Recent Progress in Sciences

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An interview with Associate Professor Malik Sallam

Recent Progress in Sciences Editorial Office

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1. Could you please briefly introduce yourself and your research field?

My name is Malik Sallam. I obtained my MD degree from the University of Jordan in 2007 and subsequently completed residency training in Clinical Pathology/Microbiology & Immunology at Jordan University Hospital. In 2017, I earned a PhD in Clinical Virology from Lund University, Sweden. Since then, I have been working as a consultant in Laboratory Medicine at Jordan University Hospital in Amman, Jordan.

In 2021, I was promoted to the rank of Docent (Associate Professor). My research interests are broad and interdisciplinary, spanning vaccine hesitancy, antimicrobial drug resistance, the role of conspiracy beliefs in public health, and the ethical and practical implications of generative AI use in healthcare education, research, and practice.

I strive to integrate clinical, epidemiological, and societal perspectives in my work, aiming to address pressing public health challenges with both scientific rigor and social awareness.

Associate Professor Malik Sallam

2. What initially sparked your interest in your research field?

My interest in this field was sparked during my medical training, when I witnessed firsthand how infectious diseases continue to shape human health and society. I was especially struck by the dual challenge they present: the biological complexity of pathogens on one hand, and the human dimension of response, trust, and behavior on the other. This combination drew me to clinical microbiology and virology, where scientific investigation directly translates into patient care and public health. Later, the rise of vaccine hesitancy and the influence of misinformation and conspiracy beliefs deepened my motivation to explore the social drivers of health behaviors. At the same time, the global

challenge of antimicrobial resistance and the rapid evolution of AI in healthcare expanded my research scope, uniting my interests in microbiology, public health, and technology.

3. Could you please briefly share your career story with us? And what impressed you most in your research life?

My career began with a strong foundation in medicine and laboratory sciences. After obtaining my MD degree from the University of Jordan in 2007, I pursued residency training in Clinical Pathology/Microbiology & Immunology at Jordan University Hospital. These years shaped my appreciation for the crucial role of the laboratory in guiding patient care. In 2017, I earned a PhD in Clinical Virology from Lund University in Sweden, where I focused on the evolution and epidemiology of viral infections. This was a turning point, as it gave me the opportunity to combine bench research with clinical relevance. Returning to Jordan, I took up a role as a consultant in Laboratory Medicine at Jordan University Hospital, where I could apply both perspectives in practice. In 2021, I was promoted to Docent (Associate Professor), allowing me to expand my research and mentor the next generation of scientists. What impressed me most in my research life is the power of interdisciplinary approaches. Again and again, I have seen that scientific questions cannot be answered by laboratory data alone; they require integration with social, behavioral, and ethical dimensions. For instance, studying vaccine hesitancy and the role of conspiracy beliefs in shaping public health taught me that scientific evidence alone is not enough — trust and communication matter just as much. Likewise, exploring the rise of antimicrobial resistance and the emergence of AI in medicine has shown me how rapidly evolving challenges require us to adapt, collaborate, and innovate. In short, my career journey has been defined by the pursuit of scientific rigor, the translation of research into practice, and the recognition that at the heart of all science lies a profound responsibility to society.

4. In your opinion, what could be the hot topics in your research field in the coming years?

In the coming years, I believe vaccine confidence and public trust will remain at the forefront. Beyond scientific advances in vaccine development, the real challenge lies in addressing hesitancy, misinformation, and the social dynamics that influence uptake. Antimicrobial resistance will also continue to be a defining issue, with growing emphasis on rapid diagnostics, stewardship programs, and innovative strategies to slow resistance. At the same time, the emergence of new infectious diseases — whether respiratory, vector-borne, or zoonotic — will keep global preparedness a top priority. Finally, the integration of artificial intelligence into healthcare will expand rapidly, not only in diagnostics and laboratory medicine but also in education and research. The key will be to balance innovation with ethical and responsible use. Altogether, the hottest topics will be those that unite biology with social, behavioral, and technological dimensions of health.

5. What valuable suggestions would you like to share with young scholars regarding how to be a professional researcher?

My first advice is to stay curious and never lose the sense of wonder that drives research. Curiosity fuels resilience when experiments fail or when results are unexpected. At the same time, integrity must always guide your work — honesty in data collection, analysis, and reporting is what earns lasting respect. I also encourage young scholars to seek mentorship and collaboration. Research today is rarely a solitary effort, and learning from diverse perspectives strengthens both science and character. Equally important is persistence; progress often comes slowly, but consistent effort and patience pay off. Finally, remember that being a professional researcher is not only about publishing papers, but also about serving society. Choose questions that matter, communicate your findings clearly, and remain humble in the face of knowledge that is always evolving.

6. As a scholar, what recent research trends would you suggest are important for keeping up with *Recent Progress in Sciences*?

One important trend is the growing focus on interdisciplinary research, where biology, medicine, technology, and social sciences intersect. Many of today's challenges — from pandemic preparedness to climate-related health threats — demand collaboration across traditional boundaries. Another key trend is the integration of artificial intelligence and digital tools into research and healthcare. Scholars need to follow not only the technical advances but also the ethical frameworks that guide responsible use of these technologies. Finally, I would emphasize the importance of translational and societal impact. Research that connects laboratory findings with public health practice, policy, and education is increasingly valued. Keeping up with these directions ensures that science remains both innovative and relevant to the needs of society.

7. What attracts you to join the editorial board of *Recent Progress in Sciences*?

I am drawn to join the Editorial Board because the journal embraces a truly multidisciplinary vision of science. My own work spans clinical virology, microbiology, public health, and the ethical dimensions of new technologies, and I value platforms that welcome diverse perspectives and approaches. Equally important, I see editorial work as a way to give back to the scientific community — by supporting authors, ensuring rigor in peer review, and helping maintain high standards of clarity and integrity. Being part of this board offers an opportunity to foster dialogue across disciplines and to encourage research that is both innovative and socially relevant.

8. What are your thoughts on the future of *Recent Progress in Sciences*, an open-access journal?

I believe the future of Recent Progress in Sciences is very promising, especially as an open-access journal. Open access ensures that knowledge is available to a wide audience without barriers, which is crucial for advancing science globally and for supporting researchers in regions with limited resources. Looking ahead, I see the journal growing in influence by promoting interdisciplinary research, upholding rigorous peer review, and embracing emerging fields such as digital health, artificial intelligence, and global health challenges. By maintaining high scientific standards while remaining accessible, the journal can position itself as a trusted platform for innovation and collaboration.