal access to quality medical services, particularly for places that are distant and underserved, is essential for efficiently managing morbidity and reducing its incidence. There is screening programs that are implemented in primary healthcare clinics and is usually monitored using a checklist in every patient's file in clinics of Seha in Abudhabi this enables physicians to ensure that their patients are screened against all of the main diseases in the UAE like breast cancer, colon cancer, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. We used to screen patients routinely for these diseases, the main challenge was convincing the patients to do the screening tests. Increasing their health literacy will ensure that they understand the concept of screening and accept it from us. Another challenge is our culture and beliefs patients always argue that if they developed the disease then it is meant to be, therefore counseling them and explaining to them about prevention requires a lot of energy and time from the physicians.

### **Objective**

The goal is to cut the prevalence of obesity within police officers in Abu Dhabi by 50 % within the next three years, through the implementation of individualized health and wellness programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, physical fitness, and mental well-being. These objective addresses occupational factors of the determinants of health. The nature of their work frequently involves working erratic hours, performing desk duties that require sitting for long periods of time, and being exposed to high-stress circumstances, all of which contribute to bad lifestyle choices.

### **Morbidity Achievable Target & Indicator to Measure the Progress**

At the conclusion of the intervention phase that lasted for three years, at least fifty percent of the police officers working in the United Arab Emirates will exhibit positive changes in their health and wellness habits. These changes will be measured by decreases in body mass index (BMI), waist-height ratio (WHtR), improvements in physical fitness levels, and lab results of patients that had diabetes and other co-morbidities. A study conducted by Can and Hendy in 2014 on police officers to assess the causes of obesity and the various variables, the findings showed that the only behavioral factors that substantially differed between non-obesity and obese police officers were cardiovascular and strength-training physical activity.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion it is crucial for enhancing both their general well-being and their effectiveness at work to have as their goal the reduction of obesity among police officers in the UAE through individualized health and wellness programs. Having achievable target of reducing obesity by 50% and its positive reflection on health and wellness. Choosing police officers will not just reflect on their health but also since its part of occupational health, it will impact the wellbeing of the entire police force ensuring the best protection and safety of the society. The accomplishment of this target in the fight against obesity among police officers in the UAE will be ensured by regular monitoring and evaluation of the situation.

## **Life Expectancy Domain**

The average number of years a population can anticipate living is a critical indicator of that population's general health and well-being. The life expectancy rate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has increased noticeably over the past several decades as a direct result of numerous developments made in medical care, as well as socioeconomic growth and various public health efforts.

### **Context**

Over the course of the last few decades, the United Arab Emirates has experienced tremendous economic expansion and modernization, which has led to major advances in the infrastructure and services related to healthcare. The investments that the government has made in areas such as healthcare, education, and social welfare have led to improvements in living conditions as well as health results. Because of these positive developments, life expectancy has increased, which reflects an improvement in the overall quality of life for the people.

### **Current Burden & Problems**

In spite of the general increases in life expectancy, the United Arab Emirates continues to struggle with a number of health issues that threaten to impede further advancement. Conditions such as cardiovascular illnesses, diabetes, and cancer are major contributions to premature mortality caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs), imposing a considerable burden.

### **Progress in Life Expectancy**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a life expectancy of 77 years for males and 79 years for females, according to the most recent data from 2009, this represents a moderate but steady improvement (Loney et al., 2013). The UAE has achieved significant strides toward its goal of improving life expectancy by implementing a variety of health and social development measures. Better access to medical care and more favorable health outcomes have been achieved, in part, as a result of investments in healthcare infrastructure and the implementation of innovative medical technologies. Early screening services that are available in all of the primary health care clinics in every neighborhood enables individuals to detect diseases very early on and in case any interventions are needed at that point the outcomes are better.

### **Challenges**

The experts warned that even if life expectancy was improving, the progress of the Arab world was in danger due to the rising frequency of heart disease, risk factors related to food, and deaths caused by automobile accidents (Bell, 2014). This increase in life expectancy it means some diseases will be considered chronic to our society because the individuals that suffer from them will live longer and their prevalence will increase, but not incidence. Another challenge is educating the elderly and incorporating them into the society. In addition, injuries are a substantial contributor to mortality, ranking as the second highest cause of death across all age categories in the UAE, with an annual death toll of 1,120 people between the years 2000 and 2008 (Loney et al., 2013). During the years 2000–2008, an annual average of 104 children passed away, which corresponds to an incidence rate (IR) of 13.6 per 100,000 (11–15), the leading cause of death for



individuals of this age group was injuries sustained in motor vehicle accidents (62%; IR 13.6), followed by deaths resulting from drowning (11%; IR 1.5) and falls (10%; IR 1.5) (Loney et al., 2013).

### **Objective**

To establish a comprehensive road safety program with a focus on education, and enforcement in the next three years with the goal of reducing the number of fatal car accidents and associated fatalities in the United Arab Emirates by 20%, this reduction is to take place during the next three years. By educating the public, there will be an emphasize on car seats for children, and wearing seatbelts. As well as, avoiding distractions while driving and paying attention to the road.

