

PRESS CLIPPING SHEET

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Novartis Pharma, MoH hold 1st hematology forum to celebrate 10 years

THE first scientific hematology forum was held on Thursday, December 26, 2019, to mark the tenth anniversary of the co-operation protocols in the area of hematology treatment established between the Egyptian Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Health Insurance Organisation (HIO), and Novartis Pharma.

This joint collaboration marks a new era of vision and goal harmonisation to provide health services and treatment that can improve the lives of thousands of patients. The forum brought together representatives from the HIO and the MoH, along with top hematologists who discussed the causes and genetic factors at the root of blood diseases, and the latest treatments available for patients affected.

Dr Emad Kazem, HIO Chairman and the Specialised Medical Councils showcased the MoH's accomplishments in this domain and its future plans. The forum also highlighted inspiring treatment success stories of patients and the importance of psychological and social support.

The forum is part of the successful and ongoing co-operation between Novartis and the MoH, said Sherif Amin, the head of Novartis Oncology Unit (Egypt -Tunisia -Morocco).

"The company's vision and commitment to patients and healthcare providers are reflected in its unre-



mitting efforts in the fields of scientific research, drug development, and the improvement of treatment options for patients in general and cancer patients in particular," Amin said.

"Our role in improving patient care, including medical and psychological support, with the help of hematology professors and in co-operation with the HIO and the MoH, so that patients can have access to high-quality, comprehensive treatments that help them lead normal lives. Reimagining medicine by providing the latest scientific discoveries and innovative developments, is part of our overall commitment to patients and healthcare professionals," Amin explained.

The forum highlighted the importance of the co-operation between Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML) patients and their doctors in order to set appropriate treatment goals and plans.

Mohamed Abdel Moety, Professor of Oncology and Hematology, explained that CML is a type of

cancer that begins in certain blood-forming cells of the bone marrow.

CML causes an increased number of leukocytes (white blood cells) in the blood. The disease develops relatively slowly, and the majority of patients are only diagnosed in the chronic stage of the disease, with many remaining in this chronic stage for years without the disease progressing further.

Ashraf Elghandour, Professor of Hematology at the Faculty of Medicine, Alexandria University, discussed advances in CML treatment, which have demonstrated sustained responses in patients, largely improving overall survival indicators and increasing patients' life expectancy to normal rates.

The forum also focused on thalassemia, with Dr Amal Al-Beshlawy, Professor of Pediatrics and Hematology at Abu Al-Reish University Hospital and the head of the Egyptian Thalassemia Association, explaining that iron overload is one of the major issues faced by Thalassemia patients due to regular blood transfusions over an extended period of time.

The HIO seeks to provide the best and most comprehensive service for Thalassemia patients such as securing safe blood for their transfusions, as well as the most advanced iron chelation treatment which have demonstrated their effectiveness and ease of use for all ages.