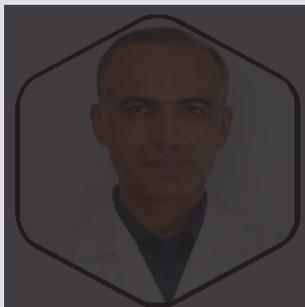


## **INVITED SPEAKERS**



Dr Shahriar Katheri is a physician and Chemical Emergency Response specialist based in Tehran, Iran. He has extensive experience in the clinical aspects of long-term health effects of exposure to chemical weapons (CW) agents, medical management of CW casualties, and rehabilitation of CW victims. Dr. Katheri received his MD degree from Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and his PhD in Medical Toxicology from the Institute of Cellular Medicine, Newcastle University, United Kingdom. He worked for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Hague from 2014 to 2021, organizing international training courses for medical professionals and first responders on emergency response to chemical incidents. He currently teaches in national and international training courses on medical management of chemical casualties and provides expert advice on CBRN emergency response to the Ministry of Health and Disaster Management Authority. Before joining the OPCW, he worked in the field of “war and public health” for over 15 years, focusing on chemical warfare survivors. Dr. Katheri is also involved in local and international NGO activities, including raising public awareness about the effects of chemical weapons and providing support for victims.

### **ABSTRACT - Are we prepared? Medical response to incidents involving toxic chemicals: The role of the OPCW in strengthening preparedness and response capacity of its member states**

As long as there is a possibility of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, deliberate release or incidents involving toxic chemicals, there will be a need to maintain and improve the protective capabilities of all countries in terms of their domestic preparedness and response and their ability to assist other countries.

Such enhanced capabilities exert an important deterrent effect. Medical response as an integrated part of chemical emergency response has to be included in any capacity building program to ensure preparedness of medical responders and medical facilities to deal with chemical emergencies particularly in mass casualty incidents.

Even though medical responders are expected to be able to provide care for patients during chemical incidents however; they should also know how to protect themselves as the first priority to prevent their own exposure as well as secondary contamination, this would require sufficient training and equipment.

Medical facilities and emergency departments should also be prepared for dealing with chemical casualties including decontamination station and a comprehensive disaster plan to include a CBRN component.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) provides support to its member states to enhance their capability on chemical emergency response through capacity building programs as well as providing expert and technical advice.

This presentation aims to provide an overview on the role of the OPCW as an international organization in strengthening capacity of its member states in preparedness and responding to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and other toxic chemical.