### **Life Expectancy Achievable Target & Indicator to Measure the Progress**

Following the implementation of the comprehensive road safety program in the UAE, the indicator is the percentage reduction in the number of car accidents that resulted in fatalities or injuries per 100,000 people in comparison to the baseline data. This will be measured after the complete road safety program was put into place. This indicator provides a clear measurement of how successful the road safety initiative has been in reducing the frequency of serious car accidents. A standardized measurement of progress over time is provided by the indicator, which does this by calculating the percentage reduction in the number of car accidents that result in fatalities or injuries per 100,000 population. Monitoring this indicator on a regular basis will make it possible for policymakers and other stakeholders to evaluate the efficiency of the program, pinpoint any potential weaknesses or obstacles, and make adjustments based on data in order to enhance efforts to promote road safety.


### **Conclusion**

To improve life expectancy a comprehensive road safety program targeting car accidents aims to reduce fatalities and injuries. Monitoring the percentage reduction in car accidents per 100,000 population will assess the effectiveness of the road safety program. By prioritizing this objective, the UAE can create a healthier and safer environment for its citizens, ultimately leading to improved life expectancy and well-being.

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Annex

<h1>Healthy People of the UAE</h1>						
Year 2025-2035	2023					
The goal of the Healthy People initiative is to improve the health of the nation as a whole by directing efforts that are made at the national level to promote health and prevent sickness (Healthy People, 2023)						
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Domain</b>	<b>Target</b>				
 <p>This healthy people initiative focuses on improving health by looking at what are the top hot topics in health to be improved and setting goals to achieve it.</p> <p>In addition to raise the level of public awareness and comprehension of the factors that contribute to health, disease, and disability, as well as the possibilities for advancement (Healthy People, 2023).</p> <p>Engage multiple sectors in the process of taking actions to enhance policies and improve practices, and ensure that these improvements are driven by the greatest available evidence and information (Healthy People, 2023).</p> <p>Lastly, to determine the essential requirements for research, assessment, and data gathering (Healthy People, 2023).</p>	<p><b>Health Literacy</b>                  Increasing a population's level of health literacy is one of the most important things that can be done to improve health outcomes of the country as a whole (Paasche-Orlow and Wolf, 2007)</p> <p><b>Context</b>                  The United Arab Emirates has witnessed substantial economic growth and development. In the past, they used to put in a lot of efforts to secure their shelter, food and life in general. This drastic change in the life style increased the number of noncommunicable diseases that can be prevented by health literacy</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">UAE</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">Other Arab</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">42%</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">23.9%</td> </tr> </table>	UAE	Other Arab	42%	23.9%	<p><b>Progress</b>                  Increased emphasis placed on health promotion efforts, the utilization of a variety of media platforms, and the utilization of both traditional and digital means to convey information regarding health</p> <p><b>Challenges</b>                  The challenges that are posed are workers in the UAE which play the largest portion of the population and they are mostly not Emirati that means that some of them may be speaking other languages. Adding to that because health literacy is not yet completely incorporated into the educational curriculum, children will miss out the required education that they may build on and use to improve their health and overall wellbeing. Lastly, grasping detailed medical data.</p> <p><b>Objective</b>                  Incorporate health literacy education into the primary school curriculum in the United Arab Emirates, with a focus on children aged 6 to 12 years old, in order to address the determinant of early health education</p>
UAE	Other Arab					
42%	23.9%					
		<p>at least 20 percent of primary school children in the United Arab Emirates between the ages of six and twelve will demonstrate improved health literacy skills.</p> <p><b>Indicator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Pre-intervention &amp; post-intervention evaluation</li> <li>o Children will show their knowledge about the different health topics</li> </ul>				
		<b>Conclusion</b>				
		<p>We expect health literacy implementation in early school years, will increase by 20% after implementing it in school which will reflect positively on the society</p> <p><b>References</b></p> <p><small>Wagner, E. (2002). The health literacy concept. <i>Health Affairs</i>, 21(12), 1905-1917. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0273214702237872">https://doi.org/10.1177/0273214702237872</a></small></p> <p><small>Paasche-Orlow, M., &amp; Wolf, S. (2007). Health literacy in the United States: Trends and implications for the future. <i>Medical care</i>, 45(12), 1336-1344. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0b013e318151303d">https://doi.org/10.1097/MLR.0b013e318151303d</a></small></p> <p><small>World Health Organization. (2019). <i>Health literacy: Solid facts</i>. Geneva: World Health Organization.</small></p> <p><small>World Health Organization. (2019). <i>Health literacy: Solid facts</i>. Geneva: World Health Organization.</small></p> <p><small>World Health Organization. (2019). <i>Health literacy: Solid facts</i>. Geneva: World Health Organization.</small></p> <p><small>World Health Organization. (2019). <i>Health literacy: Solid facts</i>. Geneva: World Health Organization.</small></p>				
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