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### Novartis Egypt Launches First-Of-Its-Kind Migraine Preventative Drug in the Egyptian Market

Novartis Pharma S.A.E (Novartis Egypt) organized a press conference to unveil a leading treatment for migraine prevention as well as raise awareness of the disease, its symptoms and causes. The conference was attended by several senior professors of neurology to discuss the burdens of migraines, the traditional treatments available to patients, and the importance of the new treatment in alleviating their suffering.

Prof. Mohamed Osama Abdel-Ghani, Professor of Neurology at Ain Shams University and Head of the Headache Chapter of the Egyptian Society: "Migraine is a neurological disease with debilitating neurological symptoms. It is characterized by a severe, throbbing, recurring pain, usually on one side of the head, with both sides affected at a rate of about 1 in 3.<sup>4</sup> Migraine headaches are commonly experienced concomitant or subsequent to certain visual disturbances, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, extreme sensitivity to sound, light, touch and smell, and tingling or numbness in the extremities or face.<sup>6</sup> About 25% of migraine sufferers also have a visual disturbance called an aura, which usually lasts less than an hour.<sup>4</sup>"

"Migraine affects more than 10% of the global population<sup>19</sup> and is two to three times more common in women than in men. Research suggests that 3,000 migraine attacks occur every day for each million of the general population.<sup>9</sup> The disease is most common between the ages of 25 and 55,"<sup>4</sup> he added.

Referring to the opinion poll, "the prevalence of primary headache disorders in Fayoum, Egypt," Dr. Abdel-Ghani said: "More than 60% of respondents stated that they did not seek medical advice for their headaches, with the percentage higher in rural areas. The prevalence of symptomatic migraines reached 17.3% and peaked in middle age according to the survey."<sup>20</sup>

"Though migraine causes are not understood, genetics and environmental factors appear to play a role. Migraines may be caused by changes in the brainstem and its interactions with the trigeminal nerve, a major pain pathway.<sup>4</sup> Clinical studies have proven that the calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP) plays an important and active role in causing a migraine attack."<sup>24</sup> Dr. Abdel-Ghani noted.

"For a long time – between 1990 and 2016 to be exact – migraines were classified globally as the second leading cause of disability<sup>23</sup>. More than 90% of those who suffer from migraines are unable to work or lead normal lives,<sup>6</sup> and up to 46% of migraine patients visit emergency rooms for treatment.<sup>22</sup> Studies show that migraine with aura is associated with a twofold increased risk of ischemic stroke.<sup>21</sup> In addition to that, migraine patients are at a greater risk of developing anxiety and/or depression than non-sufferers,<sup>3</sup> and the disease is also associated with a high economic and societal burden."<sup>7</sup> Dr. Abdel-Ghani said.

Prof. Maged AbdelNasser, Professor and Head of Neurology, Kasr Al Ainy and General Secretary of the Egyptian Society of Neurology, Psychiatry and Neurosurgery, said: "Today we are thrilled to announce the launch of the first preventive treatment for episodic and chronic migraine, Erenumab, in the Egyptian market, a drug recognized as one of the best inventions of 2018, by TIME Magazine."<sup>14</sup>

"Clinical studies have shown that Erenumab reduced monthly migraine attacks by 75%. Additionally, more than a quarter of participants no longer suffer from monthly headache attacks,<sup>13,16</sup> which has helped patients regain their ability to carry out daily activities normally.<sup>14</sup> Erenumab has achieved rapid onset of action



within the first weeks of treatment<sup>17</sup> and it brings a new hope to migraine patients for a highly effective treatment without experiencing severe side effects.<sup>19</sup>

"Migraine remains undiagnosed and undertreated in at least 50% of patients.<sup>5</sup> Fewer than 50% of migraine patients are satisfied with their current treatment and the majority are self-medicate using non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication and do not seek medical help,"<sup>2</sup> Dr. AbdelNasser added.

"Existing preventive therapies for migraines have been repurposed from other indications and are often associated with poor tolerability and a lack of efficacy, with high discontinuation rates of up to 70% among migraine patients.<sup>17</sup> Current figures suggest only 3 to 13% of migraine patients use preventative treatment,"<sup>17</sup> he noted.

"A new approach to treatment has recently made waves. Erenumab is a monoclonal antibody, a drug made from immune system cells that blocks the activity of certain proteins in the body.<sup>12</sup> Erenumab is autoinjected into the fatty part of the skin of the belly (abdomen), thigh, or back of upper arm once every four weeks," Dr. AbdelNasser said.

"Novartis is committed to the discovery of new ways to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need," Dr. Gehan Ramadan, Chief Scientific Officer, Novartis Egypt said, "in addition to that, we work to continuously advance our position within the medical community as a pioneering science partner with shared goals."

"Neuroscience and bringing innovative treatments to patients suffering from neurological conditions is a top priority for Novartis," Dr. Ahmed El Hofy, Business Franchise Head - Neuroscience & Ophthalmology (NSO) at Novartis Egypt said, "and we are committed to supporting patients and physicians in multiple disease areas including migraine and to working with the migraine community to improve care for people living with the disease. In 2019, Novartis Egypt collaborated with the Egyptian Society for Neurology and Psychiatry and Neurology (ESNPN) to launch the first ever social media channel on Facebook - #BalashSuda3 - to raise public awareness about different kinds of headaches, their causes and their treatment options, with a special focus on migraines."