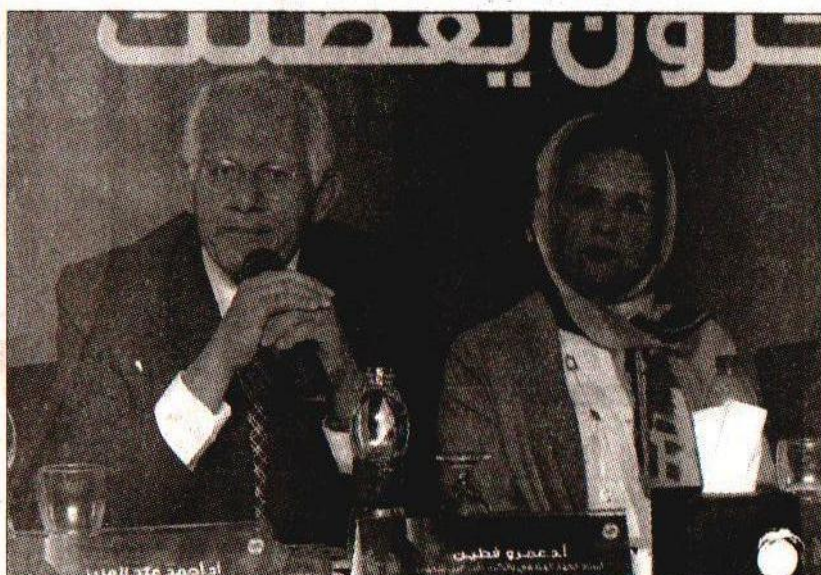


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DR Amr Fattin (L) stressed during a seminar held recently in Cairo that immunosuppressive therapy was the preferred treatment for Crohn's and ulcerative colitis.

Seminar discusses treating autoimmune disorders of digestive system

CROHN'S disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC) are autoimmune diseases that are the biggest risk factors for inflammation of the digestive system. The prevalence rate in Egypt of both diseases is estimated to be two per cent. CD can affect any part of the digestive system starting from the mouth and up to the anus. While UC mainly affects the colon, with Crohn's being fiercer than ulcerative colitis. The symptoms of both diseases are similar and the diagnosis is confirmed by colonoscopy to rule out one or the other.

Both illnesses affect people of all ages. Therefore, it is important to increase public awareness of these diseases, as a first step on the road to treatment, recovery and a better quality of life for patients. A seminar was recently held in Cairo to answer questions about the two diseases. The event was attended by Dr Amr Fattin, Professor of Digestive System and Liver Diseases at Ain Shams University.

Dr Fattin said: "Patients with colon inflammation are always complaining about the high cost of treatment. They are forced to buy biological drugs that

are known to be very expensive."

He added that studies have revealed that though the factors leading to affliction with CD and UC are still unknown, the reasons could be genetic and environmental. Dr Fattin pointed out that CD and UC may also affect the skin, joints, eyes, kidneys and liver. They may also lead to cancer of the large intestine. The symptoms vary from person to person. They appear gradually and may be mild or severe. They include abdominal pain, diarrhoea, bleeding within the digestive system, fever, fatigue and loss of appetite. Dr Fattin urged patients with CD and UC to introduce some changes to their life style in order to relieve their symptoms. He added: "They should quit smoking, eat several small meals a day rather than three big ones and do more exercise."

Dr Fattin pointed out that immunosuppressive therapy was the preferred treatment for Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. Drugs have already been produced for subcutaneous (under the skin) injection to control the symptoms of the two diseases.



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