



5th MENA Congress for RARE DISEASES 2026

03 - 05 September 2026, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Post-Event Report 2026

ATTENDEES

1,210

SPEAKERS

128

FULL DAYS

3

SESSIONS

30

SPONSORS

17

SCIENTIFIC AND
MEDIA PARTNERS

34

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RARE DISEASES**
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01

A Landmark Gathering for Rare Diseases



Prof. Ayman El-Hattab

Congress President, MENA Congress for Rare Diseases
Director and Consultant Clinical Genetics, Genetics and
Rare Disease Center, Burjeel Medical City
Professor, Department of Medical Sciences, College of
Medical and Health Sciences, Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi
Founder and President, MENA Organization for Rare
Diseases, UAE



This conference is a unique platform that brings everyone involved in rare diseases to one place to obtain the most updated knowledge, exchange experience, advance research, establish networks, and explore new horizons and collaborative opportunities aiming ultimately to provide better care for individuals with rare diseases.

— Prof. Ayman El-Hattab, Congress President

02

Scientific Committee



Prof. Brahim Tabarki

Consultant Pediatric Neurology, Prince Sultan Military
Medical City
Adjunct Professor of Pediatric Neurology, Alfaisal University,
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
Professor of Pediatric Neurology, University of Sousse,
Sousse, Tunisia



Dr. Nuriya Musina

Managing Partner, Accesstra Health Institute, Dubai, UAE
and Muscat, Oman
Executive Director, CIS Orphan Consortium
Associate Professor, Sechenov University, Moscow, Russia



Dr. Cristina Skrypnik

Consultant Medical Genetics, Genetics and Inherited
Disorders Department, Al Jawhara Center for Molecular
Medicine
Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, Arabian Gulf
University and University Medical Clinics
Chair, Rare Disease Campaign and Care for Rare Support
Group, Manama, Bahrain



Prof. Sehime Temel

Professor, Department of Medical Genetics, Faculty of
Medicine
Coordinator of Genetic Disease Evaluation Center
Founder Head of Translational Medicine Department, Faculty
of Health Sciences, Uludag University, Bursa, Türkiye



Prof. Khaled Musallam

Group Chief Research Officer, Burjeel Holdings
Deputy CEO and Chief of Cell and Gene Therapy and
Hematology
Director, Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Center
Founding Director, Center for Research on Rare Blood
Disorders, Burjeel Cancer Institute, Burjeel Medical City
Adjunct Professor, Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Adjunct Professor, Weill Cornell Medicine, New York City,
New York, USA



Prof. Tawfeg Ben-Omran

Division Chief, Genetic and Genomic Medicine, Sidra
Medicine
Senior Consultant, Medical Genetic Department, Hamad
Medical Corporation
Professor, Weill Cornell Medical College, Doha, Qatar



Prof. Maha Zaki

Professor, Clinical Genetics Department, Human Genetics
and Genome Research Institute, National Research Centre,
Cairo, Egypt



Prof. Zuhair Al-Hassnan

Consultant, Department of Medical Genomics, Centre for
Genomic Medicine, King Faisal Specialist Hospital and
Research Center
Professor of Genetics, College of Medicine, Alfaisal
University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Attendees Summary

