

# Majdi Sabahelzain (Dafallah)

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## Research Profile

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I am a global and public health researcher specialising in the social and behavioural aspects of vaccination uptake, immunisation system, health policy and risk communication and community engagement in various settings, including fragile and conflict-affected settings. I have experience in developing, conducting and analysing different types of research, including scoping and systematic reviews, quantitative and qualitative. I also have been teaching and mentoring undergraduate and post-graduate students during their research projects. Additionally, I am interested in innovative approaches to address the vaccination coverage gap, trust and infodemics.

## Work Experience

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- **Research Experience**

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| <b>Feb 2024 – Present</b>  | <b>Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney –Research Fellow</b>   |
| <b>Jun 2023 – Feb 2024</b> | <b>Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney – Visiting Researcher</b>  |
| <b>May 2022 – Jun 2023</b> | <b>UNICEF, Sudan– National Consultant for SBC and RCCE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-developed with an International consultant the RCCE strategy for the Federal Ministry of Health in Sudan.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Feb 2022 – Oct 2023</b> | <b>LSHTM in UK and AUW in Sudan– Research Lead/ Prime Investigator</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A global research project funded by Bill Gates Foundation, managed by LSHTM and hosted by PHTRU at Ahfad University for Women, Sudan.<br/><a href="https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/raise#our-team/">https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/raise#our-team/</a><br/>Study's title: Zero vaccine dose communities in crisis-affected settings.</li></ul> |
| <b>Jun 2022- May 2023</b>  | <b>School of Health Sciences,Ahfad University for Women–Assistant Professor</b>  |
| <b>Oct 2020 – Jun 2021</b> | <b>PLAN International Organization, Sudan– Prime Investigator (Consultant)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed and conducted a Baseline Study (Mixed methods) about Gender inequality (FGM and Child Marriage) in Sudan.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Feb 2016- Oct 2018</b>  | <b>GRACe at Ahfad University for Women, Sudan– Junior Researcher</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A research project funded by PC/DFID and hosted by GRACe at Ahfad University for Women, Khartoum Sudan.<br/><a href="https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-rh/550/">https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-rh/550/</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>May 2015- May 2022</b>  | <b>School of Health Sciences Ahfad University for Women– Lecturer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach Epidemiology and Health Communication and Promotion to Public Health, Nutrition and Dietetics students.</li><li>• Provide mentorship and supervision to students during their research projects.</li></ul>   |

- **Leadership and Management Experience**

**Feb 2023- May 2023    Nutrition and Health Center for Training and Research (NHCTR)**

**University for Women, Sudan– Director**

- Develop strategy and policy for the NHCTR
- Directing and managing research and capacity building in public health, nutrition and physiotherapy

**March 2022- Jan 2023    Public Health Training and Research Unit (PHTRU) in NHCTR– Head**

- Directing and managing research and capacity building in public health

**Jan 2020- Present    [Tat3im Initiative Website](#) (Tat3im=Immunization), AUW– Founding Manager**

- Managing, editing, and posting publications including articles, posters and videos on the website and related Social Media platforms. All information about vaccines and immunization is in Arabic. The website is accredited by [WHO/Vaccine Safety Net](#) as a trusted source of reliable information about Vaccine Safety.

**Jun 2015- Jan 2016    Master Program of Public Health, Ahfad University for Women– Coordinator**

- Joint Master's program between the School of Health Sciences and School of Medicine, Ahfad University for Women, Khartoum Sudan.

- **Other Relevant Global, Regional and National Experience:**

**Nov 2024- Present    WHO Initiative on Trust and Pandemic Preparedness Working Groups– Member**

**2023    Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (GPMB)–**

- Contributing to the Technical Assessment Report 2023:  
<https://www.gpmb.org/reports/m/item/technical-assessment-report>

**April 2020- Present    Acting Reviewer for Peer-reviewed Journals**

- Review manuscripts about vaccine acceptance and uptake in reputable journals, including but not limited to The Lancet, Cochrane, Vaccine (Elsevier), American Journal of Preventive Medicine, BMC Public Health, Frontiers in Public Health, and Health Communication.

**June 2022- June 2023    East Africa Centre for Vaccines and Immunization, Uganda– Facilitator**

- Contribute to teaching and facilitating Annual Vaccinology course to health professionals from African countries.

**Mar 2022- Mar 2023    University of Nairobi, Kenya– Facilitator and Mentor**

- Contribute to mentoring and facilitating Annual Vaccinology course to Paediatric Residents in Kenya.

**Jan 2023- Apr 2023    Member of the National Committee for Reviewing the National Action Plan for**

Antimicrobial Resistance, Federal Ministry of Health, Sudan.

Jan 2021- Jan 2022 Member of the Sub-National Committee for COVID-19 vaccine communication and demand generation, Federal Ministry of Health, Sudan.

