



المركز الخليجي للوقاية من الأمراض ومكافحتها
Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control

مجلس الصحة
لدول مجلس التعاون
Gulf Health Council



PEARLS in Digital Public Health: From principles into actions

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Outline

- Introduction
- PEARLS as an implementation pathway
- Turning principles into actions
- International Patient Summary (Health Passport)
- Gulf CDC regional observatory (GO)



Introduction

Gulf CDC, PEARLS, and Governance



What and Who is Gulf CDC?

Gulf Center For Disease Prevention and Control

Vision: A Gulf society enjoying the highest level of health and wellbeing through a Gulf partnership in public health.

Mission: To foster harmonization, build knowledge and generate evidence to enable the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mitigation of public health emergencies and promotion of healthy communities across the Gulf.

Why PEARLS and Governance Matters Now

- The Rapid tech advances, pandemics, global mobility. Without trust and coordination, risks grow.

Not Just Possible, But Proven

- Gulf CDC experience shows that robust, **PEARLS** guided governance transforms digital health from risky to reliable.
- Gulf CDC's data sharing policy is a working example of enabling safer, faster, and smarter public health action at scale.



Using PEARLS As Implementation Pathway



Cross-Border Health Data

- Public health data sharing (e.g., disease surveillance) demands legal, ethical, and regulatory alignment.
- WHO's Digital Health Strategy supports public health through ethical, inclusive, and interoperable digital systems.



PEARLS provides a safe, trusted foundation and offers a pathway to implement this vision.

Each PEARLS dimension reduces harm and builds trust in public health systems powered by data and digital tools



Result: Increased trust and smoother collaboration between countries
Minimizing Harm, Maximizing Trust



Turning Principles into Action

Gulf CDC used PEARLS as a practical tool to move from theory to action in building the **Gulf data sharing policy**.

Why This Matters – Trust maximization and Harm minimization

The experience shows that good governance isn't a barrier but it's the foundation for safer, smarter innovation.

The PEARLS-guided approach:

- **Minimizes potential harm** by anticipating risks before they happen,
- **Builds trust** among countries, individuals, clinicians, and the public
- **Enables rapid, coordinated action** even in the world's most challenging settings

PEARLS Domain	Gulf CDC
Political	Secured ministerial agreement for rapid, cross-border reporting and data sharing
Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verifying the data with the concerned country• Countries understanding of the data usage and utilization
Administrative	Unified reporting channels and outbreak response protocols
Regulatory	Standardized notification rules and criteria
Legal	Aligned data protection and confidentiality regulations with internationally adopted standards
Social	Inclusive communication with all member countries and the outcome of the data sharing is to benefited all the countries



International Patient Summaries (IPS) “digital passport”

- **A global digital health standard**
IPS is an internationally recognized, standardized summary of a person’s key health information, designed for safe, rapid sharing, especially during cross-border care or emergencies.
- **What does it include?**
Allergies, medications, major health conditions, procedures, immunizations, and other essential data, and presented in a simple, portable format.
- **Why does it matter?**
Enables healthcare providers to make informed, timely decisions, even if the patient’s full record is unavailable or they’re far from home.

IPS involves collecting and sharing sensitive patient information. **PEARLS** ensures that, when **IPS** is used, there are clear rules about who controls the data, how privacy is protected, and that all actions meet ethical and legal standards.

PEARLS	IPS in Action
Political	Requires international cooperation to ensure recognition and adoption of the IPS
Ethical	Respects patient autonomy and confidentiality in data sharing
Administrative	Simplifies clinical workflows, making it easy for providers to access and use safely
Regulatory	Aligns with global standards for health information exchange and patient safety
Legal	Enforces compliance with privacy laws, data protection, and clear patient rights
Social	By respecting ownership and privacy, IPS builds trust-patients know their information is used only for their care, and providers are confident they’re acting within ethical and legal guidelines.



GCC Experience is a Starting Point, Not the Finish Line



- What we’ve built in the Gulf CDC shows what’s possible, but these lessons aren’t limited to GCC context.
- The tools, principles, and governance models can be adapted anywhere and for multiple purposes.

“Beyond”	Example	Future Potential
Mass Gatherings	Hajj, Olympics, World Expo	Routine travel, migration, trade
Regional Borders	GCC cross-border data policy	Global health networks (for both emergencies and routine care)
International Patient Summaries	IPS piloted at Hajj	Integrated digital health records (patient-centered health) real-time, interoperable, and portable health information.

Gulf Observatory (GO)

- Establishment of an integrated health observatory system (communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, registries, and national surveys) to improve the quality and accessibility of health data across member states, thereby enhancing public health decision-making and regional collaboration.
- Utilizing AI for health and public health research.
- Incorporating WHO 2021 guidance on ethics and governance of AI for health, and 2024 WHO guidance on large multi-modal models that sets key principles and recommendations to guide AI responsible use in health



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Thank you