



2020-2021 RCSI BAHRAIN  
ANNUAL REPORT



**RCSI**





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# Message from the President, Chair of the Executive Committee



RCSI Bahrain has taken great strides forward in 'building the new' and despite the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to harness our own potential by embracing operational changes and execute various aspects of the University's development plan.

A momentous milestone for RCSI Bahrain this year was receiving approval from the **General Medical Council (GMC) in the United Kingdom** to allow medical graduates to apply for registration to practice in the United Kingdom, without having to undertake the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) licensing examinations. This enables RCSI Bahrain medical graduates to practice more quickly in the UK is part of our commitment to provide training and learning opportunities and produce competent graduates who can compete for international places. This achievement will enhance the experience of RCSI Bahrain graduates and support the delivery of quality health services in the Kingdom of Bahrain and worldwide.

With the increasing demand for exceptional healthcare professionals presented by the pandemic, RCSI Bahrain launched a **new scholarship opportunity** for students interested in pursuing their studies in the medical field. Under the AlMabarrah AlKhalifa Foundation, a new scholarship marking the remembrance of the late His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who was a major supporter of RCSI Bahrain since its establishment, was created for a Bahraini student to

join our undergraduate medicine programme. As a health sciences University, expanding our research efforts and opportunities for collaboration has always been an integral pillar of our responsibility for enhancing human health. In July, RCSI Bahrain opened the doors of its new **RCSI Bahrain Biomolecular and Clinical Trial Research Centre** in partnership with King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH). Supported by RCSI in Dublin, Bahrain's Ministry of Health (MOH) and the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), our new Research Centre will promote research focused on the healthcare priorities of Bahrain, with the mission to specifically address prevalent health diseases such as diabetes and obesity, and health conditions such as metabolic syndrome. One area of expertise of our centre is the delivery of clinical trials to the highest of international standards, thanks to our team of experts based in Bahrain and Dublin. Another focus of research will be clinical trials in stem cell technology, which were recently authorised in Bahrain. We will have three dedicated research groups, being new stem cell, pancreatic islet cell, and tissue regeneration.

The academic year 2020-21 witnessed major achievements for **our faculty with national and**

**international recognition** for their significant contributions to their fields of expertise. Professor Ghufran Jassim, Associate Professor in Family Medicine, was selected as one of the winners of the first edition of the 'Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Award for Bahraini Doctors', to honour outstanding Bahraini doctors in medical, clinical and treatment research, under the category of 'Innovation and Creative Award in Therapeutic, Clinical and Medical Research'. Professor Steve Safrany was awarded a Fellowship by the British Pharmacological Society in recognition of his contribution to the field of pharmacology and his work with the society over the past 26 years. Dr Ann Donohoe and Dr Hussain Ali Nasaif received the award of Fellowship by Examination of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery (FFNMRCI) from Dr Michael Shannon, RCSI Dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery and the Surgery and Postgraduate Faculties Board at RCSI in Dublin. Our faculty's achievements undoubtedly reflect on the leadership, knowledge and guidance our students receive to help transform them into future healthcare leaders.

As the whole world continued to navigate through the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting on the advancements in the fields of medicine and nursing held greater value at this time more than ever. A group of our experienced and passionate faculty members along with notable guest speakers led a **series of webinars under the themes of 'History of Medicine' and 'History of Nursing'**, to chronicle the development of medical and nursing practices across the ages and give our students and the public an insight into the contributions made by healthcare professionals across the centuries.

In June, **under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, RCSI Bahrain celebrated the successful graduation of the 2021 Classes** from the School of Medicine, the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, with two virtual conferring ceremonies. We feel very proud of our students for the tremendous work they have done to complete their studies and take their first steps in their journey as future healthcare leaders.

This academic year was largely marked by many successes, one of the most rewarding being our students' feedback from the **2021 Market Insight Study** indicating that many of our students have been satisfied with their University experience, despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic. Details of the action plan initiated from the study will be included in the next Annual Report. We are grateful to the Estates Department for

their great effort in enforcing the COVID-19 safety measures on campus throughout the phases of the pandemic and in keeping with all guidelines to safeguard the health and safety of our students, staff and visitors.

RCSI Bahrain welcomed Her Excellency Dr Shaikha Rana Bint Isa Bin Duaij Al Khalifa on her new appointment in May, as Secretary General of The Higher Education Council.

This year was marked by great sorrow with the loss of Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Professor **Jim Dornan** in March. With more than 40 years of experience, Professor Dornan joined RCSI Bahrain in March 2020 and was a valued member of the RCSI Bahrain family and a pioneer of both clinical and academic developments in the fields of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In his honour, RCSI Bahrain held a virtual memorial service, with members of Professor Dornan's family in attendance, where the RCSI Bahrain community shared their memories and stories of their much-admired colleague.

Overall, the impact RCSI Bahrain has had on public health in Bahrain during the academic year 2020-21 has been one of the greatest in our history. This being thanks to the collaboration of our students who have volunteered their efforts to support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the professionalism of our alumni, the dedication of our staff and the support of our stakeholders.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to express our sincere thanks to our students, alumni, staff and stakeholders for their contribution and ongoing support throughout this unique and rewarding academic year.

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."  
- Socrates



# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



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**Professor Stephen Atkin**  
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**Dr Kathryn Strachan**  
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**Mr Martin Cunningham**  
Head of Academic and Regulatory Affairs (Nominee)



**Dr Wendy Maddison**  
Head of Student Development and Wellbeing (Nominee)



**Mr Gary Brady**  
Head of Human Resources (Nominee)





# Impact on Public Health

RCSI Bahrain students, alumni and faculty have made a valuable contribution to public health in the Kingdom of Bahrain during the academic year 2020-21



In support of the National Vaccination Campaign, our Nursing students in Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 have undertaken their clinical placements at different health centres across the Kingdom to vaccinate and perform COVID-19 testing for members of the community.



Ms Furqan Abdulaal, N1 student, shared her volunteering experience at Alshamil Centre and Exhibition Center in addition to the Random Mobile Units and Bahrain International Airport with the RCSI Bahrain community.

"The world was living in a global pandemic, and it was a great honour and an inspiring opportunity to be able to give back to our community during these unprecedented times.

From a nursing student's perspective, it was like a jump to the future where I had the privilege of communicating with many employees from several

departments and being part of a well-integrated healthcare system.

I myself acquired many worthwhile skills during the process. It was a great privilege to play a small role in a large project. I would still like to continue the volunteer job and it would be a great opportunity to do it with the RCSI Bahrain volunteer group."



Ms Reem Alkhunaizi, Ms Shatha Mohamed, Ms Safa Rahma, Ms Fatin AlMahroos and Ms Alaa AlQassab from Year 2 and IC2 shared their experience volunteering at the COVID-19 Testing Hall at the Exhibition Centre.

"It is an incredible experience to volunteer during a global pandemic as medical students. We had the opportunity to practice our communication

skills, history taking and make social connections with healthcare workers across Bahrain. This also helped us learn new phrases from different languages and important healthcare procedures. Helping Bahrain in such a hard time to fight COVID-19 is a remarkable experience that we will never forget."



Ms Fajer Qasim, a First-Year medicine student shared her experience with the RCSI Bahrain community volunteering at the Public Health Directorate.

"I am glad and proud that I could help my community and country by volunteering at the Public Health Directorate. I worked with the contact tracing team to trace all the COVID-19 patients' contacts. During this period, I felt closer to the situation than ever, just by communicating with patients over the telephone was enough to make me grasp the gravity of the situation.

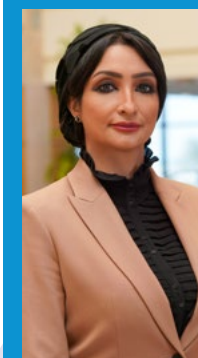
This experience made me learn a lot that I would benefit from throughout my studying period, as well as my career path in the future. My communication skills have improved a lot as I learned how to communicate with patients from different nationalities and with different personalities. Working with people from different healthcare specialties and seeing the volunteers all united by one common goal of serving the country was the highlight of my experience."



## Alumni appointed as Research Associates for COVID-19 Research

School of Medicine alumni, Dr Nada Alawi, Dr Aayat Al-Fayadh (both Class of 2018), Dr Rawaa Alsayegh, Dr Nour Soliman (both Class of 2019) and Dr Mohammed Abu Fayyad (Class of 2020), were appointed as Clinical Research Associates to

work on the Favipiravir Clinical Trial, led by Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, which aimed to compare three distinct treatment arms in the fight against COVID-19.



## Research on the psychological impact of COVID-19 on Bahraini nationals

Associate Professor in Family Medicine, Professor Ghufuran Jassim and a group of RCSI Bahrain alumni conducted a research study to investigate the psychological impact of COVID-19 on Bahraini nationals.

For most people, overlooking the longer-term negative impact of COVID-19 on mental health may cause more distress and suffering than the virus itself. Their research highlighted that most

people are in a mental state between 'flourishing' and 'depression', or generally an absence of well-being.

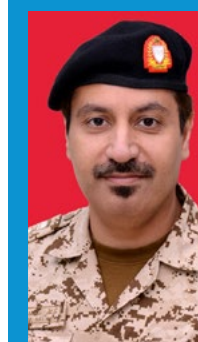
It also emphasised the need for psychological intervention, i.e. identifying and targeting people with different severity of psychological problems, in addition to spreading awareness, knowledge and information on coping strategies.



## Dr Abdulhameed Mahmood conducts groundbreaking eye surgery

Class of 2010 graduate, Dr Abdulhameed Mahmood, Resident in Ophthalmology at Salmaniya Medical Complex in Bahrain, conducted what has been regarded as the world's first successful procedure to reposition a toric multifocal lens using the four-flanged technique. At his current fellowship in Cornea, Cataract and Refractive Surgery at Prince Sultan Military Medical City in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Dr Mahmood alongside his colleague, Dr

Mohammed Aljodaie, under the supervision of Dr Anoud Al-Saati, produced a research paper on their findings, which has subsequently been published in the American Journal of Ophthalmology. The publication has been accepted as the first in the world to describe the successful repositioning of a toric trifocal IOL implant, as well as the first to specifically outline the use of the 'Four-Flanged Prolene Technique' in such a case.



## Associate Professor of Surgery performed the first stent-graft surgery in Bahrain

Associate Professor of Surgery at RCSI Bahrain and Senior Consultant Vascular and Endovascular Surgeon at Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF), Colonel Professor Dhafer Kamal, performed the first stent-graft surgery in Bahrain to treat a penetrating ulcer of the thoracic aorta.

The 71-year-old Bahraini male patient was being treated at the vascular service at the BDF Hospital when a penetrating ulcer of the descending thoracic aorta was discovered on a contrast CT scan. The ulcer was sizable and had a wide base, which makes it a high risk for rupture, therefore, interventional treatment was clearly indicated.

Treatment options for this type of ulcer are open surgery or endovascular intervention. The former is the traditional treatment method; however, it carries a high mortality and morbidity risk. Endovascular treatment is the less invasive method and is the current standard treatment for this condition in reputable vascular centres around the world.

The procedure was successfully carried out by the vascular team at the BDF Hospital headed by Colonel Professor Kamal, the patient made a speedy recovery without any complications and was discharged a few days later.



# BOARD OF GOVERNORS



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Professor Sameer Ootom  
President  
RCSI Bahrain



Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield  
Chief Operating Officer  
RCSI Bahrain



“Many students rose to the challenge of contributing to the need for novel Research. Personally, I was able to work with the National COVID-19 Taskforce on over eight projects.”

