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REPORTER:	Amina Abdul Salam

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Edited by Amina Abdul Salam

MS sufferers appeal for help

PEOPLE with the immune system disease known as multiple sclerosis (MS) have appealed to the state to help them bear the cost of treatment.

The cost of treatment for each patient is LE 2,500 monthly, but state funds for treatment range between LE 2,000 and LE3, 000 to cover a period ranging between three to six months.

According to Dr Magd Fouad Zakarya, Professor of Neurology, Ain Shams University, some bodies bear the cost of treatment in full on behalf of MS patients. These include the petroleum sector, the armed forces, the police, the Egypt Air company and the medical committee for students. But there are patients who do not have such help and cannot, themselves, meet the cost of treatment.

He said MS affects people in the age range of 20 to 40 years at the most productive stage in their lives and they require state support to overcome their problem and their loss of productivity.

Another problem has also appeared among students suffering from MS who have put off graduating from university so as not halt the treatment, Dr Zakarya added.

He was speaking during the first annual conference in Cairo last week



DR SAMIA Ashour (1st left), then Dr Magd Fouad , Dr sheriff Hamdi and Dr Hany Aref during the 1st conference on future of treatment MS patients held in Cairo recently.

on the future treatment of MS patients. The conference was organised by the Neurology Department of Ain Shams University.

MS affects over 2.5 million people worldwide. Some 40, 000 Egyptians have it, according to Dr Samia Ashour, Head of the Neurology Department,

Ain Shams University. The MS patients in fact have both physical and psychological problems, so alleviating the financial burdens of the disease will minimise their sufferings.

Dr Zakarya said that MS affects the nervous system, immune system cells attacking each other for no known rea-

son. There is, as yet, no cure for MS. The medicines currently in use help to stop complications of the disease.

He said that a rapid decline of vision in one eye within a couple of days, loss of balance and dizziness are common initial signs of the disease.

Dr Azza Abd el-Naser, Professor in the Neurology Department, Ain Shams University, pointed out that MS also affected children between the ages of ten and 13. Raising awareness of the disease, she said, had led to the discovery of many MS cases.

She added that MS resulted from trouble in the immune system and there are families who suffer from more than one immune system disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.

Successful treatment for MS depends on early detection.

Dr Naser said that the Neurology Department had special clinics to provide MS patients with treatment and check-ups, using Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

The Department also had a nutrition clinic for MS patients. There are foods, she said, which stimulate the immune system, such as vegetables, vitamin C and foods rich in vitamin D.