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Egyptian Society for Cardiology holds heart failure seminar at National Heart Institute

Study reveals Egyptian men are twice as likely as women to suffer from heart failure, and nearly 60% of patients are smokers

On occasion of World Heart Failure Day, the Egyptian Society for Cardiology (EgSC) held a patient education seminar at the National Heart Institute (NHI). Nearly 150 patients participated at the event focused on this serious cardiac condition, which could affect nearly 1 in every 5 people worldwide.

"Heart failure affects nearly 23 million people worldwide, a number that is expected to further rise as the population ages. It is also the most common cause of hospitalisation in patients over 65 years of age," said Dr Magdy Abdel Hamid, Professor of Cardiology at Cairo University. "In Egypt incidence rates continue to rise due to the widespread prevalence of significant risk factors including cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Patient education is crucial in light of this fact and coupled with a serious lack of awareness."

Dr Abdel Hamid explained: "Heart failure causes more deaths than some of the most advanced cancers such as breast and bowel cancer. Around 40%-50% of hospitalised heart failure patients are at risk of death within 5 years of diagnosis."

He explained that common warning signs include severe breathlessness, coughing or wheezing, edema, fatigue, lack of appetite or nausea, impaired cognitive functions and an elevated heart rate.

"Heart failure is a debilitating and potentially life-threatening condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood around the body. In most cases this happens because the heart muscle

weakens over time or becomes too stiff," said Dr Bassem Sobhy, Professor of Cardiology at the National Heart Institute. "Heart failure can develop at any age but becomes more common with increasing age. Globally, around 1% of people under 65 years of age have heart failure, with the incidence rising to 7% among 75-84 year olds and reaching 15% in people older than 85."

"This seminar is one of many steps we are taking to raise awareness of heart failure in Egypt where it is direly needed," said Dr Mahmoud Hassanein, Professor of Cardiology at Alexandria University. "A two-year nationwide study implemented by Egyptian Society of Cardiology (EgSC) in cooperation with the European Society of Cardiology, and over 2,145 patients enrolled, revealed that the disease affects men twice as much as women. It also revealed that Egyptian heart failure patients are affected by the disease 10-13 years younger than their European counterparts, and that nearly 60% of patients are smokers."

Dr Nasser Taha, Head of the Cardiology and Intensive Care Unit at Minia University School of Medicine said: "There are two types of heart failure, one due to weak myocardial contraction and the other, rarer type due to weak myocardial expansion. Regarding the second type of heart failure, medication only works to improve symptoms."

During the seminar patients learned about lifestyle changes to improve disease management. These include weight loss or maintenance, giving up smoking, tracking daily fluid intake, avoiding or limiting caffeine intake, eating a heart-healthy diet, being physically active, managing stress, monitoring your blood pressure and getting adequate rest.