Mr Saad Mallah  
IC3, School of Medicine



03

Knowledge and  
Experience



# Knowledge and Experience



Professor Stephen Atkin (left) and Dr Edwina Brennan (right) with Ms Khadeja AlHoussani (IC3) the winner of the Platinum Award in the 2020 edition of the Global Competition of Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network

RCSI Bahrain has been instrumental in establishing the national COVID-19 research programme and has played a significant role in promoting and accelerating research in COVID-19 therapy in Bahrain. With the opening of the new RCSI Bahrain Biomolecular and Clinical Trial Research Centre at King Hamad University Hospital, RCSI Bahrain has expanded its advanced research capacity with a vision to enhance patient care and human health in Bahrain and beyond, as well as provide students and staff with greater research opportunities.

## Medicine Student Winner of MeWIIN and Global WIIN Awards

School of Medicine student (IC3), Ms Khadeja AlHoussani won the Platinum Award in the 2020 edition of the Global Competition of Global Women Inventors & Innovators Network (GlobalWIIN), for her project on Novel DNA Imaging Technique which modifies the human system to target DNA and nuclear elements with high precision, minimal noise and off-target effects.

Prior to her global award, Ms AlHoussani won the first place in MEWIIN (Middle East Inventors & Innovators Network) for an additional project she completed on her initial Research Summer School Literature Review Competition project titled 'Modified CRISPR/Cas9 Conditions and Refined Donor Constructs to Achieve Precise Heritable Recombination in Zebrafish'.

## Medicine students awarded research prizes in First National Research Conference

Under the patronage of His Excellency Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, Minister of Education and Chairman of

the Higher Education Council (HEC), the Ministry of Education hosted a virtual ceremony in cooperation with the British Council and UK Science and Innovation Network (SIN), to announce and celebrate the winners of the First National Research Competition for Undergraduate Students.

The virtual celebration was attended by Dr Abdulghani Al Showaikh, HEC Secretary General, who honoured RCSI Bahrain School of Medicine student, Saad Mallah (IC3), who won first place in the presentation category for his research titled 'A Search for Optimisation: Dark-Field Microscopy for the Viewing of Cellular Structures' and School of Nursing and Midwifery student, Mr Abdulrahman Sulaibeekh (N3), who won second place in the poster category of the competition for his research titled 'Assessing health literacy in primary care patients'.

Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, attended the virtual ceremony and congratulated the Kingdom of Bahrain and His Excellency the Minister of Education on the unprecedented and outstanding educational

achievements announced in the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2019 (TIMSS 2019) exams, which reflect the high quality of education and the great efforts made by the Ministry.

## RCSI Bahrain Annual Research Conference 2021

Under the Patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, RCSI Bahrain hosted its Annual Research Conference on 31 March, which provided an opportunity to review and discuss the latest research projects of its faculty and clinical colleagues, as well as peers from the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) and the University of Bahrain (UoB).

Hosted and moderated by Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, the virtual conference featured an Opening Address from His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa and a Welcome Address from Professor Fergal O'Brien, Director of Research & Innovation, RCSI, Dublin. They were followed by presentations from RCSI Bahrain faculty members, namely Professor Thomas Walsh, Professor in Surgery, School of Medicine, with a presentation titled 'From The Particular To The Universal'; Dr Eman Tawash, Director of Bachelors in Nursing programme and Senior Lecturer in Nursing, on 'The challenges of nursing and promoting nursing as a profession in the Arabian Gulf'; Dr Nigel Stevenson, Senior Lecturer in Immunology and Biochemistry, School of Medicine, on 'Unravelling the Secrets of Viral Immune Evasion: towards the development of novel therapeutics'; and Professor Manaf Alqahtani, Infectious Diseases Consultant and Microbiologist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital and member of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), on 'Diversity of vaccine platforms in Bahrain'.

His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa praised RCSI Bahrain for supporting the National Clinical Trials in Bahrain and its instrumental role in the nation's strategy for identifying the best COVID-19 treatments and the pursuit of further national healthcare research projects.

The authors of the top six selected research abstracts who presented at the Annual Research Conference were Dr Yahya Mohamed Naguib, Associate Professor of Medical Physiology, Arabian Gulf University, on his paper titled 'Light at the end of the tunnel: Stem Cells for the Treatment of Diabetic Vasculopathy', Dr Nitya Kumar, Lecturer in Epidemiology and Public Health at RCSI Bahrain, for her paper on 'Time till viral clearance of SARS-CoV-2 is similar for asymptomatic and non-critically symptomatic individuals', Dr Ashang Luwang Laiva,

Post-Doctoral Researcher at RCSI Bahrain, for his research on 'Functional impact of klotho gene-activated collagen scaffold on stem cells driven soft tissue healing', Mr Brock H.R. Tompkins (IC3) student at RCSI Bahrain, for his paper on 'Determinants of Surgical Admissions Amongst Paediatric Trauma Patients in Bahrain', Mr Saad I. Mallah (IC3) student at RCSI Bahrain, for his research titled 'Using Ct Values to Predict the Future Trajectory of COVID-19 New Daily Cases: A Multicentre Cross-Sectional Study' and Mr Fathi Moustafa (IC3) student at RCSI Bahrain, for his research on 'The Diagnostic Performance of SARS-Cov-2 Nasal Antigen Test In Mildly Symptomatic Cases'.

## Virtual Symposium on COVID-19 Collaborative Research in the Kingdom of Bahrain

On 10 January, RCSI Bahrain organised an online symposium titled 'Collaborative Research on COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Bahrain', held under the patronage of His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, in collaboration with the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA).

The symposium commenced with welcome notes by the Guest of Honour, Major General Professor Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, Director of the Royal Medical Services, who highlighted the importance of the research conducted in response to the pandemic.

The welcome address by Professor Sameer Ootom highlighted the importance of collaborative and innovative research and emphasised that it is our duty to dedicate our knowledge, experience and resources to contribute to the research projects in order to support the Kingdom of Bahrain's tremendous efforts in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. His address was followed by a presentation by Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, on the Favipiravir Clinical Trial Study, which was undertaken in the hospitals by RCSI Bahrain medicine alumni in support of the COVID-19 Taskforce's efforts.

The second presentation titled 'Overview of COVID-19 Research projects' was presented by Professor Manaf Alqahtani, Infectious Diseases Consultant and Microbiologist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital and member of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19), who stated that during the period from March to December 2020, 17 COVID-19 related research projects have been completed and 13 were ongoing.

Dr Abdulkarim Abdulrahman, Resident at Mohammed bin Khalifa Cardiac Centre and member of the National Coronavirus (COVID-19) Research Group, presented his research project titled, 'The



efficacy and safety of hydroxychloroquine in COVID-19 patients: a multicentre national retrospective'. The symposium concluded with a presentation by Mr Saad Mallah (IC3), School of Medicine student and student researcher, titled 'COVID-19: Breaking Down a Global Health Crisis.'

Dr Khawla Ali, Senior Clinical Lecturer at RCSI Bahrain, moderated the presentations and the Question-and-Answer session.



**Professor Manaf Alqahtani**  
Infectious Diseases Consultant and Microbiologist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital

#### Results of RCSI Bahrain sponsored National Clinical Trials for COVID-19 Patients

Following the initiative taken under the directive from His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health and Head of the National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Major General Professor Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, Director of the Royal Medical Services, RCSI Bahrain issued the results of its first national clinical trial in May 2021.

The first national clinical trial, conducted in collaboration with the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF) and the Ministry of Health, aimed to enhance the treatment protocols for COVID-19 patients. The clinical trial entailed taking antibody-rich plasma (convalescent plasma therapy), which has been donated by subjects that have recovered from COVID-19 and injecting it into 20 patients who are severely suffering from COVID-19 to see if it will reduce the severity of the disease. The results were compared to those of 20 patients who did not receive injections and were provided with standard care. The results of the trial revealed the safety of using convalescent plasma therapy, with overall outcomes showing little difference between those who were given and those who did not receive the convalescent plasma. The clinical trial has been published in the international journal "Scientific

Reports".

The second National clinical trial, conducted in collaboration with the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF) and the Ministry of Health, aimed to determine if the drug Favipiravir was effective for the treatment of COVID-19 patients in comparison with hydroxychloroquine and standard therapy. This clinical trial involving 150 patients is now complete and has been submitted for publication.

These clinical trials were undertaken by senior members of RCSI Bahrain namely Professor Sameer Ootom, President of RCSI Bahrain, Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research and Professor Manaf Alqahtani, Infectious Diseases Consultant and Microbiologist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital and member of the National Taskforce for Combating the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

#### Completion of the first stage of joint research of a food supplement known in modulation of antiviral effects in COVID-19 Patients

RCSI Bahrain sponsored a "Pilot Study to Evaluate the Safety, Tolerability, and Efficacy of 5-ALA-Phosphate + SFC in Subjects with COVID-19", a study on using the food supplement 5-Aminolevulinic Acid Phosphate (5-ALA-P) plus Sodium Ferrous Citrate (SFC) to test their tolerability, safety and efficacy on COVID-19 patients.

The study was led by Professor John Flood, RCSI Bahrain's Chair and Professor of the Department of Medicine, with support from Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, and in collaboration with the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF), which was the site of the study. Consultant Histopathologist at BDF, Brig. Dr Abdullah Darwish, was the principal investigator of the study with Senior Resident Pulmonology and Internal Medicine Specialist at BDF, Dr Abdul Rahmann Hassan Al Madan, and co-investigators, as part of a collaboration with Photonamic and SBI Pharma, subsidiaries of SBI ALApharma, through provisions of research funding and test food supplements. The study was approved by the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) Clinical Research Committee.

Dr Ulrich Kosciessa, Chief Executive Officer of Photonamic, explained "5-ALA is a natural product produced by the mitochondria in each living cell; in combination with iron, it is a precursor of Heme which also generates haemoglobin and plays a vital role in upregulating mitochondrial function. 5-ALA-P with iron SFC has been marketed as a food supplement in Japan and various other countries and has been proven to be safe." Dr Kosciessa added that 5-ALA-P/SFC enhances the induction of heme oxygenase -1 (HO-1), a key enzyme in the heme



**Major General Professor Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa**, Director of the Royal Medical Services

metabolism and also involved in modulation of antiviral effects for many viruses like influenza, HIV, Zika, Ebola, and Dengue. (1-6).

In addition, it was recently reported in Japan that 5-ALA-P inhibited infection of SARS-CoV-2, a causative agent of COVID-19, in cell culture, and the antiviral effects could be detected in human and non-human cells without significant cytotoxicity (7). 5-ALA-P/SFC was also safely administered to COVID-19 patients and has positively influenced their time to recovery (8).

Major General Professor Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al Khalifa, Director of the Royal Medical Services commented that conducting this joint study with RCSI Bahrain will support the Kingdom's efforts in finding better methods of treating COVID-19 patients and enhancing their recovery process.

The initial part of the tests was completed in seven COVID-19 patients and no related adverse effects were reported, showing a good sign of safety and confirming the safety profile from previous use and studies. Based on these results, the NHRA approved the continuation of the study, which is now complete and the data is under analysis.

Historically, RCSI Bahrain has successfully collaborated with SBI ALApharma and its subsidiaries through research and scientific symposia. Such joint projects highlight the significance and the promising outcome of the cooperation between the pharmaceutical industry and research programmes, whereby existing and beneficial medicinal drug treatments can be tested in a controlled environment and upon receiving approval from the relevant authorities, potentially administered to sick individuals to support their recovery.

