

Razi Dermatology Hospital: Pioneering Excellence in Middle Eastern Dermatology

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Editorial

As this inaugural issue goes to press, it is both timely and appropriate to reflect upon the institutional legacy that underwrites this scholarly endeavor. Since its establishment in 1943 under the leadership of Professor Mohammad Ali Maleki, Razi Dermatology Hospital has undergone a remarkable transformation evolving from a pioneering clinical facility into the largest specialized dermatology center in Iran and one of the most comprehensive skin disease treatment institutions in the Middle Eastern region. Affiliated with Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS), the hospital occupies a unique position at the intersection of clinical care, academic medicine, and research innovation.

The clinical scope of Razi Hospital is considerable and merits precise documentation. The institution currently manages between 2,000 and 2,500 outpatient consultations per day a volume that reflects both the high degree of patient and referral satisfaction and the breadth of its specialized services. This outpatient activity is complemented by dedicated inpatient wards encompassing dermatology, surgery, infectious diseases, and internal medicine, as well as an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). The hospital operates at a capacity of 240 beds, firmly establishing its status as the foremost referral center for cutaneous diseases in the

country. In parallel with its core dermatological mission, Razi Hospital maintains active clinical departments in plastic surgery, otorhinolaryngology, internal medicine, infectious diseases, cardiology, ophthalmology, and endocrinology, among others reflecting an integrated, multidisciplinary model of care.

The academic mission of Razi Hospital is equally distinguished. The institution serves as a unique and specialized training center, currently hosting more than 150 medical students and interns, 90 dermatology residents, and 10 fellowship trainees in derma pathology, pediatric dermatology, and plastic surgery. This concentration of learners within a single institution is exceptional by any regional or international standard, and it underscores the hospital's pivotal role in shaping the next generation of dermatological specialists across Iran and the wider region. The seamless integration of patient care with formal medical education ensures that clinical excellence and academic rigor remain mutually reinforcing pillars of the institution's identity (Fig. 1).

Among its research endeavors, the Autoimmune Bullous Diseases Research Center exemplifies Razi Hospital's commitment to specialized scientific inquiry. This center





Fig. 1: The hospital view from its new building structure

focuses on pemphigus, pemphigoid, and related autoimmune blistering disorders conditions that demonstrate notable prevalence in Middle Eastern populations and has produced a body of work with direct implications for regional clinical practice. Beyond autoimmune bullous diseases, the hospital's research portfolio extends to skin regenerative medicine and stem cell therapeutics, fields in which Iran has emerged as a substantive contributor at the international level.

A landmark achievement in the institutional history of Razi Hospital is the implementation of its Outreach Program, conducted between 2008 and 2021. This initiative was designed to advance both educational and therapeutic capacity simultaneously, achieved through the systematic replication of Razi Hospital's clinical and training programs within academic institutions of partner countries. Participation extended across neighboring states including Iraq, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan reflecting the hospital's commitment to regional solidarity and the transfer of specialized medical knowledge to healthcare systems where dermatological expertise remains underrepresented.

Of particular significance is the hospital's sustained engagement with the African continent. Within the framework of the Outreach Program, three permanent dermatology clinics were established in collaboration with local partners: in Bujumbura, Burundi (2012); Nairobi, Kenya (2014); and Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (2023). These facilities represent more than infrastructural investments; they function as enduring hubs for medical service delivery, research collaboration, and professional education, conducted in partnership with dermatology specialists from the respective host countries. The sustainability of this model wherein knowledge transfer and institutional capacity-building take precedence over short-term interventions has ensured that these centers continue to serve their communities well beyond the conclusion of individual program cycles.

Among the most distinguished outcomes of this program are the internationally recognized contributions of Professor Seyed Naser Emadi, a senior faculty member at Razi Dermatology Hospital. His sustained engagement with underserved communities, both within the region and across Sub-Saharan Africa, has earned him two of the most prestigious distinctions in global medicine and humanitarian service. In 2021, Professor Emadi was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal the highest international honor conferred by the International Committee of the Red Cross upon healthcare professionals for exceptional humanitarian service. Subsequently, in 2023, he was designated the Most Humanitarian Dermatologist by the International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS), a recognition that reflects not only personal dedication but also the ethos of service that permeates Razi Hospital's institutional culture. His achievements stand as a testament to the profound impact that academically grounded, ethically driven clinical work can have on global health outcomes.

The sustained international engagement of Razi Hospital has, in turn, catalyzed a productive reverse knowledge exchange. Following the success of the outreach initiatives, the hospital began hosting specialized advanced training courses for international participants on its own premises. Dermatology residents and students from Tajikistan, Kenya, and Ghana, among other countries, participated in immersive training programs during 2024 and 2025, accessing the hospital's operating theatres, laser facilities, specialized outpatient clinics, and research laboratories. This bidirectional model of engagement enriches both the visiting trainees and Razi Hospital's own faculty and residents, cultivating a genuinely global perspective within an institution already distinguished by its regional significance.

This journal emerges from a deliberate and considered vision of Razi Hospital as a nucleus for dermatological

excellence serving the broader Middle Eastern region and beyond. It is conceived as a platform through which clinicians may share complex and instructive cases, researchers may disseminate findings of relevance to regional patient populations, educators may advance evidence-based training methodologies, policymakers may access high-quality data to inform healthcare decisions, and the broader dermatology community may benefit from the collective clinical wisdom accrued within these walls over more than eight decades.

The launch of this journal constitutes not merely an institutional milestone but an open invitation to scholarly collaboration. The dermatological challenges that define clinical practice in this region rare genodermatoses, complex inflammatory disorders, emerging infectious conditions, and the particular epidemiological profile of phototype-specific skin diseases are most effectively addressed through coordinated, multi-institutional effort. We therefore call upon colleagues across the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, and the international dermatology community to contribute case reports, original research, and critical reviews that will advance

shared knowledge and ultimately improve patient care.

As this publishing endeavor commences, we do so with full awareness of the responsibilities incumbent upon a journal bearing the name of so distinguished an institution. Razi Dermatology Hospital's eight-decade legacy of clinical excellence, its role as a center of academic and scientific inquiry, and its demonstrated commitment to international partnership uniquely position it to lead this scholarly initiative. The skin, as the body's largest and most visible organ, demands the dedicated attention of specialized centers of excellence. Through this journal, the knowledge generated within Razi Hospital's wards, laboratories, and outreach programs will be systematically communicated to a wider audience, ensuring that its benefits extend to patients and practitioners far beyond its immediate catchment.

Welcome to the inaugural issue. We look forward to the journey ahead.

*On behalf of the Editorial Board and
the entire Razi Dermatology Hospital community*