TOTAL NUMBER
OF ATTENDEES

1,210

DAILY ATTENDEES

829



Day 1
Thu 03 Sep

798



Day 2
Fri 04 Sep

713



Day 3
Sat 05 Sep



63% From UAE

37% International

INTERNATIONAL
ATTENDEES FROM

36

Countries



Egypt



USA



Saudi Arabia



UK



Lebanon



Afghanistan



Yemen



Palestine



France



Cuba



Algeria



Switzerland



Türkiye



Germany



Italy



Bahrain



Iraq



Oman



Brazil



Qatar



Sri Lanka



Kenya



Netherlands



Romania



Colombia



Canada



Saint Kitts
and Nevis



Trinidad
and Tobago



Morocco



Bangladesh



China



Indonesia



Ethiopia



South Africa



Norway



Belgium

Speakers Summary

Total Number of Speakers

128

UAE-Based Speakers

94

International Speakers

34

UAE-based · 73%

International · 27%

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS CAME FROM 19 COUNTRIES



Saudi Arabia



Lebanon



USA



Egypt



France



Qatar



Switzerland



Bahrain



Belgium



Brazil



Italy



Kuwait



Norway



Romania



Russia



Oman



Germany



Türkiye



UK



SESSIONS

30

SATELLITE SUMMITS

9

LECTURES

134

Day 1 Thursday 03 Sep

MAIN TRACK

**Opening Session —Rare Diseases:
Challenges and Opportunities**

Chair: Prof. Ayman El-Hattab

MAIN TRACK

Opening Ceremony & Award Distribution

AL THURAYA B

**1st MENA Summit for Health Economics in Rare
Diseases (Parts 1 & 2)**

Chair: Dr. Nuriya Musina

AL THURAYA A

2nd MENA Summit for Cell and Gene Therapy

Chair: Prof. Khaled Musallam

AL THURAYA A

2nd MENA Summit for Neurodivergence

Chair: Ms. Nazma Sheikh

AL THURAYA A

2nd MENA Summit for Inclusion and Diversity

Chair: Mrs. Renate Richter

AL THURAYA C

Unified Healthcare Training

Chair: Mrs. Areen Abuhejleh

AL THURAYA B

Autism Workshop

Day 2 Friday 04 Sep

AL THURAYA B

Rare Ophthalmologic Disorders

Chair: Dr. Cristina Skrypnik

AL THURAYA B

Rare Bone Disorders

Chair: Dr. Cristina Skrypnik

AL THURAYA A

Dental Care for Rare Diseases

Chair: Dr. Abeer Khayat

AL THURAYA A

Nutritional Support for Rare Diseases

Chair: Dr. Abeer Khayat

AL THURAYA C

**Patients' Advocacy and Media Role in Rare
Diseases**

Chair: Ms. Miriam Zalzala

AL THURAYA C

Insurance Coverage for Rare Diseases

Chair: Dr. Mohamad Maan

AL THURAYA B

Rare Immune and Blood Disorders

Chair: Prof. Khaled Musallam

AL THURAYA A

**Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation for
Rare Diseases**

Chair: Dr. Mohamed Babiker

AL THURAYA C

Education and Rare Diseases

Chair: Dr. Anwar Baban

MAIN TRACK

**Updates on Diagnostics and Novel Therapies
for Rare Diseases**

Chair: Prof. Ayman El-Hattab

AL THURAYA B

Workshop — Obesity, The Silent Pandemic

Day 3 Saturday 05 Sep

AL THURAYA B

**3rd MENA Summit for Genetic Counselors
(Parts 1 & 2)**

Chair: Dr. Muna Al Saffar

AL THURAYA A

**4th MENA Summit for Duchenne Muscular
Dystrophy**

Chair: Dr. Omar Ismayl

AL THURAYA C

4th MENA Summit for Angelman Syndrome

Chair: Dr. Huda Sadek

AL THURAYA A

4th MENA Summit for Huntington Disease

Chair: Mr. Svein Olsen

AL THURAYA C

**4th MENA Rare Disease Symposium for
Patients and Families**

Chair: Dr. Khawla Alshehhi

MAIN TRACK

AI, Research, and Innovation in Rare Diseases

Chair: Prof. Khaled Musallam

AL THURAYA C

**Success Stories — Patients and Families
Meeting**

Chair: Dr. Khawla Alshehhi

MAIN TRACK

**Co-Pilot Workshop: Patients and Parents as
Partners**



Award of Outstanding Achievements in Rare Diseases

Honoring pioneers whose accomplishments advance care, research and advocacy for rare diseases.



