

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE NEWSLETTER



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DEAN'S MESSAGE OF THE MONTH



It brings me great pride to see so many of our graduates match into top residency programs around the world. The last month has been very busy at the college with meetings, workshops, seminars, and activities.

As we approach the end of the academic year, I would like to wish Years 3 and 5 the best of luck on their upcoming IFOM examinations.

I wish you all a very productive spring break, before the preparation for the exams begins. Wishing you and your families a Eid Mubarak.



COLLEGE

news

MoU for Medical Education Programs

Prof. Qutayba Hamid, Vice Chancellor for Medical and Health Colleges and Dean of the College of Medicine, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Sharjah and the University of Dundee. The partnership aims to enhance the delivery of Master's and PhD programs in Medical Education and Leadership through joint efforts in academic excellence, faculty development, and research. The collaboration was initiated and coordinated by Dr. Mohamed Taha, Director of the Medical Education Center, and further facilitated by Dr. Bashair Musa, Acting Director of the International Mobility Department.

As part of the agreement, the Director of Business Development and Partnerships at the School of Medicine, University of Dundee, visited the college in February to strengthen discussions on future joint activities. Planned initiatives include expanding clinical training opportunities at the Sharjah Clinical and Surgical Training Centre, fostering collaborative research, and facilitating student and faculty exchanges.



MSRD

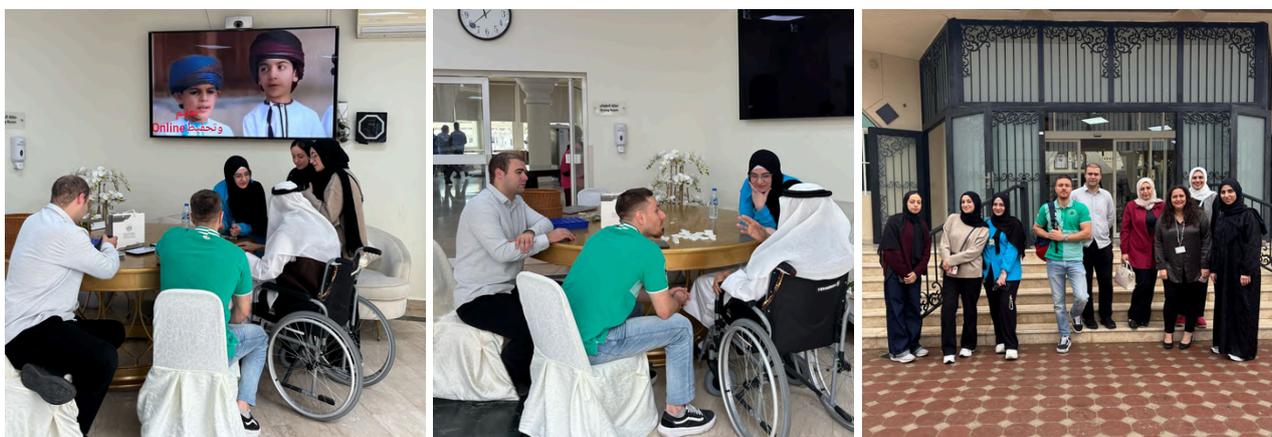
On 25th February 2025, the College of Medicine hosted the Medical Students Research Day (MSRD), led by Dr. Amal Hussein, and organized with the support of Dr. Hiba Barqawi, Dr. Zainab Al Shareef, and the Medical Student Association. The event served as an opportunity for Year 4 and 5 students to showcase their community-based research (CBR) projects through posters and oral presentations under diligent supervision and guidance. The top-performing poster and oral presenters were awarded during the closing ceremony.



Elderly Home Visit

A team from the College of Medicine, including Dr. Balsam Qubais, Dr. Hiba Barqawi, Dr. Ream Langhe, Dr. Narjes Saheb, and students from the College of Medicine, visited the Elderly Home in Sharjah on 25th February 2025. The visit aimed to provide companionship to the elderly through meaningful conversations and shared activities.

Additionally, discussions were held with the Sharjah Social Services Department to explore potential collaborations aimed at enhancing community services for the elderly. Key areas of focus included health awareness workshops, medical testing services, research partnerships, and opportunities for Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.



FACULTY

news

UOS First Psychological Counsellors Forum

On 19th February 2025, Dr. Hamid Alhaj delivered a presentation titled "Building resilience to excel in academia and beyond," at the University of Sharjah's First Psychological Counsellors Forum. During his talk, Dr. Hamid highlighted the importance of resilience in academia and beyond, emphasizing self-awareness, adaptability, and psychological well-being for success.



