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New diabetes treatment approved in Egypt

Latest treatment for diabetic retinopathy in patients with diabetic macular edema (DME) gets approval

During a press conference led by retinal disease specialists and sponsored by Bayer Healthcare on 3 December, experts announced the approval of the latest treatment for diabetic retinopathy in patients with diabetic macular oedema (DME) in Egypt.

Hany Hamza, Professor of Ophthalmology at Cairo University and Retinal Diseases Consultant said: "With nearly 21 million people worldwide suffering from DME, phase three of VIVID-DME and VISTA-DME clinical trials revealed that aflibercept offers diabetes patients suffering from impaired vision a new treatment option allowing them to proactively manage disease progression and achieve sustained improvement."

Egypt now joins 30 other countries which have approved aflibercept, which was authorised for DME treatment by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in August 2014.

"DME is a common complication of diabetes, causing damage to the retina,

which may lead to poor vision and vision loss," Hamza said. "Visual impairment resulting from DME affects nearly 3% of diabetes patients worldwide, making DME a leading cause of vision loss in working-age adults."

"In Egypt, DME is a serious challenge. It affects nearly 30% of a total of 7.5 million people living with diabetes in the country. DME occurs when blood vessels in the retina are damaged by chronic high blood sugar levels caused by diabetes. This in turn can cause severe vision loss or blindness," he said.

Magdy Moussa, Professor of Ophthalmology at Tanta University and Retinal Diseases Consultant, shed light on the results of phase three of VIVID-DME and VISTA-DME clinical trials. "After one year of regular therapy, patients treated with aflibercept showed significant improvements gaining on average, the ability to read approximately two additional lines on an eye chart. Moreover, 33% of patients regained the ability to read three additional lines after only eight injections," he said.