## Education

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May 2022	PhD (Determinants of Measles Vaccine Hesitancy in Sudan) CAPHRI, Maastricht University, Netherlands.
Jan 2014	Master of Public and Tropical Health (MPH), University of Medical Science and Technology (UMST), Khartoum, Sudan
Mar 2008	Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm), University of Gezira, Medani, Sudan

## Awards/Scholarships, Conferences and Publications

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### Awards/Scholarships

July 2023-Mar 2024	Scholarship, University of Sydney Scholars at Risk Scheme, \$45,000, 2023
Sep 2021	African Advanced Vaccinology course (Afro-ADVAC), WITS University Johannesburg, South Africa (Full Scholarship)
May 2021	Advance Vaccinology Course (ADVAC), Geneva University, Switzerland, May 2021 (Full Scholarship)
Jun 2019	Vaccinology course, East Africa Centre for Vaccine and Immunization, Kampala, Uganda (Partial Scholarship)
Jun 2018	Epidemiological Evaluation of Vaccine Safety, Efficacy and Policy, LSHTM, London, UK. (Partial Scholarship)
Jul 2017	Intervention Mapping: Planning Health Promotion Programs, Maastricht University, Netherlands. (Full Scholarship)

### Conferences

Sept 2019	Speaker, 7th vaccine acceptance conference, Merieux Fondation, France.
Nov 2018	Speaker, Addressing the Burden of Disease in Sudan through Scientific Collaboration (Conference), Khartoum, Sudan
Nov 2018	Speaker, Women Leaders in Global Health conference, November 2018, LSHTM, London, UK

### Publications

2025	1. Leask J, Christou-Ergos M, Abdi I, Mboussou F, <b>Sabahelzain MM</b> , Wiley KE, Lambach P, Sim SY. Informing the development of
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transmission modelling guidance for global immunization decision-making: A qualitative needs assessment. *Vaccine*. 2025 Mar 7;49:126800.

2024

2. **Sabahelzain MM**, Dwyer H, Abimbola S, Leask J. Implications of conflict on vaccination in the Sahel region. *BMJ Global Health*. 2025 Jan 30;10(1).
3. **Sabahelzain MM**, Almaleeh A, Abdelmagid N, Abdalla O, Nor B, Mounier-Jack S, Singh NS. Vaccination strategies to identify and reach zero-dose and under-immunized children in crisis-affected states in Sudan: a qualitative study. *Conflict and health*. 2024 Dec 23;18(1):76.
4. Abdallah MS, Jumma T, Elhadi YA, **Sabahelzain MM**. Impact of gender-biased parental perceptions on under-immunization in Eastern Sudan: a cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Global Women's Health*. 2024 Oct 29;5:1337553.
5. Christou-Ergos M, **Sabahelzain MM**, Steffens M, Kaufman J, Bolsewicz KT, Danchin M, Leask J. The Drivers of Influenza Vaccination in Adults: Insights from a National Australian Survey. Available at SSRN 4958283. 2024 Aug 26.
6. Bile AS, Ali-Salad MA, Mahmoud AJ, Singh NS, Abdelmagid N, **Sabahelzain MM**, Checchi F, Mounier-Jack S, Nor B. Assessing Vaccination Delivery Strategies for Zero-Dose and Under-Immunized Children in the Fragile Context of Somalia. *Vaccines*. 2024; 12(2):154. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines12020154>

2023

7. Allison, L.E.; Alhaffar, M.; Checchi, F.; Abdelmagid, N.; Nor, B.; **Sabahelzain, M.M.**; Light, P.M.; Singh, N.S. A Systematic Review of Vaccination Guidance for Humanitarian Responses. *Vaccines* 2023, 11, 1743. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines11121743>
8. Abdelmagid, N.; Southgate, R.J.; Alhaffar, M.; Ahmed, M.; Bani, H.; Mounier-Jack, S.; Dahab, M.; Checchi, F.; **Sabahelzain, M.M.**; Nor, B.; et al. The Governance of Childhood Vaccination Services in Crisis Settings: A Scoping Review. *Vaccines* 2023, 11, 1853. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines11121853>
9. Ibrahim ZA, **Sabahelzain MM**, Elhadi YAM, Malande OO, Babiker S. Predictors of Tetanus Vaccine Uptake among Pregnant Women in Khartoum State, Sudan: A Hospital-Based Cross-Sectional Study. *Vaccines*. 2023; 11(7):1268. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines11071268>
10. Hamad, S.A.A.B., **Sabahelzain, M.M.** and Afandi, M.A., 2022. Report Brief COVID-19 pandemic in Ahfad University for Women: Institutional response. *The Ahfad Journal*, 39(2), pp.65-74.