#### Research Publications Update

Despite the impediment of the pandemic, RCSI Bahrain increased its research capacity and played a significant role in the research effort undertaken in Bahrain. In 2020-21, RCSI Bahrain published 74 research papers, a sharp increase of 68% in comparison to the previous year. The top papers were published in prestigious publications such as Microbiome; the Annals of Surgery; Frontiers in Immunology; Metabolism; Diabetes Obesity and Metabolism; and the British Journal of Surgery. Overall, all papers showed a marked increase in impact factor.

#### Research Summer School 2021 Competition Winners

**First Place** *Children Are Not Little Adults: A Review of SARS-CoV-2 in the Paediatric Population*

- **Mr Mina Maher Maurice Amin** (SC2)
- **Mr Faris Soloman AlMadi** (IC2)
- **Mr Saad Imad Yousef Mallah** (IC2)
- **Mr Andrew Hanna** (IC2)
- **Mr Mohamed Omar Diab** (IC2)
- **Mr Tharmegan Tharmaratnam** (SC2)

*Internal Supervisor:*

**Professor Iqdam Tobbia**

Head of Department of Pathology / IC1-IC2 Director

**Ms Katrina D'Urzo**

School of Medicine, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin

*External Supervisor:*

**Mr Prasaanthan Gopee-Ramanan**

MD FRCPC University of Toronto, Toronto

**Mr Tyler Cameron Tabobondung**

MD CCFP Brantford General Hospital, Toronto

**Ms Thilani Sreekantha RN**

University of Toronto, Toronto

**Second Place** *Eyieing out the pandemic: A review of the ocular manifestations of COVID-19*

- **Mr Ali Mardini** (Med1)
- **Ms Seemal Maqsood Qadir** (SC1)

*External Supervisor:*

**Dr Khaled Alhoms**

Al-Sham Private University, Damascus, Syria

**Third Place** *The challenges of diagnosing Placenta Accreta. Can MRI help in management: A case series review*

- **Ms Prianna Menezes** (Med2)
- **Ms Jayaditya Devpal Patil** (SC1)
- **Ms Alekya Anala** (FY)

*Internal Supervisor:*

**Dr Bedoor Al Omran**

Chief of Radiology, Bahrain Defence Force Royal Medical Services, Bahrain

*External Supervisor:*

**Dr Nawal Dayoub**

IVF Consultant, Assisted Reproduction and Gynaecology Centre, London, United Kingdom



“ I had the opportunity to be an external representative in Bahrain's Youth Parliament, which helped me nourish my leadership and personal skills. ”

Mr Husain Alasfoor  
Year 4, School of Nursing and Midwifery

Global Leadership, Transnational  
Education and Quality  
Enhancement

04

Global  
Leadership,  
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# Global Leadership, Transnational Education and Quality Enhancement



On-campus small group teaching session

RCSI Bahrain is committed to continuously evolving the quality of its transnational education and to developing a learning environment that entices all students to become future healthcare leaders. As a leading healthcare education provider, RCSI Bahrain is active in shaping healthcare policy in the Kingdom of Bahrain through invited appointments on government committees.

## Blended Learning

The academic year 2020-21 commenced with the goal of ensuring that all students and staff members were informed of the updates regarding the modus operandi of the campus under the Ministry of Education's (MoE) COVID-19 regulations and familiarise themselves with the new blended learning system. RCSI Bahrain adopted a blended learning approach for its programme delivery which included using on site face-to-face small group teaching sessions, laboratory and practical sessions, as well as live online interactive sessions delivered by our academic faculty members.

To enhance the learning and teaching process, RCSI Bahrain applied the 'flipped classroom' blended learning approach, which focussed on student participation through active learning and engagement. The on-campus lecture theatres and tutorial rooms were rearranged according to distancing guidelines

and large touchscreen computers were installed. The lectures were also live-streamed to students attending lectures from their homes. To further facilitate online learning the University acquired the 'Iconasys' hardware and software system, a virtual anatomy laboratory for students, containing high-resolution 3D images of anatomical models accessible online at any time. Students were able to use this tool alongside their anatomy practical classes on campus.

RCSI Bahrain extends its sincere gratitude to all students and staff for complying with the regulations and directives from the Ministry of Health and the University.

## Clinical Simulation Teaching Update

During academic year 2020-21, the Ibn Al-Baitar Clinical Simulation Centre (ICSC) has been vital in providing students with simulated clinical interactions

as part of clinical teaching. Professor Nuha Birido, Associate Professor in Surgery and Academic Lead for Clinical Simulation, noted that the Clinical Simulation Teaching is now aligned with the University's Strategic Plan and linked to Community Engagement.

A formal Simulated Patient Unit has been established, and the number of teaching hours with simulated patients increased by 277% when compared to the previous year. Clinical and procedural skills teaching sessions on task trainers were similarly increased to ensure adherence to social distancing and infection control guidelines. A virtual reality software, BodyInteract, was acquired to allow medicine and nursing students to manage patients virtually in a variety of clinical encounters.

## LCU Operational Plan Update

Using Zoho Creator, a new cloud-based and secure operational management plan was created by the Language and Culture Unit (LCU), allowing for nominated users to access workflows under each of the University's strategic pillars: Teaching and Learning, Research and Community Engagement, resulting in an enhancement of the department operations as well as an enhanced experience for the LCU academic staff.

Besides this major operational upgrade, Dr Amal Al-Qallaf, Head of Language and Culture Unit and Senior Lecturer in English, highlighted the yearly LCU updates as being the initiation of the 3D Immersive Language Learning project, the review of the School of Medicine and the School of Nursing and Midwifery delivered language and culture curriculum, the implementation of Aptis (a new English language proficiency test developed by the British Council), the cataloguing of internal, national and international research opportunities and the collaboration opportunities with Community Engagement - the Smile Initiative, Tree of Life Charity Society, Dream Big charity organisation, and the enrichment lecture series delivered at the British School of Bahrain.

## Nursing student participates in first Youth Parliament session

School of Nursing and Midwifery fourth year student and Student Nursing Officer in the Student Council, Mr Husain Alasfoor, participated in the first Youth Parliament session, which was held in November and chaired by Parliament Speaker Ms Fouzia Zainal. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, His Royal Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa also took part in the hybrid event.

## Nursing student selected as member of the Student Steering Group at ICN

Fourth year School of Nursing and Midwifery student, Ms Hawra Hasan, was selected by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), as part of the Nursing Student

Steering Group to represent the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO). Ms Hasan will be working in collaboration with nursing students from different regions of the world to increase student representation and engagement within the ICN, as well as to enhance the nursing student and youth influence on global health and nursing policy dialogue.

## Nursing students participate in virtual Conference with Salford University

In support of our students' exposure to global experiences and learning opportunities, four students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery participated in a virtual 'International Study Day' event hosted in April by the University of Salford, UK, with the theme of 'The Future Nurse: 2021 and beyond'. The event allowed students from five different academic institutes to link and network with each other, as well as share their experiences of learning and volunteering during COVID-19. Nursing students Mr Mahmood Ali, Ms Maryam Bujandal, Mr Abdulrahman Sulaiabeek and Ms Aysha Alhamar shared their experiences and lessons learnt from volunteering during the COVID-19 pandemic with a presentation titled 'Volunteering Experience in Combating COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learnt'.

## Tribute to the History of Nursing in Bahrain

Under the guidance of RCSI Bahrain Senior Lecturer in Nursing, Dr Hussain Ali Nasaif, and the IDirector of Quality and Academic Development host of the webinar, Dr Kathryn Strachan, the webinar was delivered by Ms Batool Al Mohandis, former Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery in RCSI Bahrain with more than 50 years of experience in nursing and nursing education.

Ms Al Mohandis started her presentation by surveying the rise of health services in Bahrain in the late 1800's and the medical practices that were performed to treat common ailments. Moving to the 20th century, Ms Al Mohandis highlighted the journeys of the main figures of the nursing field in Bahrain, such as the first Bahraini male nurse, Mr Habib Ghaith, the first Bahraini female nurses, Ms Fatema Al Zayani and Mrs Omayya Al Tajer, who established the first School of Nursing in Bahrain in 1959.

With the establishment of the nursing profession in Bahrain, Ms Al Mohandis covered the past 50 years with an overview of the nursing regulations introduced in the 70's and 80's by the Ministry of Health, notable figures in the nursing field, as well as the development of nursing degrees, specialisations and career prospects for nursing graduates.

President of RCSI Bahrain, Professor Sameer Ootom commented: "RCSI Bahrain aims to enhance human health in Bahrain through endeavour, innovation and collaboration. It is essential for our students





Professor Martin Corbally, Chairman of the Department of Surgery

to understand the contributions and achievements made by their predecessors. Shedding light on the development of the nursing field in Bahrain is crucial for our students to understand how they can contribute to the healthcare system and develop their community as future healthcare leaders.”

#### ‘History of Medicine’ Webinar Series

Hosted by Professor and Chairman of the Department of Surgery at RCSI Bahrain, Professor Martin Corbally, the ‘History of Medicine’ series of nine webinars, held between February and May 2021, surveyed the development of the medical field across the ages and its influence on present-day medical practice. The webinar series delivered by RCSI Bahrain faculty and experts from different medical specialties explored a range of topics in the fields of surgery, anatomy, obstetrics and gynaecology and pathology through different time periods.

The series emphasised the important lessons to be learnt across centuries, the need to constantly question the current status quo and embrace change as an inevitable aspect of the evolution of medicine and surgical practices. It included a variety of themes such as ‘Women: Their Fall and Rise’ presented by the late Professor Jim Dornan, former Chair and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, RCSI Bahrain and ‘Anatomical Dissection and the History of Anatomy’ delivered by Chair and Professor of Department of Medicine at RCSI Bahrain, Professor John Flood. In addition to, ‘What can we learn about disease in ancient times from Paleopathology’, presented by Associate Professor in Surgery, Department of Medicine, RCSI Bahrain, Professor Thomas Walsh, ‘Medicine and the Holocaust’, by Lecturer in Healthcare Ethics, RCSI Bahrain, Dr Fionnuala Gough, ‘Another

Unprecedented Epidemic?: The Irish influence on the 1832 Cholera Epidemic’ by Consultant Paediatrician, King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH), Dr Gabriel Fox. The final webinar was moderated by His Excellency Dr Faisal Al Mousawi, former RCSI Bahrain President, former Minister of Health and Speaker of the Shura Council, Kingdom of Bahrain and featured the topic of ‘The History of Medicine in the Arab World’, presented by Consultant Paediatric Surgeon, (KHUH), Dr Mohamed Amin Al Awadhi.

The webinar highlighted how science contributes to our understanding of medical practice 200 years ago and develops resilience and empathetic skills, and reminds our students to persevere when faced with challenges.

#### RCSI Bahrain’s participation in the Nursing Professionals Qualification Requirements

The National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) established a virtual national working group to review the Nursing Professionals Qualification Requirements (PQR) and develop the Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice and Decision-Making Framework in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The working group was led by the Nursing Professions Assistant Registrar of NHRA, Mr Ahmed Faraj and included nursing leaders and specialists from the Ministry of Health, all major hospitals (SMC, BDF, KHUH), the Bahrain Nursing Society, RCSI Bahrain, University of Bahrain and nursing consultants.

Lecturer in Nursing, Ms Danah Ahmed Smith was nominated by Dr Kathryn Strachan, Director of Quality and Academic Development, to represent RCSI Bahrain within this national group. Along with the working group, Director of Masters in Nursing Programme, Professor Maura Pidgeon and former Regional Adviser for Nursing & Midwifery WHO/EMRO, Dr Fariba Aldorazi, contributed widely through resources, knowledge and experience in the field of nursing regulation, to the development of the revised PQR and the scope of practice documents, which received approval from the Supreme Council of Health and NHRA.

