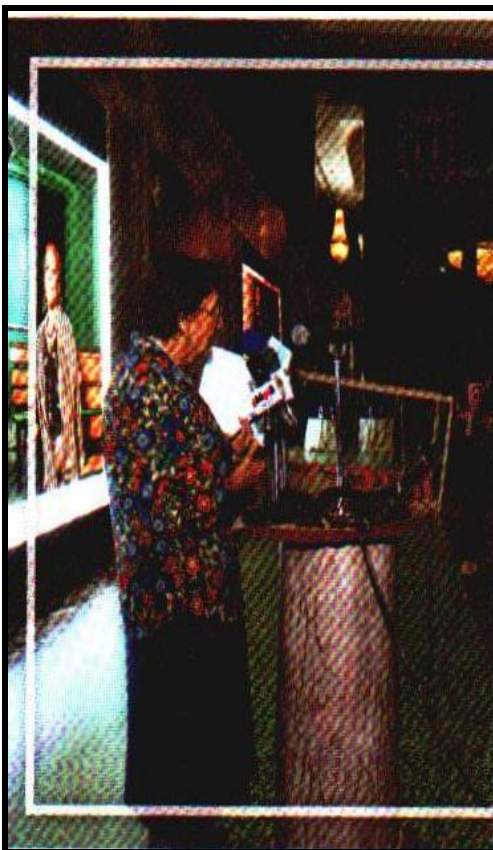


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The Minister of Health, Novartis Launch Second Scientific Symposium for Developing Thalassemia Healthcare Treatment Options

Under the auspices of the Minister of Health and in cooperation with Novartis, the Second Symposium for the Development of Thalassemia Treatment Options kicked off its proceedings. The Symposium covers the latest developments in the treatment and prevention of Thalassemia, a disease which Egypt has the highest rates of globally.

Dr. Mona Hamdy, Professor of Hematology and Pediatrics at Cairo University, noted that Specialist Medical Councils have amended treatment codes for Thalassemia patients to provide them with the best healthcare services possible. According to Dr. Amal Beshlawi, Professor of Pediatric Hematology at Cairo University, Egypt is one of the countries with the highest incidence of Thalassemia, with rates of up to 9%, where more than 150 children are born with the disease annually in Egypt. Treatment of this disease hinges on continuous and periodic blood transfusions, which result in the accumulation of iron in the body's vital organs such as the liver and heart, and may lead to an enlarged spleen that in some cases has to be surgically removed. "The accumulation of iron requires the use of drugs to reduce its high rates in the body's vital organs. In the past, treatment was through a drug injected into the patient from one to eight hours. Now innovative oral drugs such as Deferasirox constitute a breakthrough in the treatment."