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The First Annual Ain Shams University Multiple Sclerosis Unit Conference The Future of Treatment for 40,000 MS Patients

The Multiple Sclerosis unit at the University of Ain Shams launched its first annual conference discussing the future of treatment for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) patients in Egypt. The conference was attended by renowned doctors and professors specialised in the disease as well as over 300 MS patients.

The conference highlighted the importance of early treatment for MS, as well as the efforts undertaken by the university's neurology department to control this disease, which affects over 2.5 million people worldwide. Participants emphasised the need for the Ministry of Health and companies to join forces to provide MS treatment at an affordable cost.

The MS unit at Ain Shams University plays a pivotal role in the support of over 40,000 MS patients in Egypt. Samia Ashour, Professor and Head of the Neurology Department at Ain Shams University, stated that the unit continues to ensure strict application of state-paid-treatment decisions for all underprivileged patients who are receiving treatment at the unit, pointing out that decisions include the allocation of between EGP 2,000 and 3,000 for these patients to cover 3-6 months of treatment. She explained



that this figure was hardly sufficient, and patients are unable to pay the remaining costs, with the price of medication reaching EGP 4,000, and are forced to discontinue their treatment.

Ashour added: "Patients suffer both physically and psychologically during their treatment journey, and the least we can do is alleviate their

financial burden. We must stress that this disease affects the age bracket between 20 and 40."

Magd Fouad, Professor of Neurology at Ain Shams University, said: "The earlier treatment begins, the better chances a patient has to remain in the first stage of the disease and not progress to more advanced stages. It is important to note

that the disease usually affects young people."

For his part, Hany Aref, Professor of Neurology at the Ain Shams University, said: "One of the greatest challenges that patients in Egypt face is a lack of public awareness of the disease and the difficulty in obtaining an accurate diagnosis, as well as the shortage in doctors specialised in the treatment of MS. The disease is considered the second biggest cause of motor disability in youth after car accidents, and we therefore call on the Ministry of Health to provide treatment free of charge for patients who cannot afford it."

Azza Abdel Nasser, Professor of Neurology at Ain Shams University, emphasised the importance of a correct diagnosis of the disease and said: "Our unit has the most qualified professors and specialised doctors."

Dina Abdel Gawad, Assistant Professor at the Ain Shams University Neurology Department said: "Ever since the inauguration of the unit, we have followed-up and assessed all the medical and psychological needs of patients, and - based on our findings - established several specialized clinics within the unit, where the cost of a check-up does not exceed EGP 10, which is a considerable accomplishment."



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