#### Roundtable discussion with Ms Luma Bashmi “Biopsychological Model in Patient Care and Quality of Life”

To understand the impact of interactions between biological, biopsychosocial and social factors on the health and wellbeing of individuals, the Student Development and Wellbeing Department led by Dr Wendy Maddison held a roundtable discussion with Ms Luma Bashmi, Head of Scientific Research and Development at King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH). The session co-hosted by Dr Wendy Maddison and Dr Nalin Mathur, alumnus and intern at KHUH explored the use of the biopsychosocial model in patient care and quality of life.

#### Academic Development Framework - Professional Development Unit

To support RCSI Bahrain’s staff members in continuing their professional development at all stages of their career, in March the Professional Development Unit (PDU) launched the Academic Development Framework (ADF). The framework is a key tool based on the University’s strategic pillars: Teaching and Learning, Research and Community Engagement, with the aim to provide faculty with the structures to enhance their teaching and research skills, as well as increase their knowledge and enhance their contribution to the community.

#### AdvanceHE CLTHE and Fellowship Training

To provide new opportunities for RCSI Bahrain faculty to enhance their professional development, with particular emphasis on improving their teaching skills, RCSI Bahrain has been working in partnership with AdvanceHE to ensure the best quality of education for our students. AdvanceHE is a non-profit company that works with global higher education institutions to improve higher education for students, staff and society.

In February, the Professional Development Unit in association with AdvanceHE, arranged a ‘Bridging’ webinar, for faculty staff who have recently completed the Certificate of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE). The purpose of the webinar was to outline the process for application for the Fellowship of AdvanceHE.

The webinar covered fellowship profiles and descriptor statements, deciding on the appropriate fellowship category, general principles and application formats, dimensions of practice, referees, the review process and draft submissions. AdvanceHE and RCSI Bahrain have recently completed the delivery of the first cohort of the CLTHE and are preparing for the second cohort, which will start early in the academic year 2021-22 and will be co-delivered by RCSI Bahrain faculty as part of the Train the Trainer model.

#### AdvanceHE - RCSI Bahrain Torchbearers

To recognise the successes of colleagues around the world, AdvanceHE invited teaching professionals in Higher Education institutions to join its global Torch Relay event and share examples of assessment practices introduced online during the pandemic.

The Professional Development Unit collaborated with AdvanceHE in celebrating the efforts of professionals who showed ingenuity, resilience, and empathy while facing unprecedented changes in teaching, learning and assessment.

The RCSI Bahrain Torchbearers, Mrs Sharon Nicklin, Clinical Educator in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and

Dr Ebrahim Rajab, Senior Lecturer in Human Biology, shared their valuable experiences as part of this global event. To view the Torchbearer world map created by AdvanceHE, visit <https://bit.ly/2Ta9r5H>

#### Franklin Covey - Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Training

To create leaders at every level of the organisation who can develop an enhanced student experience and contribute to the Strategic Plan, the Professional Development Unit (PDU) in collaboration with the Human Resources Department engaged with the Masar Centre for Training and Development to deliver the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People to staff members.

The Signature Edition 4.0 of this training was developed to help participants internalise and sustain twenty behaviours that will change the way teams work together. This programme combines timeless principles of effectiveness, including leadership, influence, engagement and collaboration in the context of modern technology and practices. These principles, as well as the capacity to continually improve and renew one’s capabilities, are at the heart of personal, team, and organisational effectiveness. The training was run across all departments to help develop a culture of enhanced people management skills in the University.

#### Blockchain Certificate

Starting as of May 2021, RCSI Bahrain adopted the process of issuing digital graduation certificates through a tamper-free, blockchain-secured platform called Blockcerts. As a result, each of the 2021 graduates received a parchment, as well as a digital certificate.

Having a digital certificate on the blockchain means that the original certificate record is always in the graduate’s possession. Graduates can choose to share their certificate publicly on a social media profile (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) or send it privately by email or text message. A link to the digital certificate can also be added to a resume, public portfolio, or application allowing employers or third parties to verify the graduates’ qualification with a simple click.

When a certificate is issued in the blockchain, its data is compressed into a hash and logged on the blockchain. This generates a “receipt” that can always be checked later. The verification service validates the signature of the issuer (i.e. RCSI Bahrain) and the certificate data; it also ensures that the certificate status has not expired or been revoked. Certificates are unchangeable and cannot be updated. The issuer may revoke a certificate in case of error.

For more information, please visit <https://www.rcsi.com/bahrain/alumni/blockcerts>



“The Careers office provided their constant support whether for exams, programmes, applications or opportunities; I always had the best resource and advice.”

Ms Rawan ElHennawy  
Senior Cycle 2, School of Medicine



05

Healthcare  
Environment  
Development,  
Global Mobility  
and  
Employability



# Healthcare Environment Development, Global Mobility and Employability

RCSI Bahrain places great value in its global community of alumni and professional colleagues. Thanks to this international outlook, RCSI Bahrain continues to enhance the level of career pathway support offered to medicine and nursing students and celebrate the achievements of our graduates and alumni.



Inspiring Excellence Award winner Captain Dr Abdulrahman Ebrahim Alshafei



Inspiring Excellence Award winner Ms Nazia AlAmri

## Inspiring Excellence Award

In acknowledgement and celebration of the achievements of our alumni, the latest recipients of the Inspiring Excellence Award were announced in December 2020.

The winners of the award were Captain Dr Abdulrahman Ebrahim Alshafei, School of Medicine Class of 2011 graduate, who is currently a Paediatric Surgeon and Paediatric Urology Specialist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF), and Ms Nazia AlAmri, School of Nursing and Midwifery Class of 2014 graduate, who is a Team Leader and Registered Nurse-Midwife in the Labour and Delivery Department at King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH).

Both recipients have exhibited excellence through their outstanding achievements in their careers. Captain Dr Alshafei, recipient of a Master of Surgery (MCh) from RCSI in Dublin has contributed to numerous research publications, and Ms AlAmri obtained her Fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery from RCSI and has recently been appointed as Deputy of the Nursing Research Team at the Maternal and Child Division in KHUH.

## Gulf Region Alumni Speakers Series 2021

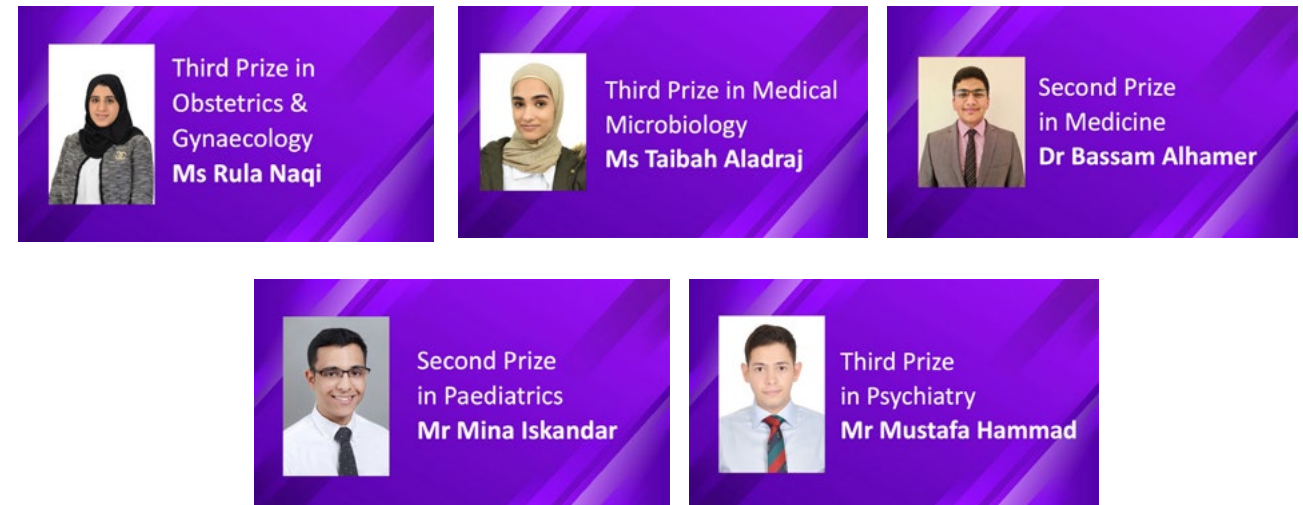
Organised by the Careers and Alumni Office, in conjunction with the alumni team from RCSI in Dublin, RCSI Bahrain held the Gulf Region Alumni Speaker Series, under the theme of 'Excellence in Healthcare', which featured prominent graduates from across RCSI programmes, presenting on a range of topics.

The first event of the series commenced in February with a presentation by Class of 2011 graduate, Paediatric Surgeon and Paediatric Urology Specialist at the Bahrain Defence Force Hospital (BDF), as well as one of the recipients of RCSI Bahrain's Inspiring Excellence Award, Captain Dr Abdulrahman Ebrahim Alshafei, based on his experience of setting up a paediatric surgery service in Bahrain.

'Successful Leadership in UAE Healthcare' was the topic of discussion for the second event of the series, with RCSI School of Medicine and Institute of Leadership (IOL) alumnus and current Dubai Healthcare City Authorities regulation sector CEO, Dr Ramadan Alblooshi. Introduced by RCSI's Managing Director of Surgical Affairs, Mr Eunan Friel, the presentation focused on various topics including global leadership, the influence of culture, as well as challenges to leadership and the balance between success and failure from Dr Alblooshi's own experiences.

## Awards

### Dr Henry Hutchinson Stewart Medical Scholarships and Prizes 2020



### School of Medicine Awards 2021

Class Valedictorian, **Dr Ali Mohamed Ali Sabah** received the Highest Aggregate Marks Gold Medal, Senior Cycle Bronze Medal, the Professor Niall O'Higgins Prize in Surgery and first place for the inaugural Professor David Whitford Prize in General Practice.

**Dr Hajar Sayed Abdulla** was awarded the Professor John Murphy Prize in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

**Dr Ahmed Ali Alekri** received the Professor James Finucane Prize in Medicine.

**Dr Jay Chieh Liu Jr** received the Best Paediatrics Project Award.

**Dr Manar Sayed Qasim Husain** was awarded with the Senior Cycle Silver Medal and the Degree Award Marks Gold Medal.

*New prizes have also been established this year, with the inaugural places being awarded to:*

**Dr Mina Maher Iskandar** for the Professor Joe McMenamin Prize in Paediatrics.

**Dr Fatima Mohamed Shaheen** for the Professor Charlotte Kamel Prize in Psychiatry.

### School of Nursing and Midwifery Awards 2021

Class Valedictorian, **Ms Jenan Ahmed Hasan Albaqali**, received the BSc Nursing Overall Gold Medal, Year Four Bronze Medal and Year Three Silver Medal.

**Ms Maryam Mohamed Bujandal** received the BSc Nursing Year Four Silver Medal and Rufaida Alaslamiya Prize in Nursing.

**Ms Elizabeth Spyropoulos** received the MSc Nursing Gold Medal.

**Ms Zainab Sayed Husain** received the Nursing Year One Bronze Medal and Nursing Year Two Silver Medal.

**Ms Hawra Abdulla Hasan** received the Nursing Year One Silver Medal and Nursing Year Two and Year Three Bronze Medals.



Introduced by Professor Cathal Kelly, Chief Executive/Registrar of RCSI, the series concluded with a talk by practicing Clinical Pathologist and Head of the Laboratory Department at a private hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Dr Shaista Hussain (RCSI in Dublin, Class of 2006), on the topic of 'Triage Project and Leveraging Technology for Healthcare Excellence'. In 2016, Dr Hussain founded the Triage Project, a non-profit public health service and education programme in Saudi Arabia, which leveraged smartphone technology to bring streamlined clinical evaluations to underdeveloped communities. Dr Hussain hopes to contribute to building the bridge between humans and technology towards optimising and enhancing healthcare services.

