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PUBLICATION:	Daily News
DATE:	03-May-2018
COUNTRY:	Egypt
CIRCULATION:	80,000
TITLE :	Second Scientific Symposium for Developing Thalassemia Healthcare Treatment Options
PAGE:	06
ARTICLE TYPE:	Agency-Generated News
REPORTER:	Staff Report
AVE:	11,160

Second Scientific Symposium for Developing Thalassemia Healthcare Treatment Options

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and in cooperation with Novartis, the Second Symposium for the Development of Thalassemia Treatment Options kicked off its proceedings. The symposium covers the latest developments in the treatment and prevention of Thalassemia, a disease that Egypt has the highest rates of globally.

Mona Hamdy, a professor of haematology and paediatrics at Cairo University, noted that specialist medical councils have amended treatment codes for thalassemia patients in order to provide them with the best healthcare services possible, especially under the recent economic changes. She added that since September 2017, all financial treatment allowances for drugs and medical supplies that include blood transfusions and treatment have been raised from EGP 2,500 to EGP 12,500 every six months (EGP 6,000 for blood transfusions and EGP 6,600 for treatment) since the government's decision to increase



state spending on medical coverage.

Hamdy applauded the research project conducted by four different universities and their governorates in Zagazig, Tanta, Alexandria, and Mansoura, which brought to light the actual number of thalassemia patients in Egypt. She also highlighted the importance of establishing thalassemia treatment centres in all of Egypt's governorates.

Speaking on prevention methods of thalassemia, Hamdy stated, "there has been a giant leap in the diagnosis of the disease. Prenatal testing can determine whether or not a foetus has thalassemia and its severity. For instance, drawing a sample of the amniotic fluid makes an early

abortion possible if the test is positive. Also, if the parents already have a child with thalassemia and are planning for another one, IVF can prevent the reoccurrence of thalassemia, and the marrow can be used in the treatment of the older child's disease."

Sherif Amin, head of oncology at Novartis Egypt and Libya, said that this symposium reaffirms the commitment of Novartis towards thalassemia patients and the significance of the joint efforts between the Ministry of Health and Novartis to improve the level of care that thalassemia patients receive through the creation of an integrated medical team of doctors, pharmacists, nursing staff, and blood banks.