



## Dubai Health Authority Receives 2020 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Award – Recognition of Distinction and Best in Africa and the Middle East for their Novel Collaborative Approach Among Public and Private Sectors During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dubai Health Authority, United Arab Emirates



**Dr. Rana Nabulsi**  
 FACHE,  
 Head of Quality,  
 Dubai Health Authority



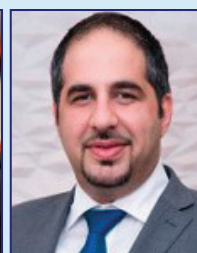
**Dr. Hussain Al Samt**  
 Director,  
 Dubai Health Authority



**Dr. Laila Al Dabal**  
 Head of Infectious Diseases,  
 Dubai Health Authority



**Dr. Hanan Al Suwaidi**  
 Assistant Professor,  
 Mohammed Bin  
 Rashid University



**Mohammed Daoud**  
 CEO, Unilabs  
 Middle East

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a global challenge that has stretched the limits of healthcare systems. Efforts to combat the pandemic require substantial protective and preventative measures, varying from protective equipment, policies, testing, and mass screening, to quarantines and more.

Early in the pandemic, the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) experienced significant challenges related to large scale testing and screening. This in turn affected DHA's ability to effectively trace and isolate infected individuals and to ultimately help slow viral transmission.

Specific challenges included logistics of acquiring an adequate supply of COVID-19 tests, increased testing capacity with 24 hour reporting, as well as active data integration with governance between private and public laboratories across Public Health systems to enable tracing and isolation of COVID-19 patients.

Accordingly, the DHA sought to generate new partnerships with private laboratories to enable increased COVID-19 testing capacity with prompt result turn-around and to enable regulation of the SARS-CoV-2 testing standards. Additionally, standardization programs and interlaboratory

comparison programs were initiated to enable track and tracing.

This novel collaboration between public and private laboratories has enabled substantial improvements to patient and public safety. Specifically, COVID-19 test results are returned within 48 hours of collection, enabling actionable next steps for infected patients, while mitigating risk for transmission to others. Consequently, the mortality rate related to COVID-19 in United Arab Emirates has declined by 83 percent when compared to the acute phase.

Given that Dubai is the most populated emirate in the UAE per square meter, it stands to reason that Dubai Health Authority plays a substantial role in the overall UAE statistics.

Importantly, 23 of 38 Hospitals/Healthcare centers in Dubai have been declared COVID-19 free by the regulation sector of DHA and patients are now comfortable seeking care at these facilities. Not only does this ensure continuity of care for patients, but also enables important revenue streams and sustainability for healthcare centers.

This innovative approach for uniting private and public laboratories for the greater good in UAE would not be possible without the leadership and patient-centricity of core team members within and beyond the DHA. For their remarkable outcomes this care team has been awarded the prestigious 2020 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Award Designation of Distinction and Best in Africa and the Middle East.

Congratulations to Dr. Rana Nabulsi, *FACHE, Head of Quality, DHA*, Dr. Hussain Al Samt, *Director, DHA*, Dr. Laila Al Dabal, *Head of Infectious Diseases, DHA*, Dr. Hanan Al Suwaidi, *Assistant Professor, Mohammed Bin Rashid University*, Mohammed Daoud, *CEO, Unilabs Middle East*.

### THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Joint coordination of supply chain and logistics for timely acquisition of COVID-19 tests can substantially improve test availability and capacity across the UAE
2. Standardization, active governance and data integration between private and public laboratories enables data sharing for enhanced tracking and tracing of active infections. This in turn translates to better prevention including quarantine and isolation measures.
3. Novel collaborations can substantially improve patient and public health during the COVID-19 pandemic