

## QATAR RESEARCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ANNOUNCES FIRST DOCTORS OF PHILOSOPHY IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

*Two Women Become First Doctors To Graduate From Programme After Working On Cancer Research*

**Doha, Qatar, 9 January 2015:** Qatar Research Leadership Program (QRLP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), has announced that its first two Doctors of Philosophy in Biomedical Sciences have graduated following their outstanding work on cancer research.

Dr Hamda Al Thawadi and Dr Halema Al Farsi graduated with honours from QRLP, a programme dedicated to science and research and developed by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF). The innovative initiative aims to develop and nurture Qatar's human capacity in R&D in a bid to unlock human potential and transform the country into a knowledge-based society.

Dr Al Thawadi's work highlights the effects microparticles from ovarian cancer have in initiating the formation of blood vessels that promote the growth of tumour cells. Her research identified that targeting these microparticles could be of therapeutic use in treating cancer in the future. Dr Al Thawadi's work was published in the *Oncotarget Journal*.

Also focused on ovarian cancer research, Dr Al Farsi chose a very original approach, including computer simulation, to look at genes that are protected against mutation and to discover pathways that are essential for tumour survival. Her work is in preparation for publication.

Dr Dirar Khoury, Executive Director of Research Coordination and Special Initiatives, and Acting Executive Director of Education, Training, and Development at QF R&D, congratulated the two graduates saying, "Dr Al Thawadi and Dr Al Farsi are two outstanding individuals who exceeded our hopes and have set the standard of achievement extremely high at QRLP. Their success is a reflection of our investments to become a knowledge-based society, filled with innovative people and ideas that will take us forward."

"The future of scientific research here in Qatar is fortunate to be able to draw upon the knowledge that both doctors have accumulated in their studies. Their backgrounds in medicine, biomedical laboratory technology, and scientific research fit well into a future vision of beating cancer and similar diseases. That is why cancer research is part of the Qatar National Research Strategy, and why it is essential that we, as a society, support the brightest aspiring scientists to come up with the most promising ways of beating cancer," Dr Khoury added.

Both doctors received their degrees from the University of Paris-Sud (Paris 11) in France, while performing their research in collaboration with Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar, a QF partner university.

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### **About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)**

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) is charged with the Qatar National Research Strategy, dedicated to making Qatar a leading center for research and development excellence and innovation. QF R&D is home to Qatar National Research Fund, a leading scientific research funding organization, and Qatar Science & Technology Park, an international hub for technology innovation and commercialization.

### **Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organisation that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. QF was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation's Chairperson. QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>