#### Intern Award Winner 2021

In July, the Professional Development Unit (PDU) in collaboration with the Careers and Alumni Department presented this year's Intern Award to Dr Rand Bashir Abdulrahman (Class of 2020), who demonstrated excellence in professionalism, communication skills and collaboration as evidenced by the outcome of the Multisource Feedback (MSF).

The selection of the Intern Award winner is based on information received by consultants, residents, co-workers, colleagues, and fellow peers through a Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) evaluation. The feedback focuses on clinical skills, communication, and collaboration with other healthcare professionals, professionalism, and patient management and was then collated and analysed by the Quality Enhancement Office.

Although the award is traditionally presented during the annual School of Medicine dinner, we were delighted to welcome Dr Abdulrahman back to receive her award from Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research. In a letter formally notifying Dr Abdulrahman of her award, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine, Professor Alfred Nicholson, expressed his sincere congratulations and noted that RCSI Bahrain is very proud to count her as a member of their alumni network.

#### Virtual Match Parties for Students and Alumni

In celebration of our alumni and students who have matched to their programmes of choice in North America, the Careers and Alumni Office hosted two virtual 'match' parties.

In April, the office hosted a virtual match party to celebrate students and alumni who successfully matched into a US residency training programme for 2021. Of the 20 students and alumni who matched, 12 attended the event, alongside Professor Alfred Nicholson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine; Professor Kevin Dunne,

Professor and Head of Department of Paediatrics, and representatives of the Careers and Alumni Office.

In May, the office held another match party to celebrate graduates who successfully matched into a Canadian residency training programme for 2021. All four of this year's matches attended the event, along with Professor Alfred Nicholson, Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Chief Operating Officer and representatives of the Careers and Alumni Office.

#### Class of 2011 Virtual Reunion

Ten years after they left the RCSI Bahrain campus, Class of 2011 alumni living across the globe connected virtually for the second official RCSI Bahrain Alumni Reunion event. Welcoming the alumni to the event, Professor Sameer Ootom, RCSI Bahrain President, and Dean of the University back in 2011, expressed his delight to see the 36 former students and hear about their achievements throughout the years.

After watching a video of highlights from their own graduation ceremony, attendees were soon sharing memories of the day and their time at RCSI Bahrain. With the majority of alumni not having visited the campus in ten years, Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield – Chief Operating Officer, took the opportunity to give a short presentation on the major updates that have occurred during that time.

Organised by the Careers and Alumni Office, the event was also attended by senior staff members, Professor Alfred Nicholson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine; the Director of Quality and Academic Development, Dr Kathryn Strachan; Dr Eman Tawash, Director of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programme and Mr Fadi Ghosn, Recognition, Careers and Alumni Manager.

#### Alumni Talks Series

To guide our students and alumni in their application process for training programmes abroad and support them throughout the pursuit of their career paths, the Careers and Alumni Office organised an Alumni Talk series for academic year 2020-21.

#### North American Talks

In November, the North American Talks kicked off with a series of sessions on US and Canadian pathways, organised in conjunction with the North American Medical Students Association (NAMSA).

Alumnus Dr Mohammed Almuqamame, Class of 2014, delivered a virtual presentation on his experience of the US match process, and for the Canadian talks, Dr Nicholyn Selvanayagam, Class of 2019, and Dr Alaa Mohamed, Class of 2018, gave an in-depth presentation on the Canadian match process and shared valuable insights into their personal experiences. The series concluded with talks on

Featured in the 2021 RCSI Alumni Magazine, RCSI Bahrain alumni around the world have shared their journeys and new experiences after graduating.



**Dr Nabila Mann-Isah**, Class of 2019, currently living in Nigeria shares her story: "I did A-Levels in the UK before attending RCSI Bahrain. I got married just before graduation and moved back to Nigeria in July 2019. I had been missing home and was happy to return. I sat for the licensing exam in November 2019 and got the results a week later, but the induction ceremony did not happen until February. I got my license then and applied to hospitals immediately but was not called to an internship position until December. I currently work at the National Hospital of Abuja, the main government hospital.

When I finish my internship, I have to apply to do a one-year service to the country with the National Youth Service Corps, which is compulsory for everyone under the age of 30. As a medical graduate, I will do this in a clinical setting and after the year I will sit an exam and then apply for residency. I hope to stay in Abuja and make my life here and would hope to do my residency in the same hospital."



**Ms Lulwa Bumutea**, Class of 2019, is a Registered Nurse working at King Hamad University Hospital, who shared her memories and experiences during her clinical placements.

"Each new clinical placement was like an expedition, and each day unpredictable, with new patients, new personalities and new information to learn. For one placement, I was assigned to the neurological ward, taking care of patients who had suffered a stroke. For the first time in my life, I understood the effort that goes into getting these patients from bedridden to ambulatory on discharge.

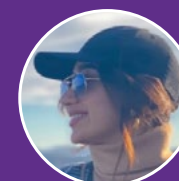
RCSI Bahrain alumnus Dr Kinan Alryahi, (Class of 2017) currently working in Sarajevo shares his experience after graduating: "I grew up and went to school in Jordan. I went to RCSI Bahrain because it was close to home. I did my intern years in Jordan. When I was finished, I wanted to get a place on an Ophthalmology Residency programme. I thought I would go to the UK but my father, who is an ophthalmologist, wanted me to go to Sarajevo, where he studied. My father and older brother have a private clinic there.

I arrived in Sarajevo in 2019 to start the four-year residency programme at the University hospital. Between the hospital and the clinic of my father, I work 8am to 8pm every day with one day off. My plan is to stay in Sarajevo. My family hopes to expand the clinic into a hospital and start an Ophthalmology Residency programme; that's our aim. I am excited to do that in Eastern Europe because there are not a lot of opportunities in the region and it will give doctors who want to pursue a career in ophthalmology better access to the speciality. "

**Ms Fatema Ebrahim**, Class of 2015 alumna, shares her journey in the United States, while she pursues her postgraduate studies in Public Health.

"I am originally from Bahrain and after I completed my degree, I took a gap year in Austria. When I returned to Bahrain, I initially worked in the private sector, and then took a job at the Ministry of Health as a nurse in primary healthcare. Then I was awarded a Fulbright scholarship offered by the US Embassy in Bahrain and I moved to Idaho state in 2020 to study for a Master's degree in public health.

I have three classes per week, some in person and some online. I also work part-time in a public health department as a contact tracer for COVID-19. The teaching takes me a whole week to prepare; so working and studying is tough. It is a two-year course, after which I have to go back to Bahrain and do something useful for my country. In Bahrain, I plan to work as a public health professional. I am studying prevention and intervention and will be able to work on health promotion programmes."





pathways in the US, delivered by Dr Ali Khader, Dr Moeen Aboabdo (both Class of 2019) and Dr Tyler York (Class of 2018), with more than 50 students in attendance.

#### UK F2 Alumni Talk

The Alumni Talks continued in December with an in-depth look at the UK Foundation Year 2 (F2) Standalone programme. More than 80 students and graduates joined the talk to hear 2018 graduates, Dr Tooba Khan, Dr Sultan Albinali and Dr Sara Alqusous discussing the F2 application process, including documentation, timelines, registration requirements, interview tips and useful resources. The trio also spoke about their own personal experiences of training in the UK, dealing with COVID-19 and applying for further training.

#### USMLE Preparation Programme

For the second year in a row, the USMLE Preparation Programme was launched in Semester One, with 110 students from Year 3 signing up to prepare to sit their USMLE Step 1 examination. In January, the Peer Led Tutoring (PLT) sessions were launched, whereby tutorial sessions were given by students and alumni who have previously sat the Step 1 examination. There were 18 PLT sessions that took place from January to April, covering all the main topics required to take the STEP 1 Examination.

#### Nursing Careers Week

In line with the University's ongoing efforts to promote nursing as a profession providing extensive employment opportunities, the School of Nursing and Midwifery, in collaboration with the Careers and Alumni Office, held a virtual Nursing Careers Week event.

The keynote speaker for the event was Professor Mustafa Bodrick, Consultant Nurse and Advisor at the Heath Academy at Saudi Commission for Health Specialties, who covered the topic of 'Navigating a Nursing Career by Rethinking 'vulnerability' Aimed at Favourable Outcomes'. Professor Bodrick's presentation addressed the concept of 'emotional agility', and the importance of resilience and emotional intelligence when navigating a career in nursing.

The event also featured presentations by Mr Ahmed Faraj, Nursing Profession Registrar for the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA), on the topic of 'NHRA Nursing Licensing Examination in Bahrain' and Dr Jameela Mukhaimer, Women Health Nurse-Practitioner and President of the Bahrain Nursing Society spoke about her experiences and the new career opportunities and specialities available in the field of nursing.

Professor Maura Pidgeon, Associate Professor in Nursing and Director of Masters in Nursing, discussed the academic prospects for nursing students who wish to pursue nursing postgraduate opportunities. RCSI Bahrain School of Nursing and Midwifery, Class of 2014 alumna and one of the 2020 Inspiring Excellence awardees, Ms Nazia Alamri also presented accounts of her personal experiences, as she is currently a Team Leader and Registered Nurse-Midwife in the Labour and Delivery Department at the King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH).

Featured in the 2021 RCSI Alumni Magazine, RCSI Bahrain alumni around the world have shared their journeys and new experiences after graduating.



**Dr Rola Husain**, Class of 2011, currently a fellow undertaking her subspecialty training in musculoskeletal radiology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, has taken the lead in COVID-19 research and has become the first author of a study on COVID-19 related rhabdomyolysis.

The study; 'Rhabdomyolysis as a manifestation of a severe case of COVID-19: A case report', published recently by a number of online platforms, looks at the case of a 38-year-old male patient with COVID-19 symptoms and showed that COVID-19 infection has many manifestations that are not only limited to the respiratory system. This made it the first case internationally to document the radiological finding of COVID-19 related Rhabdomyolysis.

This study is only one of a number of projects that Dr Husain has been working on over recent months alongside contributing to an upcoming book on pain management.



**Dr Aymen Bukannan**, Class of 2010 and an Inspiring Excellence Award winner, has become a Gastroenterologist at Archbold Medical Center, Thomasville, Georgia, USA. He shared his memories of his clinical placements.

"My most memorable placement memory was the cardiology elective at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Since my goal was to complete my training in the USA, I had to figure out how to go about applying for and getting approval to complete a clinical elective in a different country. Dr Gerard McGorisk (Class of 1988, RCSI in Dublin) helped facilitate my visit and I had the privilege of working with him and others. I had the opportunity to be an active member of the cardiology consultancy service and get first-hand experience of the practice of medicine in a different country and culture."



In memory of **Mr Ahmed Adel Abdel Rahman Nasser Al-Khatam**, School of Postgraduate Studies and Research 2018 alumnus, RCSI Bahrain staff and students offer their deepest condolences and sincere sympathies to Mr Al-Khatam's family, friends and colleagues. We salute Mr Al-Khatam for his contributions to healthcare at such a critical time, as he was sent by the Mohammed Bin Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa Specialist Cardiac Centre to study at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre in Saudi Arabia to become an Echocardiography Technician.



