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<b>PUBLICATION:</b>	<b>Egyptian Gazette</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14-February-2016</b>
<b>COUNTRY:</b>	<b>Egypt</b>
<b>CIRCULATION:</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>TITLE :</b>	<b>Hearing impairment a problem for many</b>
<b>PAGE:</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>ARTICLE TYPE:</b>	<b>NGO News</b>
<b>REPORTER:</b>	<b>Staff Report</b>

# Hearing impairment a problem for many

**BETWEEN** one and six people in a thousand have a hearing impairment and 50 per cent of them have severe hearing impairment, said Professor Mohamed el Shazli, Ear, Nose and Throat specialist at Kasr al Aini School of Medicine.

He said there were several reasons for this. Amongst them, endogamy, or marriage within a narrow group, and lack of attention to the mother's health during pregnancy.

He was speaking during the first international conference on cochlear ear implant held in Cairo recently and organised by the Cochlear Ear Implant Unit at Kasr al Aini School of Medicine.

Surgeons in the congress said that cochlear implant procedures had been used successfully for over 30 years. They stressed this procedure was most effective



**TAMER** el Shahat, Med-EL representative, (1<sup>st</sup> L), Dr Ahmed Sameh Fareed (2<sup>nd</sup> L), Dr Ingeborg Hochmair, Dr Mohamed el Shazli, are attending a conference held in Cairo on Cochlear ear Implant.

tive when done for children ranging from the ages of one to five years old.

According to the world Health Organisation (WHO), hearing loss

affects 1.2 million children in the region. Thus far, the growth of awareness has led to an increase of 1,400 patients in 2015

from 122 patients in 2010, according to

Dr. Ingeborg Hochmair, the Founder of the MED-EL Company.

Dr el Shazli spoke of the prevalence of severe hearing impairment in the Upper Egyptian governorates. He said that there were a number of procedures that should be taken into consideration, such as IQ tests, in the rehabilitation of a child. He pointed out that 32 approved centres are being established to carry out cochlear ear implants and that this procedure should be done before the age of five.

Professor Ahmed Sameh Fareed, Ear, Nose, and Throat specialist, said that 1,600 cochlear ear implant surgeries had been done for children in the various governorates.

He said that the Health Insurance System had contributed LE 90,000 to the costs of the surgery, which was worth

LE 120,000. The rest was paid for by contributions from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

According to a survey by MED-EL, 84 per cent of Egyptians believe that education and literacy are important factors for patients and their families in deciding to seek treatment.

Failure to spread awareness and educate society on the issue may lead to a lifetime of silence for many suffering from hearing loss, according to Tamer el-Shahat Med-EL representative.

The congress highlighted MED-EL's plan for raising awareness through partnerships to reach remote areas in the country, which have limited access to healthcare services. It also called for other private sector companies to contribute to the cause through donations.