

The 6th ISIRV School of Respiratory Viruses, Qatar University, Doha Qatar

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The 6th ISIRV School of Respiratory Viruses was held at Qatar University from 19th to 23rd January 2025. ISIRV partnered with the Biomedical Research Centre and WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Capacity Building on Emerging and Re-emerging Zoonotic Diseases at Qatar University, WHO EMRO and Gulf CDC to deliver the school. The School offered an intensive program of lectures to train the next generation of respiratory virus researchers, public health and animal/one health scientists. The school focused on improving understanding of influenza, coronaviruses (SARS and MERS), and RSV with a strong focus on human, animal-/one health and outbreak/pandemic preparedness.

The 6th edition of the School was the largest to date. Seventy-six international and 45 Qatar based students attended the 5-day school. Attendees from the EMRO region were prioritised with ISIRV supporting 44 participants from Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen. One-year ISIRV membership will be given to the scholarship awardees supported by ISIRV. Other international students attended from Bahrain, Germany, India, Iraq, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Norway, Russia and Saudi Arabia. Forty-five Qatar based students attended the school, with other local attendees joining for specific days. The school was oversubscribed, although most of these attendees needed a scholarship to attend, and a Webex link was shared with participants who could not join the school in person so as they could follow the school online.

The ISIRV school facilitated networking opportunities with ice breaker session, round tables during the breaks and lunch for students and teaching faculty to meet, and a gala dinner to encouraging informal networking and collaboration within the region. The program included a mixture of keynote lectures, two expert panel discussions (bridging the gap between academic and industry, and mass gatherings) and 3 student presentation sessions (two oral sessions and a poster session). Each morning started with a recap by a group of students of the previous day. Daily feedback by the students was collected on the school program and areas for improvement. We are very grateful to the speakers from Qatar, the EMRO region and around the world who shared insights into the latest research on respiratory viruses, with a focus on both fundamental science and its applications. Qatar showcased its work on surveillance systems used to track viral outbreaks, including genomic surveillance, and the role of real-time data in shaping public health responses and timely vaccine effectiveness data from the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall,

the school received very positive feedback, and many students established new contacts within the region.



The 6th School attendees and some of the teaching faculty.



ISIRV supported attendees and teaching staff