

## Awards

1. In January 2024, during its 154th session, the Executive Board adopted a number of decisions awarding prizes to individuals or entities in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public health.<sup>1</sup>

2. An award ceremony for the following six prizes is scheduled to take place during the plenary meeting of the Health Assembly on Friday, 31 May 2024:

the **Ihsan Doğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize** will be presented to **Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri (Oman)**;

the **Sasakawa Health Prize** will be presented to **Dr Doreen Ramogola-Masire (Botswana)**;

the **United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize** will be presented to the **National Death Registry System of the Ministry of Health (Saudi Arabia)**;

the State of Kuwait Health Promotion Foundation's **His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion** will be presented to **the Chinese Geriatrics Society (China) and Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi (Oman)**;

the **Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health** will be presented to **Dr Bader Al-Rawahi (Oman)**; and

the **Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion** will be presented to **Professor Bontle Mbongwe (Botswana) and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) (India)**.

3. Many of the prizes have been established by, or set up in memory of, an eminent health personality or an individual with an important legacy in the field of health. The call for nominations of candidates for each prize is sent out each year after closure of the Health Assembly, and nominations can be made by national health administrations of a Member State of WHO or by any former recipient of the prizes. The recipients of the prizes are designated by the Executive Board during its first annual session, on the basis of recommendations made by each Foundation's selection panel.

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<sup>1</sup> See decisions EB154(18), EB154(19), EB154(20), EB154(21), EB154(22) and EB154(23) (2024).

4. Over the years, the prizes have been awarded to a wide range of recipients: well-known scientists and researchers; other dedicated individuals or entities who have greatly contributed through their work to the advancement of public health; and individuals or entities caring for the health of local communities.

5. Further information on the prizes and on the 2024 laureates is provided in the Annex to the present document.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also the information on public health prizes and awards on the WHO website (<https://apps.who.int/gb/awards/>, accessed 21 March 2024).

## ANNEX

**PRIZES AWARDED IN 2024****1. Ihsan Dođramacı Family Health Foundation Prize**

The Ihsan Dođramacı Family Health Foundation Prize is awarded to a person or persons globally recognized for his, her or their service in the field of family health.

The 2024 laureate of the prize is Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri (Oman).

Dr Jamila Taiseer Yasser Al Abri is a renowned obstetrician gynaecologist in Oman with extensive experience and leadership in women's health. She is currently the Director of the Department of Woman and Child Health in Oman. She has worked extensively in the field of family health, including: community health; mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis; human papillomavirus; HIV and management of a variety of communicable diseases; maternal health and prevention of maternal mortality; and newborn, child and adolescent health at primary care and tertiary care levels. Dr Al Abri has demonstrated significant leadership in teaching and managing national health programmes, including on breast cancer, mental health and autism spectrum disorders, and other family health issues. She has played an important role in contributing to the strategic plans for women's and children's health as part of Oman's long-term vision, Health Vision 2050. She has authored numerous scientific publications and has received several national and international awards and fellowships. Dr Al Abri has helped to guide the work of various organizations and their technical committees as an adviser, for the region and beyond. This has included leading a technical assistance project to enhance social protection for health care of women in Arab States, which was implemented in six countries, and collaborating with WHO on the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

**2. Sasakawa Health Prize**

The Sasakawa Health Prize is awarded for outstanding innovative work in health development to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations. Such work includes the promotion of given health programmes or notable advances in primary health care.

The 2024 laureate of the prize is Dr Doreen Ramogola-Masire (Botswana).

Dr Doreen Ramogola-Masire is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise, at the University of Botswana. Since 2002, she has played an important role in the development and implementation of Botswana's first National Cervical Cancer Prevention Strategy, which was launched in 2012. Through her role as a member of the National HIV Technical Working Group for the past two decades, she took an active part in developing and updating the National Strategic Framework for HIV. She worked to expand the partnerships that had been developed to support the country's HIV/AIDS programme to also support cervical cancer prevention. Her work initially focused on screening and early treatment of precancerous lesions caused by human papillomavirus (HPV) infections and then expanded, with HPV vaccination starting in 2015. Thanks to the use of self-collected samples for HPV testing, the cervical cancer screening programme will be accessible to more women in Botswana, including socially and geographically disadvantaged women. In addition, her innovative work in training nurses and medical officers to carry out cervical cancer screening, and on treatment procedures using telemedicine as a quality assurance tool, helped the

country to implement its cervical cancer prevention programme despite an insufficient number of trained gynaecologists. Moreover, she has facilitated the development of an obstetrics and gynaecology specialization programme at the national level, which will help to ensure a supply of well-trained specialists able to lead this work in the future. Dr Masire's involvement of community and traditional leaders at key stages of the preparation for the programme's launch is expected to be an important factor in ensuring the programme's success. In her new role as leader of the Strategic Office for Research at the University of Botswana, Dr Masire continues to facilitate and build capacity for collaborative and impactful multidisciplinary health research, with the inclusion of the impact of climate change. Dr Masire would like to use the award to invest in supporting the qualitative aspect of the development of biomarker triage strategies for women who screen positive for any high-risk HPV.

