

Optimizing Healthcare Systems in the MENA Region: Insights from TRIGER (Tailored Reimbursement for Innovative and Generic Essential Remedies) Meetings in Saudi Arabia and Algeria

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Introduction

Healthcare systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are evolving to improve patient access to innovative therapies, as well as generics and biosimilars. Despite progress, gaps in policy, regulation, and financing hinder the development of health equity. The TRIGER initiative was launched to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration and to co-create actionable strategies. This poster shares insights from advisory board meetings in Saudi Arabia and Algeria, focusing on Health Technology Assessment (HTA), Managed Entry Agreements (MEAs), and approaches to enhance patient access and systems’ sustainability.

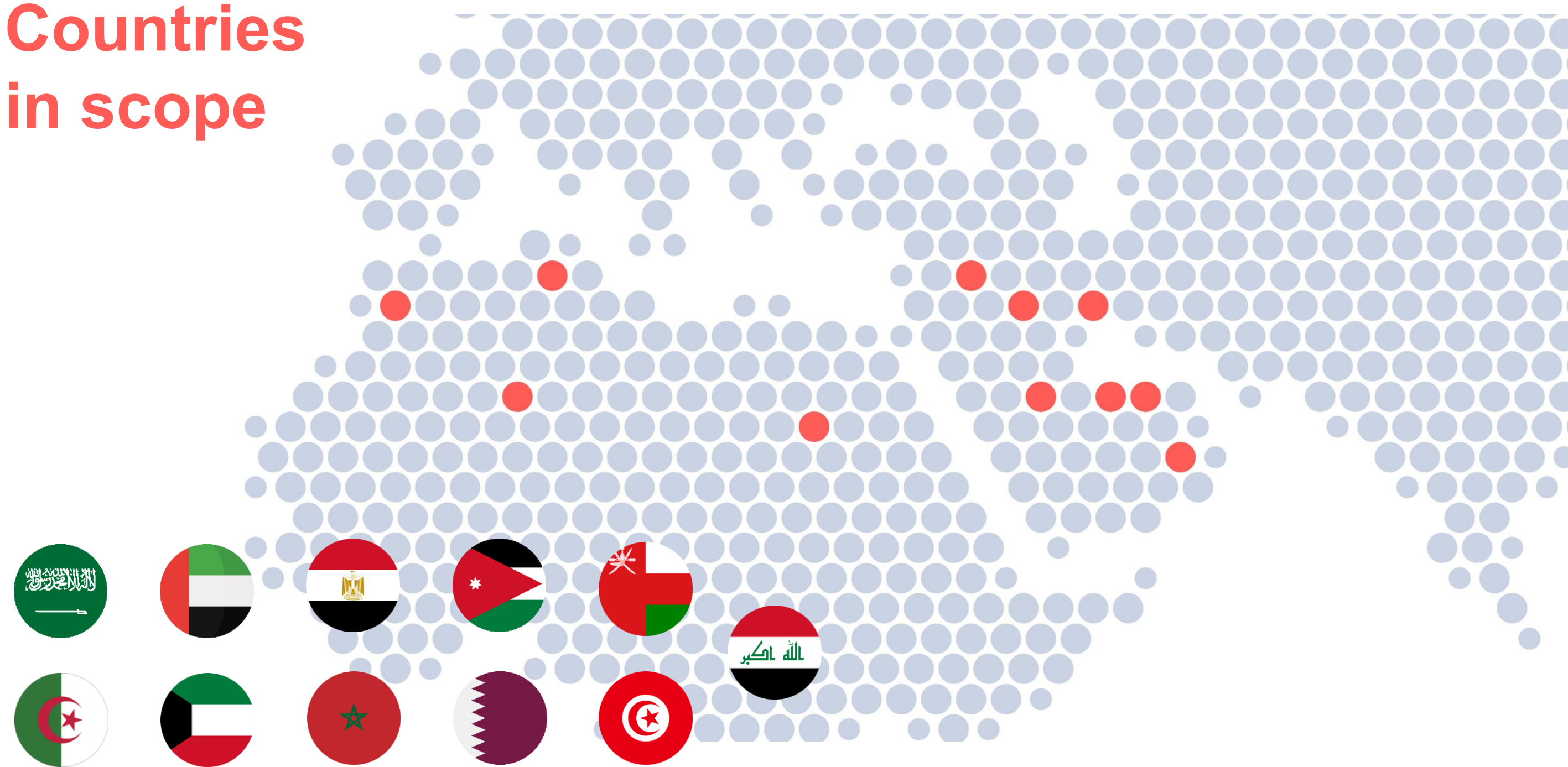
Method

The paper employs a mixed methodology, combining systematic literature review with insights from two advisory board meetings held in Riyadh (2023) and Algiers (2024). The literature review includes recent publications from national and international journals. The advisory board meetings involved stakeholders from various sectors, including policy makers, payers, academia, and professional associations, using an open-ended, iterative approach.

Results

The findings highlight significant disparities in healthcare systems across the MENA region, with high level of variability in terms of access to innovative medicines, biosimilars and generics. Key barriers identified by advisory board participants include a lack of dedicated drug policy frameworks, inadequate regulatory provisions, and economic or financing constraints. Conversely, enablers such as robust HTA processes, value-based healthcare models, and public-private partnerships have shown promise in improving healthcare quality and equity. Case studies from Saudi Arabia and Jordan illustrate successful implementation of HTA and MEAs, leading to significant enhancements in equitable patient access and system’s overall efficiency and sustainability.

Countries in scope



Conclusion

The TRIGER proceedings have concluded that there are three pillars that support multiple strategies aimed at achieving true health equity across the MENA region, namely: tailored policy frameworks, multi-stakeholder collaborations, and investment in healthcare infrastructure. The resulting actionable strategies include the adoption of value-based health technology assessments (HTA), tailored managed entry agreements (MEAs), along with extensive patient engagement and education. Jointly, these strategies have proven to significantly improve access to essential medicines and overall healthcare quality, as was evidenced in Saudi Arabia and Jordan case studies. The key recommendations propose policy-level changes, governance improvements and care delivery re-focus. In terms of policy, all MENA countries should create or enhance drug policies covering both innovative and off-patent medicines and embrace robust HTA frameworks by adopting value-based methodologies and building local capacity. When it comes to governance, which in many jurisdictions remains fragmented, clearly linking approval, appraisal and financing mechanisms has the potential to improve systems’ transparency and predictability, thus enabling closer cross-country and cross-stakeholder collaborations and partnerships. Finally, the providers and research centers should focus on establishing regional reference networks for data sharing platforms to enable evidence-based decision-making and foster the development of educational programs for all stakeholders. The TRIGER advisory boards not only did articulate the above recommendations but have also led to commitment from participating stakeholders to embrace corresponding actions and strategic initiatives.

Objective

The TRIGER initiative and the resulting analyses aimed to explore and evaluate recent developments in healthcare systems across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, focusing on the status and development of Health Technology Assessment (HTA), the use and the level of sophistication of Managed Entry Agreements (MEAs), and all other strategies designed to improve patient access to innovative medicines, biosimilars and generics. The primary objective was to identify shared barriers and enablers of access and to explore emerging and transferable best practices in order to propose actionable recommendations for policymakers, payers, and providers.

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