**Dr Mohamed Shehab**, Class of 2012, who's finishing a six-year programme in the Burns and Plastic Surgery department at the Salmaniya Medical Complex shared his experience and advice, "I worked as a surgical resident in the private sector for two years after graduating. My advice to new medical students is to be consistent and determined to reach your goals, build a strong ground of knowledge which will eventually help you make a positive impact."



**Dr Fatema Abdushaheed**, Class of 2016, currently a paediatric resident at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, USA shared her favourite memories as a medical student and her advice to students aspiring to become doctors.

"Bahraini Doctors' Day is an opportunity to celebrate and thank all the doctors that are working hard to keep Bahrain healthy and appreciate all those who travelled across the globe to make a difference and bring their expertise back to serve Bahrain.

Medicine is a noble profession that requires lots of dedication, persistence and most importantly maintaining high morals. Some of my favourite memories of my time at RCSI Bahrain was the final-med clinical exam preparation period, when I spent long hours with my friends in the hospital practicing history-taking and physical examination. So, let your faith and passion drive you, be sincere, avoid negativity, help each other, stay focused and dream big!"



**Doctors to Follow:** The Foundation of IMG @foundationofimg, founded by Dr Adri-Anna Aloia, Medicine Class of 2019, is an extension of the non-for-profit organisation by the same name that offers personal and career support to medical graduates around the world. By visiting the website or social media accounts, students can gain access to stories from fellow member graduates, information on clinical experience and residency programmes, as well as online events.



**Doctors to Follow:** Dr Malvika Bhatia and Dr Hebah Afridi (Class of 2019) are the co-founders of the YouTube channel IMG Marvels, hosting medical graduates who have secured jobs in the UK. Their videos feature recent graduates who discuss their own routes to securing their first job after graduation and give valuable tips to fellow alumni on the job hunt in the UK.



“RCSI Bahrain has paved a new path to instil a sense of community and togetherness.”

Mr Usama AlDallal  
Year 2, School of Medicine



06

Student  
Life and  
Experience



# Student Life and Experience

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to unfold, RCSI Bahrain evolved the Student Life and Experience to meet changing requirements while safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of students in line with international guidelines.

## Class of 2021 June Conferring Ceremonies



Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, RCSI Bahrain hosted two virtual conferring ceremonies to celebrate the graduation of the Class of 2021. The School of Medicine conferring ceremony was held on 2nd June 2021, and the School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Postgraduate Studies and Research conferring ceremony was held on 30th June 2021.



**His Excellency Lieutenant General Dr Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa**, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Health, attended the virtual ceremonies on behalf of His Royal Highness and delivered a congratulatory message to the graduates and their families.

The ceremonies proceeded with an address by Professor Sameer Otoom, President of RCSI Bahrain, Professor P. Ronan O'Connell, President of RCSI in

Dublin, and Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of National University of Ireland (NUI), to the Classes of 2021, praising them for their resilience during these challenging times and expressed their eagerness for the graduates to join the lines of healthcare leaders around the world.

The Master of Ceremony for the conferring ceremonies, Professor Martin Corbally, Professor of Surgery and Head of Department of Surgery at RCSI Bahrain, virtually presented the graduates with their degrees and recited with them their Graduates Declaration; a proclamation of their commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethical practice in their careers.

Professor Ghufra Jassim, Associate Professor in Family Medicine, also congratulated the Class of 2021 and announced the names of the 152 medical graduates. Dr Eman Tawash, Director of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programme recited the names of the 84 School of Nursing and Midwifery Bachelor graduates and the Director of the Masters in Nursing Programme, Professor Maura Pidgeon recited the names of the eight Nursing Master graduates from the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

## Virtual White Coat Ceremony

Early clinical engagement is at the core of our students' learning process, which will equip them with the necessary skills and tools to become work-ready graduates.

In February, RCSI Bahrain virtually hosted its annual White Coat Ceremony, in celebration of the pivotal transition of 151 medical students into clinical training.

The ceremony commenced with opening remarks from Professor Alfred Nicholson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine, who highlighted the significance of wearing the white coat and the responsibility associated with it. The opening address was followed by a speech from the late Professor Jim Dornan, former Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at RCSI Bahrain. Senior Cycle Two (SC2) student, Mr Faateh Khan addressed his younger peers and shared his personal experience of transitioning to clinical training.

The ceremony concluded with the students' recital of the professional declaration, presented by Professor Iqdam Tobbia, Head of Department of Pathology and IC1-IC2 Director, through which they vowed to maintain professional attitudes and behaviours in work and relationships with classmates, teachers, patients and the community. The White Coat Ceremony is considered a symbolic event based around the presentation of the students' white coats and is regarded as a crucial moment for students who are in the Intermediate Cycle stage of the medicine programme.



White Coat Ceremony

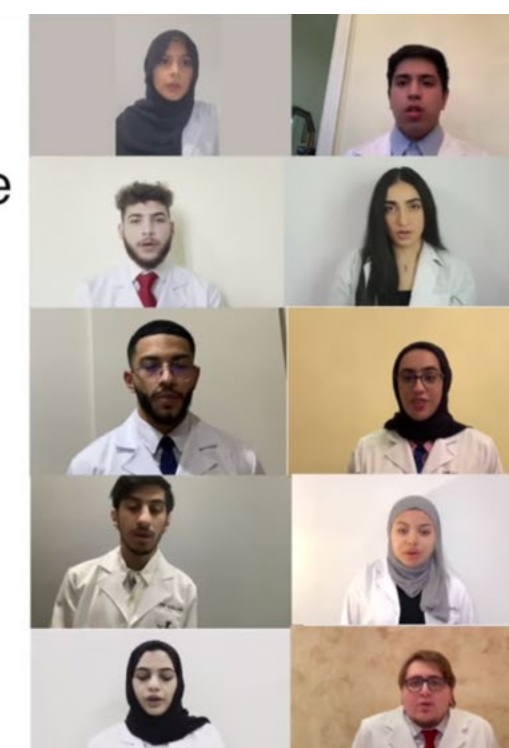
## Virtual White Uniform Ceremony

With last year's White Uniform Ceremony postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the University hosted two virtual White Uniform ceremonies in May to celebrate the transition of nursing students to clinical training.

The first White Uniform Ceremony witnessed the transition of 111 students from Nursing Year One (N1) into clinical training and the second ceremony celebrated the transition of 124 students from Nursing Year Two (N2).

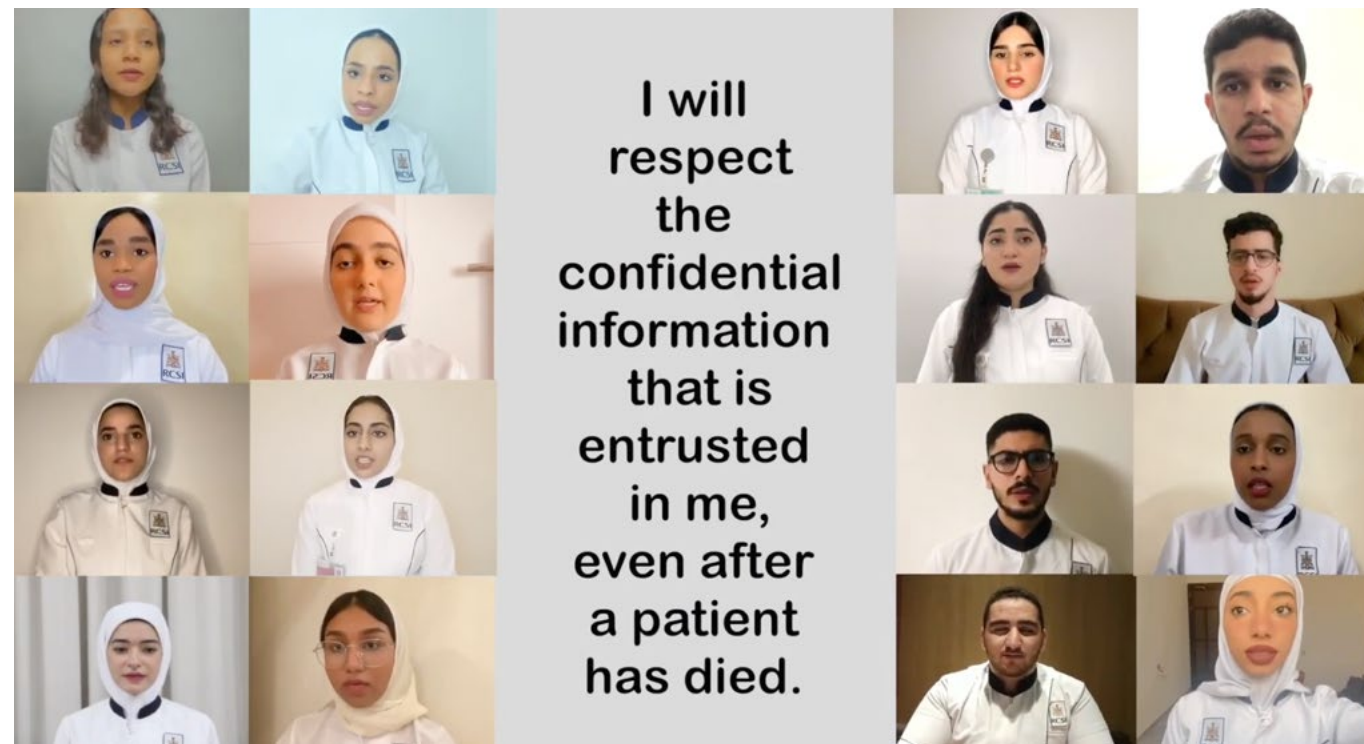
The ceremonies commenced with opening remarks by the Director of Quality and Academic Development, Dr Kathryn Strachan, during which she emphasised the value and significance of the white uniform and praised the students for their dedication and hard work.

Guest speaker, Ms Shafeeqa Hasan Yaqoob, Head Nurse of Hereditary Blood Disorder Centre, addressed the students and was followed by an address by Nursing Year Four (N4) student, Ms Maryam Bujandal. After featuring the recitation of the professional declaration by students, they received congratulatory and motivational messages from faculty, senior students and alumni.



I make these  
promises  
solemnly,  
freely and  
upon my  
honour





White Uniform Ceremony

### Internal Vaccination Campaign

To support the National Vaccination Campaign in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Government's efforts, RCSI Bahrain launched an internal vaccination campaign to encourage students attending clinical locations to wear their COVID-19 Vaccinated Badge.

Students who received their vaccinations were advised to collect their RCSI Bahrain COVID-19 Vaccinated Badge from the main security gate by showing proof of vaccination. In addition, students who were not yet vaccinated were urged to register for the vaccine.

The campaign was launched to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of our students during their clinical engagements following through on our commitment to maintain the quality of their educational experience.

### Tree Lighting Live Virtual Event

On 2nd December, the Student Services and Events team hosted a Christmas Tree Lighting event which was live streamed through the Student Council Instagram account, where students and staff joined virtually to celebrate.

The celebratory event commenced with a tree lighting countdown attended by Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Chief Operating Officer and Professor Alfred Nicholson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine. The event also featured a tutorial on how to make the season's hot chocolate recipe, and virtual games which students were able to participate in virtually alongside a festive music performance.

### Mental Health Week

To emphasise the importance of mental health, the Student Development and Wellbeing team hosted a series of virtual events from 21st to 27th February to mark mental health week.

