

PRESS CLIPPING SHEET

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Novartis launches novel treatment for adult patients with SPMS in Egypt

Novartis Pharma SAE announced on Tuesday the launch of a novel treatment indicated for adult patients in Egypt with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS).

The event took place in cooperation with the MS Chapter of the Egyptian Society of Neurology Psychiatry and Neurosurgery (ESNPN) and the Egyptian Society of MS to raise the community's awareness of this novel treatment that has shown effectiveness in delaying disease deterioration for SPMS patients.

"MS has been categorised as the most common immunological demyelinating disease to affect the central nervous system. It is characterised by inflammatory and neurodegenerative processes leading to compromised vision, disability, and cognitive impairment," said Dr Magd Fouad Zakaria — Professor of Neurology at Ain Shams University and President of the Egyptian Society of MS.

"Given its progressive nature, almost 60% of people with MS require walking assistance within 20 years of disease onset. Our experience — and the global consensus — is that a timely diagnosis, early treatment, and innovative therapies can reduce the disabling progress of the disease, allowing patients to lead as normal a life as possible for as long as possible."

Zakaria added that healthcare for MS patients has undergone significant development since the Egyptian government's decision to bear the costs of treatment in 2015. Intense efforts have been made to improve the diagnosis and management of cases, including the establishment of medical MS units, which began as central units and were then expanded to cover the entire country. This has contributed to the achievement of a fundamental transformation in MS treatment in Egypt and to providing appropriate healthcare services for patients.

The government's decision to support the expenditures of disease-modifying drugs (DMDs), establish MS units, and implement MS case registration and develop statistics for the disease in Egypt, as well as participate in global clinical trials and publish research in specialised medical journals, has led to unanimous praise by specialists treating the disease.

It has helped underline the importance of early diagnosis in MS and the comprehensive management of cases. This has led to the system of MS diagnosis and treatment in Egypt becoming not only one of the most successful systems in the entire region but demonstrated that it is able to compete with the highest global standards, establishing it as a unique example to follow for countries seeking to develop their diagnostic and treatment systems.

"MS can be segmented into relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS), secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS), and primary progressive multiple sclerosis. Our focus today is on SPMS," said Dr. Maged Abdel Nasser — Professor of Neurology at Cairo University, Head of the MS Chapter, and Head of the PanArab Union of Neurological Societies.

"MS does not only represent a burden on patients and caregivers; as a relatively 'young' disease with an average age of onset of 20 to 40 it has a significant impact on society as a whole. Novartis has been committed to supporting MS patients in different disease stages with a legacy that extends for nearly 10 years since the launch of the first HET for RRMS patients. We have since supported more than 5,000 Egyptian patients and counting. Today, the newly introduced treatment represents hope for SPMS patients who, until now, did not have treatment," said Jamal Habash — CPO Head of Novartis Egypt.

"We aspire that this new hope for SPMS treatment can help change the conversation about progressing MS and expand possibilities for patients and their caregivers. We are working closely with all stakeholders to ensure that eligible Egyptian patients can benefit from this treatment as quickly as possible," said Gehan Ramadan — Chief Scientific Officer at Novartis Egypt.

"We are committed to open dialogue with all our stakeholders, who are key partners in our decision-making throughout the medicine's lifecycle, helping us to develop better drugs for patients with unmet needs," said Karim Youssef, Neuroscience and Ophthalmology Franchise Head at Novartis Egypt.