

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0195-6701(15)00307-2

DOI: [10.1016/j.jhin.2015.07.012](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2015.07.012)

Reference: YJHIN 4604

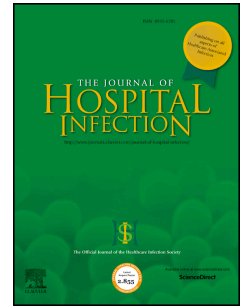
To appear in: *Journal of Hospital Infection*

Received Date: 10 July 2015

Accepted Date: 14 July 2015

Please cite this article as: Omar NS, The inaugural Healthcare Infection Society Middle East Summit: a local perspective, *Journal of Hospital Infection* (2015), doi: 10.1016/j.jhin.2015.07.012.

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The inaugural Healthcare Infection Society Middle East Summit: a local perspective

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It was a great honour for infection prevention and control practitioners in Middle Eastern countries to be able to participate in this inaugural HIS Middle East Summit. The sharing of experience and ideas among speakers and delegates from different countries and cultures was very fruitful. Although the Summit was widely publicized in our countries, June would have been a difficult month for many interested delegates to attend, and this author believes that an even greater attendance would have been achieved if the Summit had been held in the autumn.

The Summit opened with Professor Tawfik Khoja describing the challenges of infection prevention and control in the Middle East. His understanding of the problems that we face locally in implementing standard infection control precautions, and his suggested solutions, set the scene for the rest of the Summit. After his talk he discussed with delegates the possibility of developing a Middle East Association of Infection Prevention affiliated to the HIS; this idea was attractive to many delegates, and we hope that it will progress.

Dr Tim Boswell's presentation on infection prevention and control challenges in Europe raised some important points of interest for delegates, especially around the value of public reporting and external scrutiny, which happens little, or not at all, in most of our countries. We were also interested to hear of the risk posed by patient curtains as a source of infection transmission.

There then followed an important overview of MERS-CoV by Dr Ali Omrani, highlighting some important material such as the results of MERS-CoV national sero-surveillance.¹ He reminded us of the role of the dromedary camel as an intermediary host. These animals are known to have a high rate of carriage in nose or lung tissue, and a recently published study has shown that the seroprevalence of MERS-CoV antibodies is significantly higher in camel-exposed individuals than in the general population.^{1,2} Dr Omrani then discussed the importance of social media in dispersing the news among KSA cities during the MERS-CoV outbreak, emphasizing the importance of being transparent during outbreaks of infection, engaging with the public through effective communication. Although Dr Omrani showed the value of surveillance in relation to MERS-CoV, a later presentation by Dr Muhammad Halwani,

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