2022

11. Abdalla RO, Yousif SA, Tagelsir A, Akola M, Almaleeh A, Elhadi YA, **Sabahelzain MM**. The global health challenge of counterfeit vaccination certificates: The case of yellow fever vaccination among travelers departing from Khartoum International Airport in Sudan. *Public Health Challenges*. 2022 Dec;1(4):e45.
12. **Sabahelzain MM**, Tagelsir A, Elhadi YA, Abdalla O. Perceived Vaccine Availability and the Uptake of Measles Vaccine in Sudan: The Mediating Role of Vaccination Hesitancy. *Vaccines*. 2022 Oct 8;10(10):1674.
13. **Sabahelzain, M.M.**; Moukhyer, M.; van den Borne, B.; Bosma, H. Vaccine Hesitancy among Parents and Its Association with the Uptake of Measles Vaccine in Urban Settings in Khartoum State, Sudan. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 205. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10020205>
14. **Sabahelzain, M.M.**; Moukhyer, M.; Bosma, H.; van den Borne, B. Determinants of Measles Vaccine Hesitancy among Sudanese Parents in Khartoum State, Sudan: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Vaccines* 2022, 10, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines10010006>

2021

15. Malande OO et al. COVID-19: Vaccines, myths and misconceptions in Africa. *Africa Health Journal*, October 2021. Available from: <https://africa-health.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AH-2021-10-31-Covid-myths.pdf>
16. **Sabahelzain MM**, Crutzen R, Moukhyer M, Bosma H, van den Borne B. Increasing vaccine uptake in Sudan: Development of a web-based intervention. *JMIR Preprints*. 22/07/2021:32326
17. Omayo LN, **Sabahelzain MM**, Nkwinika VV, Afaayo RN. Cervical cancer: Epidemiology and vaccines in Africa. *Paed Health Update*. 2021 August. South Africa. [In press]
18. **Sabahelzain MM**, Hartigan-Go K, Larson HJ. The politics of Covid-19 vaccine confidence. *Curr Opin Immunol*. 2021 Aug;71:92–6. doi: 10.1016/j.coi.2021.06.007. Epub 2021 Jun 16. PMID: PMC8206618. .
19. **Sabahelzain MM**, Ibrahim ZA, Hamad SA, Finnegan G. Vaccine information-seeking behavior among pregnant women in Khartoum state, Sudan: a hospital-based cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Public Health*. 2021;9:797.
20. Elhadi YA, Mehanna A, Adebisi YA, Essar MY, El Saeh HM, Alnahari SA, Alenezi OH, El Chbib D, Yahya Z, Ahmed E, **Sabahelzain MM** et al. Willingness to Vaccinate against COVID-19 among Healthcare Workers: An Online Survey in 10 Countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. *Global Journal of Health Sciences*. 2021 July 26. DOI:10.5539/gjhs.v13n9p42
21. **Sabahelzain MM**, Dubé E, Moukhyer M, Larson HJ, van den Borne B, Bosma H. Psychometric properties of the adapted measles vaccine hesitancy scale in Sudan. *PloS one*. 2020 Aug 6;15(8):e0237171.

2020

22. **Sabahelzain MM**, Moukhyer M, Dubé E, Hardan A, van den Borne B, Bosma H. Towards a further understanding of measles vaccine hesitancy in Khartoum state, Sudan: A qualitative study. *PLoS One*. 2019 Jun 20;14(6):e0213882. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0213882. eCollection 2019. PubMed PMID: 31220092; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC6586394.

2019

23. Sabahelzain MM, Eldin AG, Babiker S, Kabiru CW, Eltayeb M. Decision-making in the practice of female genital mutilation or cutting in Sudan: a cross-sectional study. *Global health research and policy*. 2019 Dec;4(1):5.

2013-2014

24. **Sabahelzain M** et al. Prevalence And Factors Associated with Unintended Pregnancy Among Married Women in an Urban And Rural Community, Khartoum State, Sudan. *Global Journal of Medicine and Public Health*. 2014. Available from: <http://www.gjmedph.org/uploads/O4%20-Vo3No4.pdf>
25. **Sabahelzain MM**, Hamamy H. The ethnic distribution of sickle cell disease in Sudan. *Pan African Medical Journal*. 2014;18. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25360197>

## Referees

1. Julie Leask, Professor, Social scientist and Co-lead of Social and Behavioural Insights in Immunisation (SABII) Research Group, School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney. Email: [julie.leask@sydney.edu.au](mailto:julie.leask@sydney.edu.au)
2. Heidi J. Larson, Anthropologist and Director of the Vaccine Confidence Project™ (VCP); Professor of Anthropology, Risk and Decision Science, Dept. Infectious Disease Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Email: [Heidi.Larson@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Heidi.Larson@lshtm.ac.uk)

3. Nada Abdelmagid, Assistant Professor in Humanitarian Health Practice at Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre at the LSHTM. Email: [nada.abdelmagid@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:nada.abdelmagid@lshtm.ac.uk)