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Egypt keeps a pace with global efforts to fight chronic myeloid leukemia (CML)

In collaboration with Ain Shams University School Hospital, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Qasr El Aini Hospital, and the Alexandria University Hospital, Novartis Pharma hosted Dr. Pierre Laneuville, professor of Medicine and Oncology at McGill University and former head of the university hospital's Hematology Unit, to discuss the potential of suspending treatment in some chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) treatment-free remission (TFR) cases, based on positive response and thorough medical follow-up. About 14 million new cancer cases are diagnosed annually worldwide, with CML representing 15% of all leukemia cases detected.

Novartis' initiative, which aims to help tackle cancer and improve patients' quality of life, spanned visits to the four aforementioned hospitals, with Dr. Laneuville sharing promising data on the possible suspension of treatment and the transformation of CML from a fatal to a chronic and potentially curable disease. The first session held at Ain Shams University, included a meeting between the departments of Internal Medicine and Hematology, with a number of Cairo University professors joining their Ain Shams peers. The second session, held at the NCI, involved the institute's hematology professors and consultants,



while the third took place during the Second International Alexandria Hematology Conference.

"CML incidence rates fluctuate between 1.5 and 2 per 100,000 people annually, but the good news is that treatment has witnessed significant developments over the past three years," said Dr. Mohamed Azzazy, professor of Internal Medicine and Hematology at Ain Shams University. "The advances are based on several pillars: exceptionally accurate and rapid diagnosis facilitating patient treatment and follow-up; the availability of alternatives to chemotherapy that can precisely target disease-causing genes (Philadelphia chromosome), which improved response rates with minimal complications and enabled patients to switch medications. Over the past year, promising studies have shown that intensive treatment can help patients successfully suspend treatment."