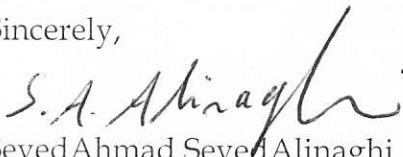


Conflict-of-interest Statement:

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

Hereby, the authors of the manuscript No. 14870 entitled "Early initiation of antiretroviral treatment: challenges in the Middle East and North Africa" certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.A. Alinaghi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

SeyedAhmad SeyedAlinaghi

Corresponding Author