Dr. Arif Khan

Award for Outstanding Achievements
in Rare Diseases - Clinician



Dr. Cristina Skrypnik

Award for Outstanding Achievements
in Rare Diseases - Clinician



Dr. Afsheen Raza

Award for Outstanding Achievements
in Rare Diseases - Researcher



Prof. Mahir Al-Hilali

Award for Outstanding Achievements
in Rare Diseases - Leader



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International Speakers



Ms. Aida Adra
Lebanon



Dr. Aisha Al Balushi
Oman



Mr. Ayman Semaan
Lebanon



Dr. Chantel Van Wyk
Oman



Dr. Cristina Skrypnik
Bahrain



Mrs. Duaa Aburizik
Kuwait



Ms. Ellen Koekoeckx
Belgium



Dr. Frank Grossmann
Switzerland



Ms. Gina Halik
Lebanon



Ms. Hager Abou Al-Seood
Saudi Arabia



Prof. Hussain Al Omar
Saudi Arabia



Dr. Kirsten Johnson
Switzerland



Prof. Maha Zaki
Egypt



Dr. Mashael Al-Shafai
Qatar



Prof. Moeen Al Sayed
Saudi Arabia



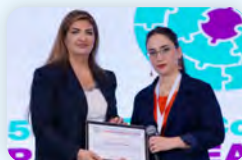
Dr. Mohamed H Al-Hamed
Saudi Arabia



Dr. Nuriya Musina
Russia



Dr. Raed Selmi
Italy



Mrs. Rana Abukhadra
USA



Dr. Renaud Debailly
France



Prof. Rodrigo Araldi
Brazil



Prof. Sehime Temel
Türkiye



Dr. Sohela Elkebir
France



Mr. Suhail Haque
United Kingdom



Mr. Svein Olsen
Norway



Dr. Tobias Boettcher
Germany



Dr. Wejdan Aburas
Saudi Arabia

08

— UAE-Based Speakers



Dr. Abdulkader Hamad



Dr. Abeer Al Naqbi



Dr. Abeer Khayat



Dr. Ala Khalil



Dr. Ameera Al Afeefi



Dr. Amna Almheiri



Dr. Anas Abu Hazzem



Dr. Anwar Baban



Dr. Arif Khan



Prof. Arif O. Khan



Dr. Ashwaq Binamro



Prof. Asma Deeb



Prof. Augusto Junior



Ms. Aya Al Zabidi



Prof. Ayman El-Hattab



Dr. Bakul Mukherjee



Prof. Bassam Ali



Dr. Binu George



Dr. Dan Sheppard



Dr. Elias Berdouses



Ms. Farah Almadhoun



Ms. Farah Masoud



Dr. Farrukh Shah



Ms. Fatima Al Sakka



Dr. Fida Dyab



Prof. Ghanem Al Bustami



Dr. Haitham Elbashir



Mrs. Hala Tannira



Prof. Haleema Al Sabbah



Dr. Hamid Alhaj



Dr. Hatim Sidahmed



Dr. Heba Elabdi



Dr. Hiba Shendi



Ms. Hind Almarri



Prof. Howieda Fouly



Dr. Huda Sadek



Dr. Kefah Al Qawasmeh



Ms. Khadija Shafique



Prof. Khaled Musallam



Dr. Khawla Alshehhi



Dr. Khedidja Hedna



Ms. Lea Abed



Dr. Lubna Abu Zohair



Prof. Mahir Al-Hilali



Dr. Majid Aziz



Dr. Mansi Sachdev



Ms. Maryam Alhussainy



Dr. Maysa Saleh



Ms. Miriam Zalzal



Dr. Mohamad Maan



Prof. Mohamad Miqdady



Dr. Mohamed Abu Haleeqa



Dr. Mohamed Babiker



Dr. Mohammad Yousuf



Dr. Muna Al Saffar



Dr. Murad Alobthani



Dr. Najwa Al Bustani



Ms. Nazma Sheikh



Dr. Nidheesh Chenchiri



Dr. Noura Al-Dahari



Dr. Omar Ismayl



Mrs. Omnia El Saeed



Dr. Rasha Abdelrahman



Mrs. Renate Richter



Mr. Rifaat Rawashdeh



Ms. Rita Ojeil



Prof. Shahrukh Hashmi



Dr. Shaimaa Al Mashhadani



Dr. Sherif Mahmoud



Dr. Shivam Mittal



Ms. Sonia Creado



Ms. Sonika Sachanandani



Dr. Thekra Hasan



Mr. Wael Al Awabdeh



Ms. Yasmeen Abuhmaid



Mr. Yousef Gamal



Mr. Youssef Hussiny



Dr. Zeinab Alloub

Abstracts and Posters

High-quality scientific abstracts were presented as posters; top abstracts were awarded and presented orally.

TOTAL NUMBER
OF ABSTRACTS

78



Top Abstract Winners



Prof. Rodrigo Araldi



Mr. Suhail Haque



Dr. Sohela Elkebir

Poster Winners



Mohammed Naji AlAbsi



Mohammad Ali



Anshida Abdul Latheef

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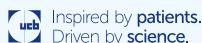


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انطلاق فعاليات مؤتمر الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للأمراض النادرة الخامس في أبوظبي 2026

[Watch video ↗](#)
**AD TV**

AR

03 Sep 2026 · Instagram reel

البروفيسور د. أيمن الخطاب يتحدث عن جهود دولة الإمارات في تطوير التشخيص المبكر للأمراض النادرة

[Watch video ↗](#)
**Akhbar Al Emarat**

AR

03 Sep 2026 · Instagram reel

انطلاق أعمال مؤتمر الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا الـ 5 للأمراض النادرة في أبوظبي

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**AD Net**

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04 Sep 2026 · Instagram reel

انطلقت أمس الخميس في أبوظبي فعاليات مؤتمر الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا الخامس للأمراض النادرة 2026

[Watch video ↗](#)
**Al Khaleej**

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تقنيات الجينوم والذكاء الاصطناعي تقود تحولاً في رعاية الأمراض النادرة

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**Al Watan**

AR

03 Sep 2026 · Online article

إنطلاق فعاليات مؤتمر الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للأمراض النادرة الخامس 2026 في أبوظبي

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AI Watan

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AI Bayan

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تقود تحولاً في رعاية الأمراض النادرة

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AI Dafrah TV

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تقود تحولاً في رعاية الأمراض النادرة

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Zawya

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إنطلاق فعاليات مؤتمر الشرق الأوسط
وشمال أفريقيا للأمراض النادرة الخامس
في أبوظبي

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Zawya

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Fifth MENA Congress for Rare
Diseases 2026 opens in Abu
Dhabi, bringing together 1,500+
participants from over 20
countries

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Fifth MENA Congress for Rare
Diseases 2026 Opens in Abu
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Participants from Over 20
Countries

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Fifth MENA Congress For Rare
Diseases 2026 Opens In Abu
Dhabi, Bringing Together 1,500+
Participants From Over 20
Countries

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Gulf Daily News

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12 Sep 2026 · Online article

Regional honour for rare diseases
expert

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Arab Times News

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Genomics and AI accelerate
diagnosis and precision medicine
for rare diseases

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Thank you

We are grateful for the significant support provided by all of our sponsors and partners, and to every speaker, attendee, patient and family who made the 5th MENA Congress for Rare Diseases a success.

See you at



**6th MENA Congress for
RARE DISEASES 2027**
3 - 5 June 2027, Abu Dhabi, UAE

For more information

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✉ info@larimarevents.com

Congress website



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