

# On the COVER

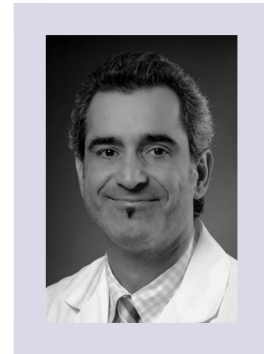
## Water Crisis in Basra, Iraq

Volunteer NGO Physician Perspective by Jamil D. Bayram, MD, MPH, EMDM, Rush University Medical Center

Shortly after the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, I joined a nongovernmental organization to work as a volunteer emergency physician in southern Iraq. A few weeks after I arrived in country, I was asked to head to Basra, Iraq's second largest city, to conduct a medical training workshop on the latest guidelines on cardiopulmonary resuscitation for a group of Iraqi physicians at the university hospital in Basra.

Early in April 2003, the complex humanitarian situation in several regions of Iraq was concerning due to the persistent disruption of food and water supplies. Water supplies in Basra had been affected by major damage to high-voltage electricity cables. In spite of efforts by large international organizations, the main water plant was partially repaired and only 50% of the city's population had access to drinking water. Walking through the streets of Basra, I saw stagnant and dirty pools of water that the city's 2 million inhabitants used for washing. Purification systems and water tanks brought in by various organizations were not enough as people came to canals and dilapidated wells to draw their drinking water.

The cover depicts Iraqi women carrying donated boxes of bottled drinking water on their heads and shoulders to their families.



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