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Scientific Symposium under auspices of Minister of Health: developing thalassemia treatment options

The Egyptian Ministry of Health is committed to the improvement of health-care services in Egypt and to this effect held a thalassemia-patient-specific symposium in collaboration with Novartis Pharmaceuticals. The two-day symposium discussed new therapy developments and advanced treatments that have helped reduce patient suffering, as well as preventative measures for Egypt, where the disease has one of the highest

global prevalence rates.

Dr. Sherif Amin, head of oncology at Novartis in Egypt and Libya, emphasised that this symposium was part of the joint efforts between the Ministry of Health and Novartis to improve the care thalassemia patients receive and sought to help establish an integrative medical team of doctors, pharmacists, nursing staff, and blood banks to care for them. Its objective was also to highlight thousands of pa-

tients' need for medical and psychological support with the help of haematology professors at Cairo, Ain Shams, and Alexandria universities and the Egyptian Thalassemia Association so that patients may have access to top-quality, comprehensive treatment and lead normal lives.

"Thalassemia is a type of anaemia that has a largely genetic component, as the chances of giving birth to a child suffering from the disease reaches 25%

if both the father and mother are carriers. Egypt sadly boasts a 9% carrier rate—one of the highest globally. Thalassemia patients require regular blood transfusions to replenish red blood cells that have been destroyed and maintain acceptable levels of blood haemoglobin, but this may lead to other health complications," Dr Amal Al Beshlawy, professor of haematology and pediatrics at Cairo University said.