

# **Dr. Maryam Mohamed Fatma Matar**

## **MD, Ph.D.**

### **Scientist. Genetics Expert. Healthcare Influencer. Leadership Mentor**

A leading healthcare influencer, Her Excellency Dr Maryam Matar had pioneered study of genes and advocates public education and awareness of genetic disorders across the ME region.

A true game changer in the field of genetic research and biotechnology in the Arab world, she is single handedly responsible for putting UAE on the global map of genetic research and innovation. As the pioneer genetic scientist, she played a lead role in bringing new legislations for pre-marital screening, preventive genetic testing and relevant mandatory legislations at the government level in the UAE.

Dr Matar comes with very strong background and expertise in sustainable development, strategic planning and leadership, public policy and advocacy. As a strategic advisor, she is helping leading organisations across South East Asia and GCC to build an enabling environment where talent, science and innovation flourishes.

### **Founder & Chairperson of UAE Genetic Diseases Association (UAEGDA)**

In 2004 she had conceptualized a national body on genetic disorder, awareness and prevention and UAE Genetic Diseases Association (UAEGDA) and Sheikh Zayed Research Centre were founded in 2004 as a dedication to the memory of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of the U.A.E. Founded under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al- Nahyan, Cabinet Member and Minister of State for Tolerance of UAE and President, UAE Genetic Diseases Association

Responsible for gene mapping in the UAE, UAE Genetic Diseases Association is working under the leadership of Dr Matar with the aim to have the better quality of genes of the future generation by 2021. The UAE Genetic Disease Association achieved extraordinary results such as screening of 37,281 Emirati families and more than 13,000 expat families

### **Pioneering the advocacy and awareness on genetic screening & legislative decisions:**

- Mandatory Premarital screening legislation in UAE
- Mandatory newborn screening legislation in UAE
- A national screening program for the common genetic blood disorders in 2006 aimed at identifying Thalassemia, Sickle cell anemia and G6PDH carriers in the UAE population.
- Manal – Folic Acid prevention program & WHO fortified wheat campaign

- A recent cabinet decision that rules that unmarried women and couples can now freeze their eggs in the UAE.
- Legislation on ban of smoking in public places in UAE

### **Global speaker, panelist and advisor as a genetic scientist**

Dr Maryam Matar speaks in more than 20 specialist healthcare and medical conferences in the field of genetics across the globe every year.

Currently serving on the panel of Global Commission to End the Diagnostic Odyssey for Children with a Rare Disease. The Global Commission will develop an actionable roadmap to help the rare disease field to shorten the multi-year diagnostic journey, considered a key to a longer, healthier life.

As the founder of GCC Genomics Society, in partnership with Saudi Genome Project, Dr Matar has created a regional platform to accelerate the understanding of genomics in the Arab world. Dedicated to the development of studies, bringing the regional experts together, and help the research community to the potential of genomics, this initiative aims to connect the global and regional research centres and also create a GCC wide knowledge bank.

### **Global advocacy efforts for Women Leadership, Youth Development and Girl in STEM**

Dr Matar serves as a Chairperson/senior advisor in over 15 international, regional and local committees for Women in STEM, Youth leadership and preventive healthcare initiatives. She mentors over 100 professional women and 500 young professional graduates on annual basis.

Committed to women leadership, girls in STEM and youth leadership, she is a globally acclaimed speaker and influencer and invited as a keynote speaker in over 25 conference and forums every year to speak, inspire and champion these causes. She is a strong advocate of women leadership and creating learning opportunities for women, especially Emirati women.

In 2018 alone, she has spoken on the topic of women leadership as an “inspiring women leader” and addressed over 2,500 professional women, scientists, healthcare experts and students in China, Bahrain, Europe and UAE.

In 2017, she was invited to represent UAE in the global Sheikha Fatima Lectureship forum in Washington, USA, to join the five speakers on the theme of ‘Women at the Table’. Organised to support U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 that amplifies the participation of women in all aspects of decision-making on peace and security issues. The resolution advocates for women to be included and engaged in all stages of peacebuilding, including talks at the peace table.

### **Empowering Community through awareness and information**

Dr Maryam Matar is a very active and strong advocate of empowering community in healthcare, and has a very strong background and expertise in sustainable development, strategic planning and leadership, public policy and advocacy.

One of the most inspiring and effective keynote speaker on the topics of “Reprogram Your Genes” and “Epigenetics for Academic and Professional Performance”, she is the lead speaker of UAE GDA community awareness and academic outreach program. This program is a collaborative effort of UAE schools, Universities and targets over 5,000 students every year.

### **Pioneering work as a sustainable healthcare and community development advisor**

She is the first woman Director General of Community Development Authority (CDA), which undertakes to formulate social policies and deliver social services that are in line with and contribute to the achievement of the social development objectives of Dubai Strategic Plan 2007 – 2015, launched by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum on February 3rd, 2007. In 2005, Dr. Matar was the leader of the executive team that set up social development strategies for Dubai Strategic Plan.

- Recognised as the most powerful scientist in the UAE since 2014.
- Recognised among top 20 Arab scientists with the biggest contribution to humanity by British Scientific Community 2016.
- Currently serving on the panel of Global Commission to End the Diagnostic Odyssey for Children with a Rare Disease
- Serves on the board of over 10 scientific/leadership committees advocating girls in STEM, women empowerment and leadership and youth development across academic and research centres in the GCC region
- First Emirati Woman appointed as Director General, of the Community Development Authority (CDA)
- First Emirati woman on the position of Undersecretary to the Ministry of Health in 2006
- Women in STEM ( Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Ambassador and advisor on Women Leadership in workplace
- A leading influencer advising private sector organisations, healthcare and educational institutions on their strategy regarding the sustainable development
- A globally acclaimed speaker on the topics of emerging technologies, biotechnology, epigenetics, impact of genetic screening and leadership
- IN the ‘100 smartest people in the UAE’.
- Among the “top 100 most influential Arabs in the world” recognised by Arabian Business for six consecutive years.