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"**GAUHCHER'S** treatment is set according to the child's weight and lasts lifetime" says Dr Ahmed Emad Minister of Health (R) next to Alexis Myrand, Manager of the company producing of the treatment.

Getting to grips with Gaucher's

THE Ministry of Health and one of the pharmaceutical companies working in Egypt have signed a co-operation protocol to provide support and treatment to patients with Gaucher's disease.

According to Dr Ahmed Emad, Minister of Health and Population, Gaucher's disease is a financial and moral burden for patients and their families. "The incidence of the disease is on the rise all over the world," he said.

"The treatment is based on providing child patients with the enzyme they lack, intravenously. The dose is set according to the child's weight, and the treatment is given every two weeks and lasts a lifetime," according to Dr Emad. He noted that the treatment costs $1,480 for a bottle containing 400 units of enzyme.

This is enough to treat one child a six-months old infant for two weeks. The cost of treating one child in Egypt has been calculated at LE840,000 annually, with the cost rising as the child grows older.

Dr Emad pointed out that the cabinet has approved a budget for the support of preschool children affected with Gaucher's disease. He noted that 111Egyptian children had the disease.

The Director General of the pharmaceutical company, Alexis Moyrand, noted that his company was interested, not only in producing pharmaceuticals, but also in supporting the health sector, so the doctors could make an accurate diagnosis and the patients could get the best healthcare, especially for a disease as rare as Gaucher's.

Spokesman for the Ministry of Health Dr Khaled Megahed stated that the minister had LE 5million to be used to buy the drug and to supply it to children with the disease. For the past few months, children suffering from Gaucher's disease have been supplied with the drug and this has saved their lives.

He added that all the treatment centres at various Egyptian universities, such as Ain Shams, Assiut, Cairo, Mansoura Zagzig, Fayyum, and Alexandria, have been provided with the medicines they need to treat children with Gaucher 's. The disease is a rare genetic disorder that is caused by the lack of a certain enzyme.

This leads to the accumulation of fat in various body systems and cells, especially the liver, spleen, kidneys, lungs and bone marrow. Symptoms include an enlargement of the spleen or liver, cramps, disturbance in eye movement, anemia, and respiratory problems.

Wael Soliman, a director at the pharmaceutical company producing medicine to treat Gaucher's, said that the company was committed to providing Egyptian patients with the drugs they needed and to developing better methods for diagnosing the disease.