The team hosted a virtual chat lounge with the topic 'Mindfulness Therapy', delivered by Therapist, Ms Melanie Sarginson, during which students learned about practicing mindfulness meditation techniques and their effect on their mental health. Another virtual event that took place during mental health week was an online Art Therapy session, delivered by Art Therapist, Ms Dalal Al Sindi, where students learned how to use art as a therapeutic tool to de-stress and express their emotions.

Throughout mental health week, students were encouraged to participate in various activities and events, such as the kindness challenge and photography competition to promote self-care and mental health awareness.

### Virtual Talent Show

On 24th March, the Student Services and Events Department hosted its very first Virtual Talent Show on the RCSI Bahrain YouTube Channel, with live premier, countdown and chat box to allow all students and staff to show their support and encouragement to the performers. A total of 13 performers participated in the show with a variety of talents. This year's show also featured newly introduced talents such as painting, sketching and graffiti.

The virtual event included entertainment in between performances with Mr Omar Barakat (SC1), medicine student as Master of Ceremony, and a raffle spinner with five lucky winners towards the end of the event.

The first place winners were Ms Ezabel Shaju Lona and Ms Elizabeth Shaju Lona for their dance performance, second place winner was Ms Zainab Al-Kheir for her piano performance and the third place winner was Ms Farah Tarek for her singing performance. Results for the winners were decided through a voting poll managed by the student body. To date, the Talent Show has received over 1.9K views.

### RCSI International Citizenship Award 2021

17 RCSI Bahrain students received the RCSI International Citizenship Award (ICA), with 12 IC3 students from the School of Medicine and five Nursing Year Four students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery. This year marks the first year for students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery receiving the Award. The RCSI International Citizenship Award programme (ICA) is a two year, mentored programme open for all undergraduate students organised and managed by the Department of Student Development and Wellbeing. The focus of the programme is professional development and building leadership and intercultural communication skills.

The winners of the award are referred to as RCSI International Citizens, as they have demonstrated being creative, analytical, ethical and culturally aware, important qualities to help students become well-rounded, high-level medical graduates able to differentiate themselves as future global healthcare leaders. Students achieving the prestigious Award have this achievement noted on their academic transcripts.

To be eligible to take part in the ICA programme, students attend compulsory workshops on cultural competency and reflective writing along with a series of other requirements and tasks as they are guided by their ICA mentors. They are also expected to submit a portfolio and a final reflective essay on what makes them an RCSI International Citizen. At the end of the two years, the students' work is assessed by the appointed ICA Board and those who successfully complete the programme receive the award.

### Clubs and Societies at their best

The Student Services and Events Department developed and expanded on the services offered to students to ensure they are being actively supported during their University experience.

This academic year witnessed a total of 44 Clubs and Societies, the highest number to date. Throughout the academic year, the department engaged with students virtually and hosted a total of 269 diverse virtual events and activities, such as academic, social, health and fitness, giving back to the community and guides to career pathways.

Led by Ms Aneesa Rafia from the Student Services and Events Department, along with Ms Nazha Alfaraj, Student Council Clubs and Societies Officer, RCSI Bahrain hosted the Clubs and Societies Virtual Awards Night on 30th May. During the event, various awards were presented to the best Clubs and Societies, and special appreciation and recognition was made to the new Clubs.

### Updates to the Library Services

The Library and Learning Resource Centre (LLRC) has continued to actively support students by extending its working hours and offering a number of newly developed virtual library services.

Students who were due to be on campus could book a study space using the 'Find a Seat service'. Students were also able to reserve books online through the "Click & Collect service" and collect them by appointment, at the Information Desk. To ensure the safety of students while on campus, the library divided the centre into Red and Green Zones. The Red Zone was designated for students who wanted to reserve up to five hours of library space, while the Green Zone could only be booked for up to three hours.

### Online Food Ordering Service – St Stephen's Green Restaurant

To ensure the health and wellbeing of students and staff while still adhering to social distancing guidelines on campus, RCSI Bahrain launched the "Food Order - Click and Collect Service" at St Stephen's Green Restaurant, in collaboration with Nature's Market, the new restaurant operator.

Students and staff present on campus were able to place their food orders through an online form, accessible from any device and orders were made available either for take-away or dine-in at St Stephen's Green Restaurant according to the applicable COVID-19 regulations.



“ When I heard about Dream Big, I thought it was the perfect opportunity as it combined two of my greatest passions, teaching and helping others. ”

Ms Fatima Al Daylami  
English Lecturer, Language and Cultural Unit

07

Service to our  
Community

Service to our  
Community



# Community Engagement

We support the national health programme of Bahrain and our community through health education and initiatives of benefit to public health. Our deep professional responsibility to fulfil society's greatest need – the advancement of its health and wellbeing – is embedded in all that we do.

## Students' Artistic Competitions

Organised by the Community Outreach Department and the Library and Learning Resource Centre, the first competition invited the students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery to share their experience of living, working and studying through the COVID-19 pandemic and to showcase the impact and challenges it has had on their lives. Students were invited to document their stories through either a written reflection, a piece of artwork, a photograph or a video.

The winners of the COVID-19 Nursing Stories Competition were:

- **1st prize** Ms Maria Carmella Roxas Solido (Nursing Year 1) – Video
- **2nd prize** Ms Fatima Ebrahim Ahmed (Nursing Year 3) – Artwork
- **3rd prize** Ms Maryam Bujandal (Nursing Year 4) – Written reflection

First prize winner, Ms Maria Carmella Roxas Solido (N1), commented on her accomplishment: "Winning the School of Nursing and Midwifery Stories Competition was such a wonderful and empowering experience. The competition was a great platform to raise awareness on the impact the pandemic has brought upon students such as myself. Being confined with limited social interaction and living with the fear of contracting the virus could exhaust one's mental health. But we find reasons to encourage ourselves and keep our heads high through friends, family, and our own motivation. The pandemic is just one of the challenges we are to experience in our life, and we will have more to overcome as healthcare professionals in the future. This was a great eye opener."

As future healthcare professionals and medical students that have lived, studied and had first-hand clinical experience during the pandemic, the

students from the School of Medicine were invited to participate in the second competition focused on promoting the importance of vaccinations in the fight against COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The winners of the COVID-19 Vaccination Awareness Competition were:

- **1st prize** Ms Sukanya Joshi (SC2) – Drawing
- **2nd prize** Mr Abdulla Jamal AlZeera (SC1) – Video
- **3rd prize** Ms Maram Husain Abdali Isa Yusuf Hasan (Med1) – Poem

First prize winner, Ms Sukanya Joshi (SC2) shared his thoughts in this statement: "When hearing about a competition related to COVID-19 Vaccination, I felt a sense of personal responsibility and a desire to get involved. I am very passionate about medicine and art. I loved the idea that my drawing would serve a greater purpose by helping our community understand the importance of taking the vaccine, and helping to look beyond the stigma and misconceptions, and in turn help protect our community and the nation. I am so proud of my University for taking such an initiative and I am glad my work was acknowledged."

All competition entries are being collated and catalogued in a dedicated section of the library as learning resources and evidence for current and new students to learn from, raising awareness and promoting the importance of vaccinations to help build protection and save lives. This exhibition also pays tribute to the RCSI Bahrain students who have been supporting the National Taskforce's continuing efforts in the fight against COVID-19 in Bahrain.

Through the Community Outreach Department, enrolled students contribute to local and international communities, making them more work-ready and compassionate healthcare professionals.

## Students' Artistic Competition Winners



Artwork of the winner of the second prize in COVID-19 Nursing Stories Competition



Artwork of the winner of the first prize in COVID-19 Vaccination Awareness Competition





Face Mask Donation

### Breast Cancer Awareness Talks

More than 20 participants from RCSI Bahrain staff, students and alumni attended a virtual talk in October, organised by the Community Outreach Department on breast cancer awareness with the topic of 'The Importance of Self-Examination'. The talk was led by Dr Julie Sprakel, Founder and Chairwoman of Think Pink: Bahrain Breast Cancer Society, where Dr Sprakel highlighted the importance of monthly self-examination and the signs and symptoms of breast cancer to look out for.

### World Diabetes Day

During the month of November, two students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery (N4), Ms Maryam Bujandal and Mr Adel AlMahmood represented RCSI Bahrain at a World Diabetes Day virtual event organised by the Bahrain Diabetes Society. The students participated in an online educational lecture and conducted a presentation on the risks, symptoms and preventative measures of Type 2 Diabetes for school students in Bahrain.

### Face Mask Donations

More than 500 RCSI Bahrain reusable face masks were donated in December to both the Tree of Life Society and the Migrant Workers Protection Society, to help keep those in need safe and healthy.

Staff and students donated food, self-care items and clothing to the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS), to help provide support for workers who were out of work due to the pandemic.

### Bahrain Trust Foundation Activities

In April, the Community Outreach Department partnered with the RCSI Bahrain Paediatrics Society to host a number of virtual events for in-patients on the Paediatric Oncology Ward in Salmaniya Medical

Complex (SMC), in collaboration with the Bahrain Trust Foundation.

The interactive events included 'Who am I?' an educational insight into the life of a medical student and the role of doctors and nurses, an 'International Night', where students shared information with the children about different countries and an 'Activity Time' event where volunteers played a variety of games with the children to help lift their spirits.

The Foundation is a non-profit organisation founded in 2010 that aims to make a difference in people's lives through education, health and economic empowerment and manage a micro-school for children receiving treatment in the hospital.

### Ramadan 'Feed A Family' Campaign

During the holy month of Ramadan, the Community Outreach Department collaborated with Ms Christina Strachan, Lecturer in English Language and Online Course Coordinator at the Language and Cultural Unit, to launch the 'Feed a Family' campaign. Staff and students were invited to help support the Tree of Life Society, a charity providing support and services to communities in Bahrain since 2012. The campaign aimed to raise funds to provide food coupons to families in need during Ramadan.

### RCSI Bahrain-led studies of benefit to Public Health

Two RCSI Bahrain-led studies exploring prevalent health conditions in Bahrain were made public through the local media to create awareness on key findings and information.

### Research reveals only 7.7% of Children in Traffic Accidents Wear Seatbelts

To understand the leading causes and trends of paediatric trauma in Bahrain, a group of students conducted a three-month study at the Emergency Departments of Salmaniya Medical Complex, King Hamad University Hospital and Bahrain Defence Force Hospital, highlighting the dangers of not adhering to basic safety measures with children's lives.



Of the 1,328 children under the age of 14 who have visited the emergency departments for trauma in the duration of three months, 753 suffered from injuries related to falls, 79 were involved in car accidents or were pedestrians struck by vehicles, and the remaining suffered from a variety of other injuries. For children who were in car accidents, 92.5% were not wearing seatbelts and 12.8% were ejected from the cabin of the vehicle. The study also revealed that six children were victims of drowning or near drowning and six children passed away during the study period due to trauma related to either road traffic accidents or drowning.

Recommendations from the study emphasised the importance and effectiveness of using seatbelts to save lives and prevent death during road traffic accidents. Parents and children are also advised to be cautious and obey traffic signals and walk signs, and to use sidewalks to avoid accidents as pedestrians. As for any water activities, drownings are avoidable by maintaining constant adult supervision, pool isolation and installing fences, using personal floatation devices and receiving swimming education.

### Perceptions of Bahraini Men Towards Prostate Cancer

An investigative study conducted by a group of staff and students, explored the attitudes and the level of knowledge of men in the highest risk category for prostate cancer, for which the standardised incidence rate in Bahrain (at 13.5% in 100,000 men) is considered one of the highest rates within the Middle East.

