

An American urologist's experience in Iran: .

I had the privilege of having been an invited speaker at the 16th annual Royan International Conference on Reproductive Medicine and Stem Cell Research in Tehran Iran from September 2-4, 2015. The meeting was attended by over 2000 individuals. The entire experience was exceptional. The conference itself was extremely interesting. Indeed, the science related to male infertility was by an order of magnitude better than that at any of the many other meetings I have attended.

The hospitality was exceptionally gracious. The administrative and professional staffs facilitated all aspects of the trip including arranging for a visa, transfers, accommodations and meals.

The tourist component was very well done and captivating. Also, I found learning more about daily life in Iran was both surprising and fascinating. The impression one gets from the US and European media is very misleading. Several of my associates expressed surprise that I was traveling to Iran. Daily life for the middle class is not very different from that in the US. Iran is country of 80 million people with an excellent educational system and a populace that highly values education and academia. I had many conversations in English with educated and intelligent young students who planned to pursue advanced degrees or training in Europe or North America.

I did not see any homeless people or any evidence of terrorism. Indeed the experience was from the logistic perspective was not different from attending a medical or scientific event in the US. Women are treated as equals. I found that 40% of medical students were women and most of the Iranian PhDs I met were female. I would encourage with enthusiasm anyone who has the opportunity to attend the Royan international conference to do so. In summary it was one of the most interesting, hassle free, and enjoyable trips I have ever had.

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Dr. Howards in Iran: Dr. Hooman Sadri of Winston Salem (above left) with Dr. Howards, attending Royan International Conference in Tehran