### **3. United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize**

The United Arab Emirates Health Foundation Prize is awarded for an outstanding contribution to health development to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations.

The 2024 laureate of the prize is the National Death Registry System of the Ministry of Health (Saudi Arabia).

The National Death Registry System is a programme within the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia. Thanks to this system, Saudi Arabia has been able to share its mortality data with WHO and can now identify areas of the country with the highest mortality rates and prioritize the provision of medical support to those areas, including for road traffic injuries and notifiable diseases. The data collected through this system help to inform national health policies and resource allocation within the health system. Recognizing the need to adapt to the continuing digital transformation and automation in Saudi Arabia, efforts have been made to digitize and automate its mortality data registry. As a result, an electronic death registry system has been developed that is dynamic and regularly updated. It facilitates easy access to the data and ensures transparency and integration with multiple national agencies. Continuous improvement of the registry system is enabled by offering an open feedback loop to the stakeholders and communities within the system. The provision of training materials and sessions to registrars, doctors and coders in a consistent manner has significantly improved data quality within the system. Equity and leaving no one behind are guiding principles of the system, which is based on a primary health care approach. Birth and death registration systems are the foundation of national health policies and systems for primary health care and leaving no one behind. The potential impact of establishing an electronic death registry system in Saudi Arabia is significant and the system can serve as a model for other countries.

### **4. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion**

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Prize for Research in Health Care for the Elderly and in Health Promotion is awarded to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, or a nongovernmental organization or organizations having made an outstanding contribution to research in the areas of health care for the elderly and in health promotion.

The 2024 laureates of the prize are the Chinese Geriatrics Society (China) and Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi (Oman).

The Chinese Geriatrics Society is a nongovernmental organization whose aim is to improve the health of 267 million older persons in China. The Society conducts a broad range of programmes and activities that are central to healthy ageing through a comprehensive approach that includes geriatric assessment, clinical treatment, nutritional support, rehabilitation and palliative care. Its specific activities comprise innovative research on multimorbidity in older age and related biomarkers, and development of guidance and a range of care models to support person-centred and integrated health services, dealing with issues such as access to palliative care. Results of this work include the development of local care standards on how to manage polypharmacy among older persons with multimorbidity, and on hypertension in older adults. Such standards are disseminated nationwide. Training programmes have been implemented, reaching a range of personnel, including 4000 caregivers of older persons and over 140 000 geriatric physicians, enabling them to upgrade their skills. The Society has also carried out pioneering work on creating standards for age-friendly hospitals, outlining how health care institutions should function to meet the special needs of older persons. After piloting this work in 53 institutions, 90% of health care institutions in Beijing are now meeting these standards. The Society has also established a system to strengthen the collaboration between those involved in academia, research and industry, and has disseminated popular science articles and social media posts to share new evidence on healthy ageing with the public.

Dr Ahmed Hamed Saif Al Wahaibi is a family physician who has made an important contribution to integrating high-quality care of older people within primary health care in Oman through a variety of roles within the Ministry of Health, the Oman Medical Speciality Board and the Family Medicine Society of Oman. Most recently, Dr Al Wahaibi has been Head of the Elderly Care Section in the Primary Health Care Department of the Ministry of Health of Oman. He has contributed to the development of a national programme for older persons that provides screening, assessment and early interventions as part of primary health care for people aged 60 years and older. The programme aims to prevent diseases, provide continuity of care from health care settings to patients' homes, maximize independence and enable older persons to have access to community resources. Building on this work, Dr Al Wahaibi has helped to develop an electronic health record system, used by a multidisciplinary team, which includes the assessment findings regarding the health status of older persons, and links these findings with the support services available within primary health care. Strengthening the capacity of nurses to carry out these assessments and engaging local communities in the planning, management and evaluation of the primary health care services available for older people have been integral parts of the programme led by Dr Al Wahaibi. He recently contributed to an article on integrated care for elderly people in the primary health care setting of Oman, which outlines the lessons learned from this programme.

## **5. Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health**

The Dr LEE Jong-wook Memorial Prize for Public Health is awarded to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, a governmental or nongovernmental organization or organizations, who have made an outstanding contribution to public health.

The 2024 laureate of the prize is Dr Bader Al-Rawahi (Oman).