4th IFEMH

At the 4th International Forum on Education and Mental Health (IFEMH), held on 18th and 19th February 2025, Dr. Hamid Alhaj presented a talk titled "How does social media impact the mental health of young people?". His presentation stressed the importance of examining the impact of social media on adolescent mental health, highlighting its risks and benefits while emphasizing the need for research and intervention strategies.



AlQahera News Interview

On 9th March 2025, Dr. Jalal Taneera gave an interview on AlQahera News Channel, in which he tackled the challenges of pancreatic islet transplantation, including immune reactions and donor shortages. He also discussed new strategies that aim to improve outcomes by transplanting islets under the skin, potentially reducing insulin dependency and enhancing patient care.



WATCH NOW

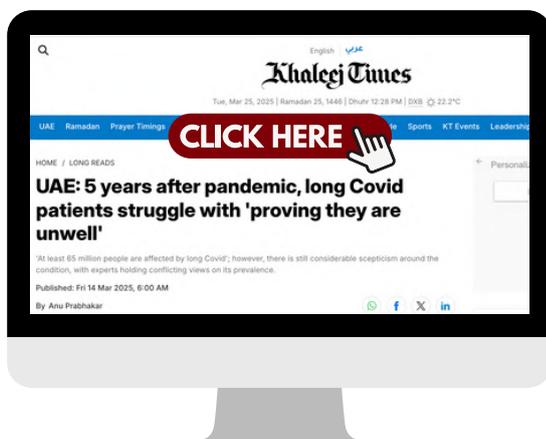
Childhood Diabetes Project

On 13th March 2025, The Childhood Diabetes Project in Sharjah Schools, led by Dr. Jalal Taneera and Dr. Amal Hussien, was launched in collaboration with the Sharjah Private Education Authority. It aims to assess the prevalence of Type 1 diabetes and to improve students' well-being across nearly 180 schools. This project focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to support diabetic students and enhance understanding of childhood diabetes.



Khaleej Times Article

On 14th March 2025, Khaleej Times published an article titled “5 years after pandemic, long COVID patients struggle with proving they are unwell”, highlighting the lasting cognitive effects of long COVID, particularly brain fog. The article presented findings from a study led by Prof. Basema Saddik, published in October 2024, which examined risk factors influencing disease severity and the likelihood of developing long COVID.



UOS Times Article

In the March 2025 issue of UOS Times, Dr. Jalal Taneera was featured for his research on the link between beta-thalassemia and diabetes, as well as his project on pancreatic cancer. The article highlights the impact of his work in advancing medical knowledge and healthcare research in the UAE.



STUDENT

news

UAE Fencing Cup

On 7th February 2025, Year 2 student Afra Alblooshi won a silver medal in the UAE Fencing Cup.



Donate Warmth Initiative

On 10th February 2025, the Community Committee, in collaboration with Al Etihad Charity, organized the "Donate Warmth" initiative to support those in need. The committee opened donation drives for students to contribute clothing items, and over 20 volunteers dedicated their time to collecting, sorting, and categorizing donations by age groups. The collected items were then handed over to Al Etihad Charity to ensure they reached those in need.



MSRP 'Path To Publication'

On 20th and 26th February 2025, the Medical Students' Research Program (MSRP) organized 'Path to Publication', a two-part series guiding students on publishing and advancing their CBR projects. The first session, introduced by MSRP student representatives Mazen Alhaj Ahmad (Year 5) and Lamees Mohamedali (Year 3), covered publication basics. The second session was led by Dr. Saryia Farouk (Batch 2021 graduate, Clinical Tutor), who shared his research expertise and provided students with deeper insights into the publishing process.



EDSA Sports Day

At the Emirates Down Syndrome Association Sports Day Event, held on 27th February 2025, students from the College of Medicine volunteered under the Community Committee of the Medical Student Association alongside Dr. Hiba Barqawi. The students played an active role by organizing engaging activities for the children, ensuring that everyone had a memorable and enjoyable experience.



Aftir3 Initiative

On 12th and 13th March 2025, members of the Community Committee volunteered in the “Aftir3” Initiative, in collaboration with Al Etihad Charity and First Abu Dhabi Bank. Over two days, volunteers helped pack and distribute meals to families in need, reflecting the initiative’s goal of making a meaningful impact and giving back to the community, especially during the holy month of Ramadan.



