

PRESS CLIPPING SHEET

PUBLICATION:	Egyptian Gazette
DATE:	5-April-2015
COUNTRY:	Egypt
CIRCULATION:	60,000
TITLE :	Big Breakthrough against Leukaemia
PAGE:	05
ARTICLE TYPE:	Agency Generated News
REPORTER:	Staff Report
AVE:	7,620

Big breakthrough against Leukaemia

LATEST advances in the diagnosis and treatment of leukaemia, focusing on the treatment of Chronic Myeloid leukaemia (CML), which affects bone marrow hematopoietic cells, was tackled during the 2nd annual conference of the Egyptian Hemato-Oncology Group (EHOG) held in Cairo last week.

"CML is a malignant disease which affects bone marrow hematopoietic cells, then spreads to the blood and potentially reaches other parts of the body. The annual incidence rate for it is around 1.5 per cent in every 100,000 people, with an average patient age of 40," said Dr Ashraf El Ghandour, Professor of the Haematology, Alexandria University.

It is important to emphasise the significant successes achieved in the treatment of this disease.

"Over a time-span of only ten years, targeted treatments have transformed CML from a fatal to a curable disease," he said.

The first generation drug, "Glivec," with the active ingredient "Imatinib", was the first drug that offered patients hope for the treatment, while the second

generation "Tasigna", with the active ingredient, "Nilotinib," represented a major leap forward, helping to improve patient survival rates by between 45 and 85 per cent, compared to first generation medications.

Dr Hossam Kamel, Professor of Haematology at the National Cancer Institute, added: "The last 50 years have seen a remarkable transformation in the treatment of CML. Whereas, in the past it was only treated using bone marrow surgery, now it is completely curable using targeted treatments." He explained that CML results from a mutation in a single gene, BCR-ABL, which leads to the production of the tyrosine kinase protein. This makes it simple for therapies to target this gene only, whereas other diseases are a result of multiple gene mutations, lowering the chances of a cure.

He said, "Second generation targeted therapies have prompted an unprecedented increase in cure rates; the number of CML patients who undergo bone marrow transplant surgeries has dropped from 34 per cent to under three per cent in the last five years."