

## **Fourth International Congress of West Asia and North Africa (WANA)**

**May 3-4, 2025**

**Kish Island**

The Fourth International Congress of West Asia and North Africa (WANA) was held on May 3-4, 2025, at the Kish International Convention Center by the Royan Research Institute of Jihad University. This scientific congress, focusing on stem cells in regenerative medicine, was organized as a branch of the International Royan Congress, with the aim of addressing the latest global scientific achievements and concentrating on the WANA region countries. This round of the WANA International Congress, with Dr. Massoud Vosough (Faculty Member of the Stem Cell Research Center of Royan Research Institute) serving as the Scientific Secretary, was held over two days on Kish Island.



The venue for the Fourth International WANA Congress

The opening ceremony of the Fourth International WANA Congress began at 8:00 AM on Saturday, May 3rd, with the recitation of the Quran and the playing of the Iranian national anthem. Following this, the Scientific Secretary of the congress delivered a speech. Subsequently, speeches were given by Dr. Alireza Monadi, Chairman of the Education, Research, and Technology

Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly; Dr. Mohammad Jafar Kabiri, Head of the Kish Free Zone Organization; and Dr. Abdolhossein Shahverdi, President of the Royan Research Institute.

Finally, the opening ceremony concluded with the introduction and appreciation of the congress's spiritual and financial supporters: Royan Cord Blood Company, Behrad Roushan Royan Company, The Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology, International Cooperation Center, Kish Institute of Science and Technology, Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research (ACECR) of Fars Province, Kish Free Zone Organization, Kish Development and Investment Company, Kish Tissue Regeneration Corporation.



The opening ceremony of the Fourth International WANA Congress and the appreciation of the congress's financial and spiritual supporters



The spiritual and financial supporters of the Fourth International WANA Congress

Alongside the congress, Royan Cord Blood Company, Behrad Roushan Royan Company, and ACECR of Fars Province set up exhibition booths to present their products and productions. This congress can serve as a platform for synergy and meetings between scientific and commercial activists in the fields of medical and biological sciences, as well as an opportunity for the presence of domestic and international knowledge-based companies.

Following the opening ceremony, the scientific part of the congress continued with the holding of scientific panels. Initially, three of the top researchers in the field of regenerative medicine from the WANA region delivered speeches, after which the other panels proceeded. The main themes of this congress included:

- "Regenerative Medicine"
- "Novel Approaches in Cancer Biomedicine"
- "Regenerative Medicine in Reproduction"
- "Artificial Intelligence and Computational Biology in Regenerative Medicine"
- "Cell Therapy and Gene Therapy in Regenerative Medicine"
- "Advanced Technology in Regenerative Medicine"

These topics were presented by 28 international and domestic speakers. Furthermore, the congress dedicated a panel titled "Next Generation Scientists" for presenting the outstanding research of recent graduates in the field.

All lectures at this congress were delivered in English, featuring 10 distinguished international speakers from Oman, Lebanon, UAE, Belgium, Jordan, Canada, Northern Cyprus, Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, and Libya, alongside 17 speakers from Iran. The Iranian speakers came from across the country, representing universities such as Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Guilan University of Medical Sciences, Royan Institute and Tehran University. The congress hosted 324 participants, including specialists and students from countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, and Libya.

After the conclusion of the scientific lectures on the first day of the congress, a meeting was held with domestic and international professors and speakers at the Kish Innovation Center. At this

session, the guests first visited the Royan International Center for Specialized Education. Subsequently, they discussed and exchanged views on the WANA scientific network, methods of international collaboration, and the venue for future congresses. This session was accompanied by a dinner for the guests.



WANA Scientific Network meeting with domestic and international professors and speakers

The closing ceremony was held at the end of the congress's second day, featuring an executive report by Dr. Rouhollah Fathi, the Executive Secretary of the congress, and expressions of gratitude for the efforts of the executive colleagues. During the closing ceremony, the congress's recap video was shown, and domestic and international speakers were thanked and honored with the presentation of gifts and certificates of appreciation. Finally, a memorable group photograph was taken of the speakers and all participants. At the end of the second day, a sightseeing tour along the beautiful shores of Kish Island, accompanied by a dinner, was arranged for the speakers and executive staff.



The closing ceremony of the Fourth International WANA Congress along with the appreciation of the congress speakers

Furthermore, prior to the commencement of the congress, four side workshops were held under the titles "Comprehensive Molecular Techniques" (by Ms. Ahmadi and Mr. Izadi; 6 participants), "Experimental Embryology in Mice" (by Dr. Vahid Esmaeili and Mr. Mehdi ZARBakhsh; 1 participant), "Cell Culture Course 1" (by Dr. Ebrahim Shahbazi; 6 participants), and "Cell Culture Course 2" (by Mr. Karami; 8 participants). These workshops were held in Persian for domestic enthusiasts, and their participants also attended the WANA Congress. Additionally, a one-day workshop titled "Cell Culture" (by Dr. Zahra Ghezelayagh; 1 participant from Lebanon) was conducted in English at the Royan Institute's International Center for Specialized Education on Kish Island. In total, 22 people participated in the side workshops of the WANA Congress.



Side Workshops of the Fourth International WANA Congress

The virtual team colleagues made significant efforts to promote the International WANA Congress and attract domestic participants. Advertisements for the congress were prepared in three languages: Persian, English, and Arabic. Posters for introducing the speakers, containing their lecture titles and affiliations, were designed in coordination with the Scientific Secretary of the congress. These posters were uploaded to the WANA congress website in collaboration with the Information Technology unit and were also widely disseminated through virtual platforms

(Instagram/Telegram/LinkedIn). Tasks such as designing congress posters and advertisement materials, handling announcements, managing posts, and exchanging messages -including Q&A interactions- were carried out across various social media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Rubika. One social media platform where the visibility of WANA advertisements significantly increased was LinkedIn. In addition to the Scientific Secretary of the congress, domestic and international scientific speakers also shared the WANA advertising posts in LinkedIn.

Overall, all advertising and informational activities were conducted via SMS, email, and telephone calls. Phone calls were made to university centers in provinces near Kish Island to promote the congress and attract participants. Furthermore, advertising posters were sent to various universities and scientific centers across the country. Additionally, during the days of the congress, advertising banners were printed and installed throughout Kish Island.



The promotional posters for the Fourth International WANA Congress in Persian, English, and Arabic languages

The executive team also played a significant role in handling executive affairs and managing the congress's operational activities. Their hard work, dedication, attention to detail, and valuable

contributions were evident at every stage of the congress's organization. These collective efforts, from the design and dissemination of advertisements to execution, turned the International WANA Congress into a remarkable success. The achievements of this event were the result of unparalleled cooperation and coordination among all team members, who worked tirelessly to bring these important scientific events to achievement. The team members included various departments from the Royan Research Institute, such as the Deputy of Education, the Deputy of Support, Information Technology, Security, and Public Relations and International Affairs.