MEDICAL OR MYTHICAL

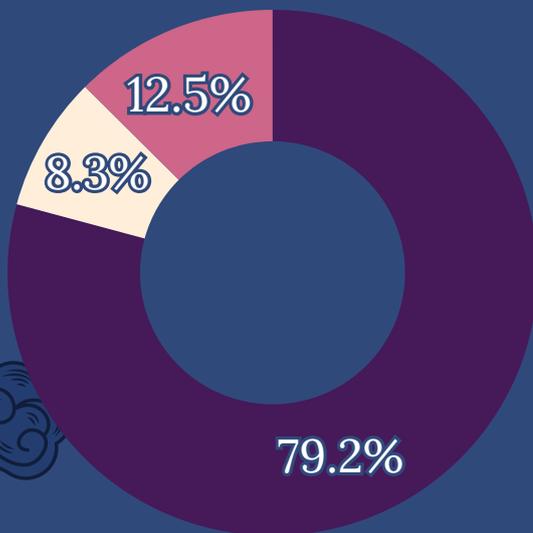
CAN STRESS REWRITE YOU?

By: Jana Eissa

Layla, a 21-year-old medical student, has been drowning in stress thanks to her brutal academic schedule. Between back-to-back exams, sleepless nights, and the occasional existential crisis, she's exhausted. One day, while scrolling through an article, she stumbles upon a claim that chronic stress can literally alter DNA. She pauses.

Could stress really leave a lasting biological mark?

Results



Stress doesn't affect DNA itself but can influence how genes are expressed, potentially impacting health and future offspring

Stress has no lasting effect on DNA orgene expression; once the stress is gone, the body returns to normal

Stress can change the structure of DNA permanently, leading to mutations that are passed down to future generations

THE VERDICT

Nope, stress won't scramble your DNA code, but it can influence how your genes are expressed.

This is all thanks to epigenetics—chemical modifications that control gene activity without changing the genetic sequence itself (Zannas & Chrousos, 2017). Studies have found that early life stress induces epigenetic modifications, such as DNA methylation and histone modifications, which can affect gene expression related to stress responses (Cheng et al, 2022).

And here's the kicker: these epigenetic changes can be inherited! A study on Syrian refugees found that individuals exposed to war-related trauma showed significant epigenetic modifications in stress-related genes, and these changes were detectable in their children—even if the children had never directly experienced the trauma (Mulligan et al., 2025).

But even less severe stressors can have transgenerational effects. Ramo-Fernández et al (2024), found that prenatal stress-associated epigenetic changes have been linked to child health, including internalizing problems, neurobehavioral outcomes, and stress-related disorders.

So, while stress doesn't permanently “rewrite” your DNA, it can shape gene expression in ways that impact your health and even future generations. In other words, managing your stress isn't just self-care—it's potentially rewriting your biological legacy.

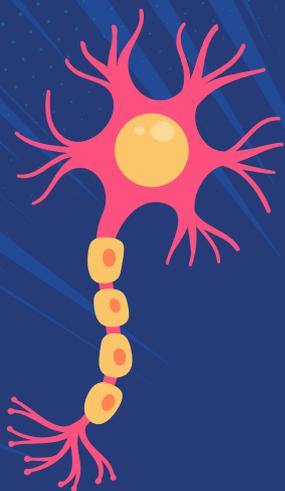
REFERENCES 

MEDICAL MARVELS

By: Jana Al Shouha

No Alarms, Only Danger

Imagine a life where pain doesn't exist—not as a relief, but as a continuous reality. Congenital insensitivity to pain (CIP) is a rare genetic condition that renders people incapable of feeling pain. Sounds like a superpower, but that's not quite the case. Pain, as unpleasant as it is, serves as the body's alarm system, signaling damage and prompting us to react to protect ourselves. Without it, individuals with CIP face unique and often dangerous challenges. For instance, a child with CIP might unknowingly walk on a broken leg or burn their hand without flinching. Everyday accidents go unnoticed, which eventually can lead to severe injuries and infections, sometimes even shortened lifespans. Most people with CIP have to regularly check their bodies for wounds they might not even realize they have.



