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'Count Me' survey results out

A PRESS conference was held recently in Cairo to announce the results of the 'Count Me' survey done by the Breast Cancer Foundation of Egypt (BCFE), and one of the pharmaceutical companies working in the country.

The survey was carried out on a broad group of advanced breast cancer cases along with other such surveys in seven countries worldwide.

During the conference, Dr Ibtisam Saad El Din, Professor of Oncology, Cairo University, said that, "Women in Egypt are open and honest about their illness with family, friends and colleagues. They receive the necessary support from their personal relationships and the medical community. More than half of them, however, say that time ends that support.

Today, most women feel that no one empathises with their suffering. Two-thirds of Egyptian women with advanced breast cancer,

67 per cent, say they generally feel that no one understands what they are going through, and more than two out of five women with advanced breast cancer here, some 45 per cent, feel isolated.

Dr Mohsen Mokhtar, Professor of Oncology, said that six out of 10, some 60 per cent of women, reported that it was difficult to get specific information on advanced breast cancer. Most women, 74 per cent, think it is necessary to have readily available information on managing side effects and 62 per cent want treatment options. He said, however, that, almost all Egyptian women reported that they were somewhat satisfied with their conversations with health care providers about advanced breast cancer (HCPs), but few were fully satisfied. The survey indicated that most women who communicate regularly with their (HCPs) were more

optimistic about the future, and more than eight in 10, 81 per cent of women prefer to have more time to discuss their needs when visiting their HCPs.

Dr Ola Khorshid, Professor of Oncology and Malignant Hematology, said that "Despite the fact that almost all women with advanced breast cancer here were currently undergoing treatment, the survey revealed that more than three-quarters of them, 76 per cent, believe their treatment options are limited, and almost all of them, 88 per cent, believe there is a need for new treatments for advanced breast cancer. The majority, 62 per cent, also need more information on the treatment options used in the medical community.

"Many women here," she said, "are taking a preemptive approach to learning about advanced breast cancer. But when it comes to care, only



Dr Ibtisam Saad El Din



Dr Mohsen Mokhtar

half feel comfortable in making decisions, as evidenced by the survey results that show almost two-thirds of women, 66 per cent independently seek information on advanced breast cancer and nearly nine out of 10, which equals 88 per cent, say their HCP is the decision maker." According to Dr Mona Magdi, Professor of Oncology,

Mansoura University, among the survey's key findings, in terms of the impact of the disease on their lives, 24 per cent of women with advanced breast cancer are currently employed. The majority of them, 66 per cent, reported that their illness adversely affected their ability to work, which affects their ability to earn.