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World Heart Failure Day marked

MORE than 25 states around the world have marked World Heart Failure Day, including Egypt, which held a seminar at the National Heart Institute in Cairo last week.

The disease affects 26 million people globally, coming next to other serious disorders, such as cancer which afflicts 32 million people and AIDS, 34 million.

According to cardiologists, the disease is called heart failure because it is due to failure of the heart muscle to provide all the body organs with blood.

Dr Mahmoud Hassanin, professor of cardiology, Alexandria University, attributes the disease to lack of adequate blood reaching the heart muscle. He said people with angina or clots need swift hospital treatment to dissolve the clots so as to avoid heart muscle damage.

Other causes are negligence in treating hypertension or affliction with a viral infection. Risk factors leading to heart failure are hypertension, diabetes, obesity and smoking.

Symptoms of heart failure, Dr Hassanin said, were fatigue even after little effort, swelling of the feet, as a result fluid retention in the body, loss of sleep, panting



DR MAHMOUD Hassanin (R), Dr Bassem Sobhi (C) and Dr Magdi Abdul Hamid (L) during a seminar held at the National Heart Institute in Cairo marking World Heart Failure Day.

and waking up at night more than once seeking a source of air. Other clues are rapid and irregular heart beats and loss of appetite.

According to Dr Magdi Abdul Hamid, the mortality rate due to heart failure is double the mortality rate of breast cancer. Some 40 to 50 per cent of heart failure patients who have been hospitalised may die within five years of diagnosis of the

disease. He said heart failure can be prevented through controlling risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol levels and getting rid of obesity.

How to live with the disease?

Dr Abdul Hamid said living with the disease could be achieved through a change of life style and reducing salt in food. The

patient should understand how to deal with diuretics, knowing when to lessen the dose.

Otherwise he or she should speedily go to a hospital in the event of feeling faint, or if his/her phlegm is accompanied by blood, or if there is a swelling of the feet and irregular heart beats.

A patients with heart failure can jog or swim if his condition is stable. However, they are not allowed to practise any hart sport if they cannot exert any extra effort.

Dr Bassem Sobhi said that heart failure is a chronic disease and needs following up constantly, though there is a breakthrough in medications for the disease which have succeeded in changing the patient's quality of life.

He stressed the importance of raising the patient's awareness of the need to take the medicine on time. There were, he said, two groups of medications that have succeeded in raising the efficiency of the heart muscle.

The first one is known as the renin-angiotensin- aldosterone system (RAAS) inhibitors. The second group is called beta blockers. They are the corner stone in treating the heart muscle. They help save energy and improve the heart's function.



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