CIP is linked to mutations in genes like SCN9A or NTRK1, which code for faulty nociceptors, or pain-sensing nerve cells, so the brain never receives the "danger!" alert. Unexpectedly, understanding the underlying mechanisms behind CIP has opened doors to groundbreaking pain management research. Researchers are reverse-engineering these mutations to develop painkillers that target Nav1.7 sodium channels (responsible for initiating and amplifying pain signals) on nociceptors or modulate endogenous opioids, turning a rare disorder into hope for chronic pain sufferers worldwide.

The paradox of CIP is captivating: a condition that seems advantageous, but rather a vivid reminder of how pain, inconvenient as it may be, plays an essential role in keeping us safe and alive. The world of pain—or the lack of it—can teach us a lot about survival and the complexity of the human body's mutations.

**REFERENCES**

based on a
true story
SURGERY GONE VIRAL

Two years ago, on one of the mornings during my surgery rotation, I woke up exhausted but brushed it off—probably just a bad night’s sleep or not enough caffeine. I had to power through. It was finally scrubbing-in day.

I dragged myself to the OR. For some reason, while I was elbows deep in the patient’s abdomen, I started sweating profusely. Then, the weakness hit. My arms felt like spaghetti. My vision turned blurry. Still, I ignored it. I blamed the unforgiving glare of the OR lights, dehydration, or just first-case nerves.

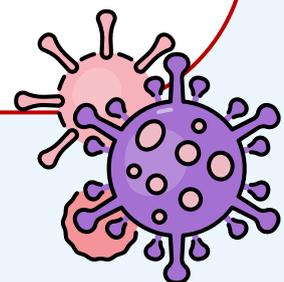
Somehow, I finished. Victory, right? Nope. Soon enough, I started feeling worse. *Way worse*. At some point in the afternoon, I gave in and decided to be a patient in the ER.

Swabbed. Waited.

The result? **COVID-positive**.

I rubbed my eyes and read it again— *negatives look like positives sometimes, right?* Not this time. There it was, bold as day: **COVID-19: +**.

And that’s how I spent the morning up close and personal with someone’s intestines while fighting a raging virus I didn’t know I had.



STUDENTS'

corner

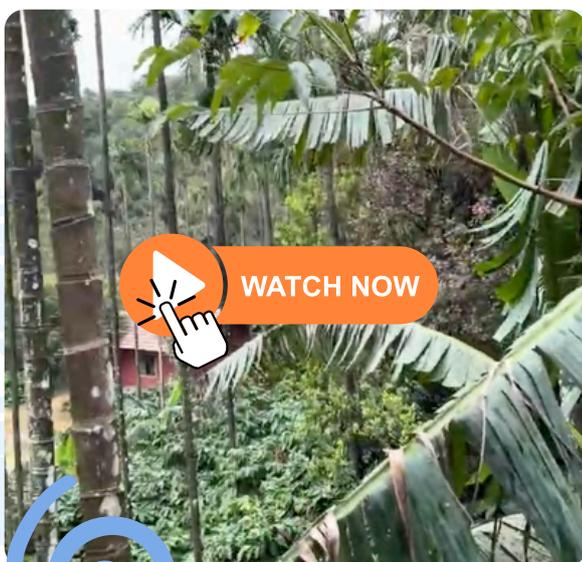
“

Ruaa Elshafie

Foundation Year

First day of uni came with a feathered surprise!

”



“

Syeda Sidra

Year I

A house in the woods, where the rain sings and the trees embrace, a peaceful escape for the heart.

”

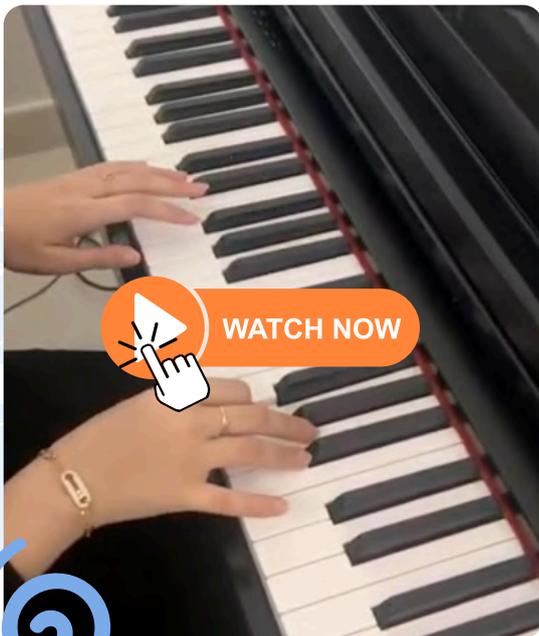
“

Fatima Lootah

Year 4

لقد علمتنا الصحراء أن نصبر طويلاً حتى
ينبت الخير.

