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New treatment for bladder weakness

THE last few decades have witnessed tremendous progress in the development of new techniques for the treatment of urinary disorders, whether they are caused by weakness of the bladder muscles, in women, or by age-related diseases of the urinary tract.

For example, urinary incontinence, or the inability to control the release of urine from the bladder when coughing or sneezing, is the result of weak bladder muscles.

The presence of an ovarian cyst also causes urinary incontinence. This is because it can expose the bladder to extra pressure, causing uncontrolled leakage and urinary incontinence, according to Dr Osama Azmi, Professor of Gynaecology at the National Research Centre (NRC).

"There are two ways to treat urinary incontinence," said Dr Azmi. The first uses

medication to help reduce muscle contractions, so as to allow the holding of a large quantity of urine in the bladder and thus to improve bladder control.

The problem with the medication method is that after receiving treatment for a week or a month, the patient may think she has recovered, only to have a relapse, once she stops taking the medication. In addition, the drugs used have side effects such as blurred vision, a constant feeling of thirst and a sense of imbalance.

"The second treatment option is surgical. The function of the pelvic muscles, including vaginal muscles that have been weakened by multiple births, can be improved through surgery. However, this improvement may only last three or four years and the treatment carries all the risks that accom-

pany surgical interventions," Dr Azmi added.

Dr Azmi pointed out that the main aim of urinary incontinence treatment is to strengthen the pelvic muscles, including those of the vagina and the bladder; that is what gave rise to the idea of using magnetic resonance, (MR), to exercise the muscles, causing them to contract involuntarily, throughout each session, long enough for them gradually to become strong.

"The results of using MR have revealed that the therapy needs to be carried out for 20 minutes at a time, over 12 sessions. By the second or third session, the patient notices a remarkable improvement," Dr Azmi added.

Describing the treatment, Dr Azmi said: "The patient sits in a chair connected to a



Dr Osama Azmi

device that emits waves that cause the pelvic muscles to contract for 20 minutes at a time. The patient goes home the same day, after each session."