The first of its kind in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the study aimed to encourage an evidence-based approach to public health interventions and cancer prevention. The results of the study showed that more than 60% of the participants had not taken a prostate screening check-up and 53% did not consider prostate cancer to be a major problem in Bahrain. Participants generally had minimal understanding of the risk factors associated with the disease and only 32% correctly identified that prostate cancer typically affects men above the age of 50. Almost two-thirds of participants were not aware of any tests available to check for prostate cancer, however, more than 75% of men indicated that they would consider going for a screening check-up in the future.

The study also shed light on the role of nurses in men's health promotion and disease prevention and the potential impact of facilitating the development of nursing specialist roles in the area of prostate disease prevention.

### Dream Big English Lessons

14 RCSI Bahrain students completed their mandatory training at Dream Big, during which they volunteered to support local children by providing them with virtual English lessons. Dream Big is a non-profit organisation founded in 2014 in the Kingdom of Bahrain by Ms Hanan Hammad, and they provide complimentary English – as a second language – lessons to children in Bahrain.



### Staff Webinar Series

The Professional Development Unit (PDU) launched a Health and Wellbeing Webinar series to replace the lunchtime seminars for staff members. Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of Postgraduate Studies and Research, led the first webinar and presented the RCSI Bahrain research response to COVID-19. Dr Jamal Hashem, Clinical Educator - Surgery for the School of Medicine, gave an update on the role of Clinical Simulation in medical education and the adaptation of this teaching under COVID-19. The series will continue in the next academic year.



“The AUBH Conference was an opportunity to network with the wider local academic community and share experiences and best practices.”

Head of Language & Culture Unit, Senior Lecturer in English  
Dr Amal Al-Qallaf



08

Focus on our  
Partners



# Focus on our Partners



Major General Dr Salman bin Ateyatalla Abdulrahman Al Khalifa (centre) and Professor Sameer Otoom (centre right) with RCSI Bahrain and KHUH officials

At the heart of RCSI Bahrain's commitment to development and enhancement lies our collaboration with existing and new national and international partners, as well as regular benchmarking against the highest standards.

## QEO Membership in the Association of Quality Assurance Administrations

Extending from RCSI Bahrain's membership of the Association of Arab Universities (AARU), the Quality Enhancement Office recently became a member of the Association of Quality Assurance Administrations (AQAA) of the AARU.

The AQAA aims to develop a network of Universities focused on quality enhancement, thereby creating a platform for knowledge sharing and good practice exchange. The association also provides a number of services such as quality management courses, and accreditation and review services.

The membership is considered an opportunity to enhance our quality network across the Arab world and MENA region and explore opportunities for collaboration and further recognition. This is in addition to increasing our active contribution to the quality enhancement culture across the network with the exposure to the different good practices it entails.

## King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH) Delegation Visit

In September, Professor Sameer Otoom, President of RCSI Bahrain, welcomed a delegation from King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH), led by Major General Dr Salman bin Ateyatalla Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Chief Executive Officer of King Hamad University Hospital, to discuss the precautionary measures undertaken by the University for the students' return to campus. Mr Mohammed Abdulla, Head of Estates and Support Services at RCSI Bahrain, led the campus tour of the various facilities and introduced the delegation to the newly applied social distancing measures. The delegation praised RCSI Bahrain for its proactive approach and for going the extra mile in implementing the changes to the campus, to ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors.

## Irish Medical Council (IMC) Virtual Visit

In March, a comprehensive virtual visit was held through video communication and the

## Her Excellency Dr Shaikha Rana Bint Isa Bin Duaij Al Khalifa

Secretary General of the Higher Education Council (HEC) and Deputy Chair of the Higher Education Council Board of Trustees



In May, Her Excellency Dr Shaikha Rana Bint Isa Bin Duaij Al Khalifa was appointed by issuance of a royal decree as Secretary General of the Higher Education Council (HEC).

Her Excellency formerly held the position of Undersecretary of Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 2017. Since 2011, she served as the Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Arab and Afro-Asian Affairs and organisations. Her Excellency participated in many bilateral and multilateral meetings within the framework of the United Nations and other international organisations agencies, especially the Asian Cooperation Dialogue Forum, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including the meetings between ASEAN and the countries of the GCC.

Her Excellency obtained her PhD in International Law from the University of Exeter, England and has a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution from American University in Washington, DC, USA.

undergraduate medicine programme went through the re-accreditation process by the Irish Medical Council (IMC). The IMC team led by Professor Mary O' Sullivan and comprising of Council and external members, met with the Executive Management Team, School of Medicine staff, students (the Student Council and students from all years/cycles) and RCSI Bahrain interns. This is in addition to meeting with RCSI Bahrain training leads and Clinical Lecturers at King Hamad University Hospital (KHUH), Bahrain Defence Force Royal Medical Services (BDF), Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) and various health centres across Bahrain.

## Higher Education Council (HEC) Campus Visit

His Excellency Dr Abdulghani Al Showaikh, the Secretary General of the Higher Education Council, visited the RCSI Bahrain campus in December as part of his regular visits to higher education institutions, to check on the progress of the educational process and services provided to students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Professor Sameer Otoom, RCSI Bahrain President, welcomed His Excellency Dr Al Showaikh to the University and discussed with him matters related to the progress of the educational process and the administrative services provided by the University to students during the pandemic, followed by a tour around the University facilities.

## BQA review of Nursing programmes

In April, the Bahrain Education and Training Quality Authority (BQA) conducted a virtual site visit to complete the quality review of the BSc in Nursing and the MSc in Nursing programmes.

The panel led by Professor Erika Sirsch, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing Science at the Philosophical

and Theological College Vallendar (Germany), comprised of three regional and international healthcare professionals, in addition to the BQA members who were managing the event. The virtual visit was carried out over the course of three days from 5th to 7th April and involved panel meetings with senior management, staff from both the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Postgraduate Studies and Research, staff across the University, students and alumni. The review also included meetings with the programmes' external stakeholders, namely the Advisory Boards of both programmes and employers from the Ministry of Health, KHUH, BDF, Salmaniya Medical Complex, the American Mission Hospital and Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi.

As part of the BQA review, RCSI Bahrain submitted a report document for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing which covered benchmarking against international standards with two partner organisations, being the University of Glasgow in UK, and the University College Cork in Ireland. The benchmarking process was established by a working group initially including Dr Maeve O'Connell, former Lecturer in Nursing, and then continued by Dr Ann Donohoe, Senior Lecturer in Nursing, as Project Lead, as well as Dr Kathryn Strachan, Director of Quality and Academic Development, and Dr Eman Tawash, Director of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Programme.





RCSI Bahrain officials with His Excellency Rami Saleh Wriekat Aladwan, the Jordanian Ambassador

#### Jordanian Ambassador Visit

In March, His Excellency Rami Saleh Wriekat Aladwan, the Jordanian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, met with Professor Sameer Ootom, President of RCSI Bahrain, and Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Chief Operating Officer, to discuss electives and research opportunities for RCSI Bahrain students in Jordan, in addition to receiving an update on the Jordanian students currently at RCSI Bahrain. The Ambassador was presented with the RCSI Bahrain shield as a token of our appreciation.

#### South Korean Ambassador Visit

In March, His Excellency Hae-Kwan Chung, the South Korean Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, visited the RCSI Bahrain campus to meet with senior officials, including Professor Sameer Ootom, President of RCSI Bahrain; Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Chief Operating Officer; Professor Stephen Atkin, Head of School of Postgraduate Studies and Research and Mr Fadi Ghosn, Recognition, Careers and Alumni Manager. The Ambassador's visit featured a presentation on RCSI Bahrain's operations and core pillars, a campus tour and a discussion on the opportunities of collaborating with medical universities in South Korea for student and staff exchange, as well as research partnerships.

#### Participation in the Ministry of Labour and Social Development event

On behalf of RCSI Bahrain President, Dr Colin Greengrass, Academic Director for Technology Enhanced Learning and Senior Lecturer in

Pharmacology, attended 'The Bahrain Exhibition for Training & Education Pre-Employment 2021', hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. Dr Greengrass participated in a panel to discuss the importance of using IT and virtual learning in the future of higher education, in which he highlighted the approach used by RCSI Bahrain in providing an engaging and highly effective online learning platform for students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Participation in American University of Bahrain (AUBH) Conference

Head of Language & Culture Unit and Senior Lecturer in English, Dr Amal Al-Qallaf, participated in the American University of Bahrain's (AUBH) 'Innovative and Learning Conference: Lessons from COVID-19', held under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Education, Dr Majed bin Ali Al-Nuaimi, as a speaker in a discussion panel with educators from different universities. Dr Al-Qallaf's presentation addressed the topics of virtual campus life, the impact of isolation on students' wellbeing, stimulating student engagement and the role of Higher Education institutions, while citing examples of best practice being implemented by RCSI Bahrain on how the University supports the physical, mental and social wellbeing of its students beyond the classroom.



RCSI Bahrain officials with His Excellency Hae-Kwan Chung, the South Korean Ambassador

#### American Mission Hospital (AMH) New Hospital Visit

On 28th March, Professor Sameer Ootom, RCSI Bahrain President; Mr Stephen Harrison-Mirfield, Chief Operating Officer and Professor Alfred Nicholson, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Head of School of Medicine visited the new King Hamad American Mission Hospital in A'ali. They were received by Dr George Cheriyan, the American Mission Hospital (AMH) corporate Chief Executive Officer and Chief

Medical Officer, along with the building team. The new hospital, set to open its doors in 2022, is built on 30,000sqm of grounds and will feature intensive care units, operating rooms, an imaging centre, an infertility centre, 120 beds focusing on the wellbeing of women and children and a 300-seat auditorium for meetings and conferences. RCSI Bahrain will be collaborating with AMH in regard to student clinical rotations and opportunities for clinical research, as well as internships.



RCSI Bahrain officials at the new King Hamad American Mission Hospital site



# A YEAR IN PICTURES

**September**  
Orientation Week



**January**  
Research on COVID-19



**May**  
Issuing digital graduation  
certificates through  
BLOCKCERTS



**November**  
Research Summer School  
Review Competition



**March**  
History of  
Medicine



**July**  
Soft opening of the RCSI Bahrain  
Biomolecular and Clinical Trial  
Research Centre



**October**  
Student Health and Wellbeing  
Department partnered with  
Al Hilal Hospital to carry out  
COVID-19 on-campus testing



**February**  
Gulf Region Speaker Series 2021



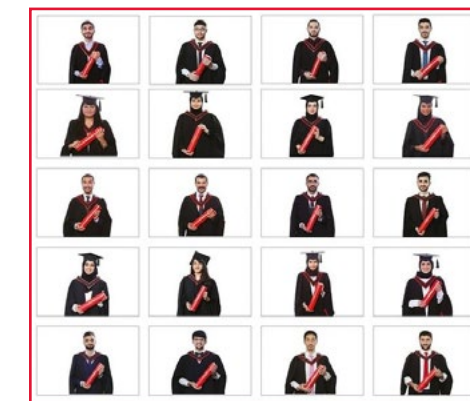
**June**  
RCSI Bahrain hosts virtual  
Conferring Ceremonies



**December**  
Student participation in the  
first Youth Parliament session



**April**  
Student TEDx Talk





“ RCSI Bahrain delivered a well-rounded year for all students thanks to the efforts of the highly dedicated staff and creative student body. ”

Ms Jessica Sefen  
SC1 School of Medicine, President of the Student Council







# RCSI

**RCSI Bahrain** aims to enhance health in Bahrain, the GCC region and beyond, through endeavour, innovation and collaboration in education, research and service.



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# **RCSI** Leading the world to better health