Dr Bader Al-Rawahi is an infectious diseases specialist who leads a major public health programme as Director of Communicable Diseases and Control, and Manager of the Expanded Programme of Immunization, at the Ministry of Health of Oman. The high quality of immunization services provided in Oman is widely recognized and the contribution of Dr Al-Rawahi to this achievement is significant. He has kept abreast of new scientific, programmatic and policy developments to provide Oman's communities with a highly performing immunization programme and to achieve

significant health results. Dr Al-Rawahi has made a considerable effort to leave no one behind, including migrants, displaced populations and underprivileged persons. For example, during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, he helped to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines were available to everyone in Oman, regardless of their registration status, contributing to a coverage of 94%. In addition to his significant work at the national level, he also gives his time to support other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, advising and assisting immunization programmes in war-torn countries and demonstrating his compassion when times are difficult. He has also served as an expert on several international public health committees, in support of vaccine product development and tuberculosis vaccines, and has authored numerous publications on health equity in peer-reviewed journals. Dr Al-Rawahi encompasses the values that inspire this prize and is an outstanding role model. Dr Al-Rawahi would like to use the award to invest in further developing his work towards better public health outcomes in Oman.

## 6. Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion

The Nelson Mandela Award for Health Promotion is awarded to a person or persons, an institution or institutions, a governmental or nongovernmental organization or organizations, who or which has/have made a significant contribution to health promotion.

The 2024 laureates of the award are Professor Bontle Mbongwe (Botswana) and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) (India).

Professor Bontle Mbongwe is Associate Professor of Environmental Health and Head of the School of Public Health at the University of Botswana. In addition to her academic work, Professor Mbongwe is a renowned public health advocate and a passionate tobacco control activist. Through country-level consultations that she initiated during the negotiation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, she contributed to efforts to amend Botswana's Control of Smoking Act, 1992, in 2004. Improvements include the restriction of smoking in public places to protect children, pregnant women and workers, raising the minimum-age restrictions for selling tobacco products, prohibiting their sale to persons under 18 years (previously it was under 16 years), and banning tobacco advertising and promotion. In 2008, Professor Mbongwe's research contributed to influencing government policies away from the use of mercury-containing devices in health care facilities towards mercury-free alternatives. In 2014, she successfully advocated for the introduction of a 30% tobacco levy in Botswana. She then contributed to efforts towards the country's Tobacco Control Act, 2021, which was compliant with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Her relentless work on this helped to lead to the raising of the minimum-age restriction for selling tobacco products, prohibiting their sale to persons under 21 years, banning the sale of single sticks of cigarettes as well as requiring tobacco products to be sold by licensed persons only. Moreover, she successfully advocated for a ban on the sale of tobacco products during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through her efforts in founding the first civil society Anti-Tobacco Network in Botswana, she has played an important role in building a network of media and nongovernmental organizations committed to tobacco control in her home country and beyond. Her research on smoking among young people has informed the development of initiatives such as "SKY Girls BW" and the "Most Teens Don't Smoke" campaigns. Professor Mbongwe was awarded a World No Tobacco Day 2021 award and a WHO Director-General Special Recognition Award in 2021 for her distinctive leadership in anti-smoking.

The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore, India, plays an important role in promoting mental health by delivering clinical care, carrying out training and research as well as involving the communities it serves. It also collaborates with central and state governments in framing, informing and implementing national policies and strategies such as the

National Mental Health Policy (2014), the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022). NIMHANS involves young people as change agents within district youth-empowerment centres in order to bridge the gap between young people, their families and an ever-changing society (reaching about 6 million young people). In addition, it is engaged in SAMVAD, a national initiative providing integrated resources for child protection, mental health and psychosocial care (reaching more than 3 million people). Other major programmes led by NIMHANS encompass urban mental health and integrating mental health issues arising out of climate change into primary mental health care delivery. Furthermore, NIMHANS plays a crucial role in training and accrediting community volunteers to enable them to deliver mental health first aid: 18 000 gatekeepers have been trained to facilitate the early identification of suicide risk and to intervene. Other programmes include integrating training on and supervision of psychosocial and mental health care through One Stop Centres to support women facing violence. NIMHANS has initiated numerous digital technology initiatives, including: the Digital Academy, whose courses have been followed by 2500 health care providers; the Tele-SWABHIMAN programme, which enhances maternal nutrition and improves the mental health of pregnant women and postpartum mothers; and smartphone applications for mental health. A national helpline for psychosocial support and mental health services was launched during the first wave of COVID-19 (in which more than 600 000 calls were received). NIMHANS also established in 2022 the National Tele Mental Health Programme to provide equitable, affordable and high-quality mental health care across all Indian States.

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