

PRESS RELEASE

HBKU's Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute hosts workshop to examine the impact of desalinated water on public health

Doha, December 18, 2016 – Researchers from Qatar, Europe, Asia, and North America gathered in Doha to discuss the impact of desalinated water on public health at a workshop organized by Hamad Bin Khalifa University's (HBKU) Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI). The workshop, which took place on December 12th and 13th, produced valuable insight on the safety of desalinated drinking water, which will help guide public policy in Qatar and around the world.

The workshop, entitled "Quality of Desalinated Water from Human Health Perspectives," was sponsored by QEERI, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), and the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. It featured a range of speeches, presentations, and panel discussions. In the sessions, attendees were given a multidisciplinary look at how desalination can be an effective means of producing drinkable water.

Ensuring the safety of desalinated water is increasingly vital as freshwater resources diminish and populations grow. Hamad Bin Khalifa University's research excellence and unique partnerships advance understanding of this important topic in order to help those who rely on desalinated water to live healthy, prosperous lives.

A diverse group of academics presented their original research at the workshop, including Professor Basem Shomar of QEERI, an expert on chemistry of desalination technology, who surveyed the chemical composition of desalinated water and the public's perception of its safety. World Health Organization researcher Professor John Fawell also spoke about safeguarding the complex systems that deliver desalinated water to people in countries where freshwater is scarce. Professor Nriagu of the University of Michigan expressed concern for the low mineral content of desalinated water in many countries and wondered whether such demineralized water can be a risk factor for chronic diseases.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Basem Shomar said: "When we explore the topic of desalinated water, it is important that we not only think about the quantity but also consider what is clean and safe. The topics discussed at this workshop form an important element of the overall mission of QEERI and reflect the multidisciplinary range of the work undertaken at the institute."

Another presentation talked about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan (USA) through the lens of Safe Drinking Water Act in the United States. Referencing Flint, Professor Chuanwu Xi of the University of Michigan demonstrated the importance of sound policy measures to prevent public health disasters.

Researchers affiliated with the National University of Singapore, University of Cologne (Germany), Qinghai University (China), and Carnegie Mellon University Qatar also contributed to the workshop.

For more information about HBKU's Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute, please visit <http://hbku.edu.qa/>.

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About Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU delivers undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Science and Engineering, College of Law and Public Policy, College of Health and Life Sciences, College of Islamic Studies, and its College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.