

The Human Face of War

Caroline R. Richardson, MD, Editor in Chief

Ann Fam Med 2024;22:466. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.240463>

Annals Early Access article

In this issue of *Annals of Family Medicine*, we have published 4 articles discussing the impact of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict on family doctors and patients in the region. These articles were written by academic family doctors, members of our global family medicine community, all of whom have recent or ongoing experience living and working there.

The first article, by Dr Dikla Agur Cohen and Dr Merav Sudarsky, is a research study examining the impact on clinician well-being of caring for patients experiencing conflict-related trauma.¹ Two other articles, one by Dr Therese Zink, Dr Beesan Maraqa, Dr Ameer Taher, Dr Husam Dweik, and Dr Ahmad Abu Hadwan,² and the other by Dr Dikla Agur Cohen,³ are commentaries. The first commentary is from the perspective of Palestinian family doctors and the second from the perspective of Israeli family doctors, on the toll that the conflict has had on their communities. The final article, by Dr Jeffrey Borkan, discusses the impact of war on family medicine practice more generally and extends beyond this specific conflict.⁴

We anticipate that some readers may interpret our decision to publish these papers as “supporting genocide” or “siding with terrorists.” Others will call us out for not taking a side.

Conflicts of interest: author reports none.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Caroline R. Richardson
The Warren Alpert Medical School
Brown University
222 Richmond St
Providence, RI 02912
caroline_richardson@brown.edu

Our hope is that these articles move beyond these sound bites and false dichotomies to reveal more of the complexity and the impact of this conflict. Our decision to publish these papers was based on the idea that it is important to remember and support and give a voice to our colleagues and their patients who are living and working under these horrifying conditions.

It is easy when reading news stories, walking by protests, or listening to politically charged discussions to forget that there are regular people living in this war zone. There are clinicians and staff who risk their lives to show up for work every day trying to care for their communities, families welcoming new babies, and individual patients just trying to manage their diabetes or get help for their anxiety. We hope that those who read these articles will read with an open mind and consider the conflict from a new perspective.



[Read or post commentaries in response to this article.](#)

Submitted September 23, 2024; accepted September 24, 2023

Key words: family practice; health care system; conflict and humanitarian crisis; trauma and psychological stress; war-related injuries; medical cooperation; humanitarian assistance

References

1. Agur Cohen D, Sudarsky M. The 2023 terror attack on southern Israel: well-being and burnout among health care personnel treating traumatized evacuees. *Ann Fam Med.* 2024;22(6):518-521. [10.1370/afm.3171](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.3171)
2. Maraqa B, Taher A, Dweik H, Abu Hadwan A, Zink T. “We haven’t even started crying yet”: caring for the family under occupation and war in the occupied Palestinian territories. *Ann Fam Med.* 2024;22(6):557-560. [10.1370/afm.3170](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.3170)
3. Agur Cohen D. Healing amidst conflict: the perspective of an Israeli family physician during wartime. *Ann Fam Med.* 2024;22(6):561-564. [10.1370/afm.3173](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.3173)
4. Borkan JM. Family medicine in times of war. *Ann Fam Med.* 2024;22(6):539-542. [10.1370/afm.3172](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.3172)