”



WATCH NOW

“

Yomna Barkoomi

Year I

Let the music embrace your heart as I
play piano, revealing the profound
connection between melody and the
healing journey of medicine.

”

“ **Taimiyah Khalid Abdulaziz**
Year 4
My passion for creating heritage
jewelries is endless 🌴🌟❤️ find
me on insta @teiiem.ae! ”



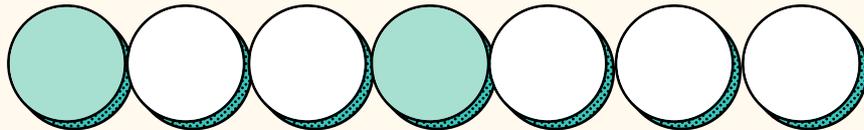
“ **Maram Bonny**
Year 3
وَ تَشَاءُ أَنْتَ مِنْ دُنْيَاكَ زَهْرَةً فَإِذَا بِرَبِّكَ
يَهْدِيكَ بُسْتَانًا ” ”

JUMBLE!

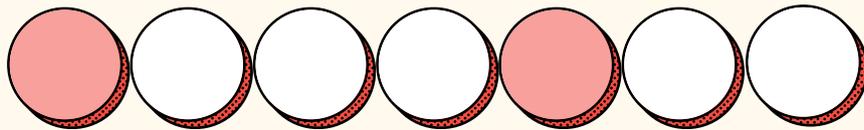
HOW TO PLAY?

Un-jumble the letters below to form a word. Finally, re-arrange the highlighted letters from each of these answers and use the hint to solve the final bonus Jumble!

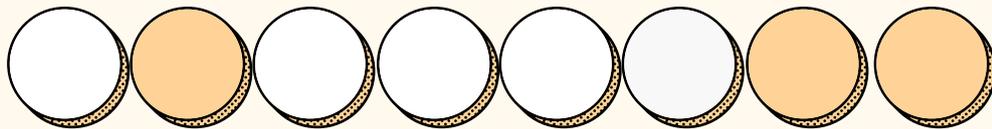
C I T E O P C



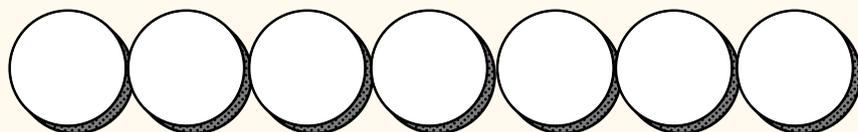
U P T R E R U



T N E I G N S A

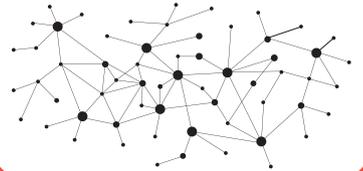


FINAL ANSWER:



Hint

My _____ are like my Wi-Fi - connected, but barely sending any useful signals!



Submit Answer



STUDENT LETTERBOX

WILTED PLASTIC

Every weekend when I return home and ring your bell, Mother, I am troubled by a future where the artificial plants you have at your front door have wilted, a future where the Ramadan decorations we keep hung all year round have died, and a future where I would have to use my keys instead.

I see it all, every new wrinkle cracking in your face, how your eyelids are drooping, how your hands are starting to look like my grandmother's, every vital the nurse measures at the hospital when you go for a visit, how your knees are starting to hurt, and I'm starting to learn about the medications you're taking at university.

I hope that when you're gone, you will have forgotten something at my house, Mother, more than just your haunting ghost so that I can know that you will show up at my doorstep again. A worn-out sweater you knit for me perhaps, or that maroon scarf you always wore to the mosque, or your old, empty bottle of vintage perfume that you bought in Damascus. I will place it under my bed, let it flower through my mattress, and stick its thorns into my cherry wood bedframe, so that when I lay to sleep in a room lit only by the refrigerator light, in a city far in a foreign land, it can still feel like I am 8 years old, laying on your lap, with your hands brushing through my hair, singing me to sleep with a lullaby known only by you.

In love, we weave our tapestries together with those that we cherish. I hope your vibrant tapestry won't fade once it finds itself in an abandoned home without your stitch, Mother.



Yasser Abbas 
YEAR 1 

'STUDYING' IN RAMADAN

By: Rehab Jamali

