

The Official Launch of the First FH Advocacy Group in Iraq

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The 2019 FH Global Summit was held on October 20-21, 2019, in Atlanta, GA (US). Each year, this event brings together unique voices to inspire and advent change.

In the past, it was not possible for patients in my country to play a role in deciding the course of treatment of their own health issues. The decisions were made exclusively by physicians. During the Summit we were asked to focus more on this issue in our countries. When I returned to Iraq, I began to actively address this concern. Since including patients in their health care decisions had never been done, and this issue had not been discussed with the health authority in Iraq, I decided to develop this initiative gradually.

Patients first needed to be educated about how important their role is in making treatment decisions. I began by first forming a group via social media. The group was called “My Friends”. For the first six months, we discussed many issues and ideas regarding lack of drugs, side effects, what level of negotiation between our network and the Ministry of Health in Iraq, and what efforts we are undertaking in this field. Group members also shared their experiences with disease and were pleased to be a part of this collaboration.

Fatima K. Lahmood is a smart, 23-year-old Homozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia (HoFH) patient in the final year at the Faculty of Pharmacy. Ms. Lahmood is a strong FH warrior-active and full of energy. Treatment of HoFH has been very costly for her. I approached Fatima about becoming the representative of the first FH Advocacy Group in Iraq and likely in the Middle East. Much to my delight, she accepted.

Fatima attended her first meeting with our network members which was held virtually on May 22, 2020. The official announcement of the first FH Advocacy Group in the area was made at this meeting.



Ms. Fatima K. Lahmood