

Editorial

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The 'Nakba' of 1948 saw a great calamity affect the Palestinian people resulting in occupation of their country, forced exodus from their homes and homeland and inflicted great loss of wealth. To date many Palestinians still live as refugees in various countries and still experience serious poverty, even after the establishment of relief agencies such as *United Nations Relief and Works Agency* (UNRWA), meant to provide basic services to Palestinians who live Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon within or outside refugee camps.

In an effort to help focus on such issues, *Annals of Alquds Medicine (AQM)* participated in the *Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development*, which was planned by the *Council of Science Editors* for October 2007. The current issue presents in part AQM's participation in the special theme issue and contains research articles mostly of relevance to Palestine's Gaza strip and West. The issue also investigated health care services provided to Palestinians through the UNRWA.

Abu El Amreen *et al* presented an article on rotavirus infection in infants and children in Gaza, whilst Dr. El Jarousha discussed variations in faecal pollutants in the sea water of Gaza, an important topic since the Gaza strip suffers from environmental pollutants due to lack of proper amenities for waste disposal. El Kichaoi discussed fungal infections in the densely populated Gaza strip. Mourtaga and Kuhail presented their use of radiofrequency to treat allergic rhinitis in Gaza. Finally, Dr. Sawalha discussed the current status of the nursing profession in the west bank and highlighted weaknesses and current needs to strengthen the Palestinian nursing practice.

I took the opportunity of visiting Amman-Jordan in 2007 to meet with healthcare officials working for UNRWA and discuss with them services which UNRWA offers for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA was established by the UN in 1949 to provide basic essential services to Palestinian refugees such as education, healthcare and welfare. I myself used UNRWA educational and healthcare services as a school boy in Beirut-Lebanon. It was interesting to me to re-visit this organisation after several years of living in Britain and learn that in the past six years the number of Palestinian families claiming food in Gaza and West Bank (worth \$136 per annum) rose from 11,000 to 220,000. I decided to share this with AQM's readers in this special theme issue.

Finally, two articles from Iran discussed Brucellosis and Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD) in the province of Kurdistan and Tehran, respectively. Moradi *et al* surveyed the epidemiology of Brucellosis in Kurdistan between 1997 and 2003. Salimzadeh *et al* related physical activity and body weight status to the incidence of IHD in Tehran.

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