

Press release

Rapid rise in diabetes spurs HMSDC and DHFMR to make it their 2009 focus for medical treatment and research

New Diabetes focus in 2009 will mean more coordinated, comprehensive care and access to research for patients

Dubai: 14 November, 2008 – The Harvard Medical School Dubai Center (HMSDC) Institute for Postgraduate Education and Research and Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research, members of Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Academic Medical Center, have announced, in the wake of World Diabetes Day, their commitment to lead diabetes care in 2009. The initiative will focus on prevention of diabetes and its complications.

In the UAE, 25% of the population live with diabetes, while a similar percent of population is at risk of developing it. This year, the UAE ranked second highest worldwide for diabetes prevalence, followed by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait (International Diabetes Federation (IDF) 2007).

At the same time, doctors who treat diabetes and other hormone-related disorders can do much more than ever before to help patients manage these conditions over the long-term. Educating doctors, patients and the general public on diabetes makes it more likely that the general population will receive all of their necessary diagnostic tests, treatments and preventive care. For these reasons and more, the HMSDC and DHFMR are planning to move, consolidate and expand their services towards diabetes care in 2009.

The initiative marks a major commitment by DHCC to provide comprehensive, coordinated care for adults who have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. The initiative will also make it easier for patients to better understand their disease, through the talk shows on television and media releases in newspapers. Walkathons and scientific

conferences for the medical community will further contribute towards raising funds for establishing a Diabetes Research Center and a Diabetes Prevention Center. These centers will make it easier for patients to take part in clinical trials of new treatments, or to volunteer for studies that seek to better understand their disease.

Other specialized services of the initiative will include "Train the Trainers" workshops to increase the number of diabetes educators in diabetes and send UAE national doctors and researchers to do fellowships at Harvard Medical School in Boston, USA, in the field of Diabetes Mellitus. Lectures in UAE primary schools will aim to ensure that young children get educated about their risk for diabetes and pay adequate attention to their lifestyle and eating habits.

The conference will also include an afternoon program for the general public with diabetes featuring learning opportunities geared toward the young people, as well as sessions for adults.

Dr Ayesha Abdullah, Senior Vice President of DHCC, said, " By focusing our resources on a disease with such high prevalence in our country, we'll be able to offer better care, and accommodate the growing need for experts in diabetes in this region. This new initiative will enhance healthcare professional and patient education, who turn to us for care that's not available in many communities."

Dr Ajay Singh, Chief Academic Officer of HMSDC, said: "We are truly committed to a partnership in diabetes care between patients and healthcare professionals. Patients need to gain confidence in managing their condition. Also, medical staff have an important role. Not only will HMSDC training support them to deliver good quality patient care and education, it will also radically improve the whole approach. Our goal is to lead diabetes research and training here in the UAE.

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