

WORLD INNOVATION SUMMIT FOR HEALTH TACKLES RISING PROBLEM OF DEMENTIA THROUGH GLOBAL AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

WISH appoints Ellis Rubinstein, President of The New York Academy of Sciences, to lead expert working group and local specialists including Dr Mohammed Albanna, who is spearheading the development of Older Adult Mental Health Services at Hamad Medical Corporation

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Doha, Qatar: In order to tackle the growing prevalence of dementia, the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), a global initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF), has appointed a Forum working group of global experts to engage with innovation leaders in the Gulf region.

Dementia is a syndrome in which there is deterioration in cognitive function (i.e. the ability to process thought) beyond what might be expected from normal ageing. It affects memory, thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday activities.

It is also one of the major causes of disability and dependency among older people worldwide. The World Health Organisation estimates that 35.6 million people worldwide had dementia in 2010. This figure is projected to almost double to 65.7 million in 2030, and rise even further to 115.4 million in 2050. The Middle East is predicted to experience a 125 per cent increase in dementia in the next 20 years¹.

Mr Ellis Rubinstein, President of the New York Academy of Sciences, has been announced as Chair of the new WISH Forum on dementia. This expert working group is tasked with producing an evidence-based report for policymakers to be presented at the next WISH Summit in Doha on 17-18 February 2015.

The WISH Summit will play a key role in addressing and trying to find solutions to the most pressing global health issues, including the growing prevalence of dementia. The Summit is in line with Qatar Foundation's mission of launching initiatives as part of the nation's drive towards fundamental healthcare development and reform.

Mr Rubinstein will lead a multidisciplinary team of distinguished experts, drawn from around the world to research and provide recommendations about the prevention and treatment of dementia, one of seven Forum streams to be discussed at WISH.

¹ http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/75263/1/9789241564458_eng.pdf

In the coming months, the Forum will explore a wide range of dementia-related issues, including an overview of the current burden of dementia and projections for likely future scenarios; the current barriers and challenges to addressing dementia; and innovative solutions, including raising public awareness, care innovations, financial models and regulatory frameworks.

Mr Rubinstein said: “I am very pleased to be leading an expert group charged with developing evidence that will support new policies around dementia. We must rethink how we can accelerate best practices. I believe that together with my Forum partners we will find the new evidence and perspectives to make a difference. Our ultimate goal: to help prevent and improve the quality of treatment for people with dementia. The Forum provides a unique opportunity to make a significant difference.”

Professor The Lord Darzi of Denham, Executive Chair of WISH and Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College of London, said: “I am personally delighted to have a forum that focuses on the timely and growing issue of dementia. The exponential growth of this disease and the huge costs associated with treating it means dementia is a truly global priority. Together we must look at ways of offering earlier diagnosis, better patient care and robust policy planning for more effective treatment. It is imperative that we do all we can to improve the care offered to this incredibly vulnerable section of our society.”

WISH representatives met recently with Dr Mohammed Albanna, who has joined this vital Forum. Dr Albanna is a Consultant Psychiatrist in charge of Older Adult Services in Hamad Medical Corporation’s Psychiatry Department. Established in 2011, the Service offers home-based care to patients with dementia and other mental health problems and their families. This includes ‘family-focused care’ training and support for relatives.

Older Adult mental health services in Qatar are growing rapidly and are considered one of the best leading model services in the Arab gulf countries. The Service is organised according to WHO recommendations and meets the highest level of international standards of older adults care.

Dr Albanna said: “I welcome the inclusion of dementia in this year’s WISH Forum topics and look forward in particular to discussing the impact of social and demographic changes on our planning of older adult’s mental health care.

“Qatar, like other Arab gulf countries, has a specific socio-demographic structure where most of older adults with dementia live in their homes in the community. As we are seeing changes in family life and an increasing trend in people participating in the workforce, we want to ensure that we have enough available carers for older adults with dementia and mental illness in general.”

WISH Forum topics reflect healthcare challenges facing countries across the world, but are especially relevant to Qatar and the Gulf region. Recent research undertaken in Qatar estimates that 1 in 5 people experience a mental illness at any one time.

Launched in December 2013, the Qatar National Mental Health Strategy sets out a vision and 5-year plan to provide the best possible mental health services for its citizens, while changing attitudes towards mental illness. The Supreme Council of Health, Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation are the key healthcare partners in delivery of the Strategy.

Dr Salih Ali Al-Marri, Assistant Secretary General Assistant for Medical Affairs and Chair of the National Mental Health Strategy Implementation Committee, said: “We want to build a sustainable mental health system that not only meets the needs of our population now, but well into the future.

“This is why we are developing tailored community mental health services, including those for older people and their families. We look forward to learning from the global expertise brought to Qatar by WISH to help us all understand the health challenges we may face over time as our population ages.”

WISH is committed to supporting the development of a comprehensive, world-class healthcare system in Qatar, remaining closely aligned to the vision and mission of QF to unlock human potential and serve to underscore Qatar’s pioneering role as an emerging centre for healthcare innovation.

In addition to Dementia, the other research Forums to be presented at the 2015 Summit are: Communicating Complex Health Messages, Diabetes, Delivering Affordable Cancer Care, Universal Health Coverage, Patient Safety, and Mental Health and Well-being in Children and Young People.

For more information about the Forum, please visit <http://www.wish-qatar.org/2015-summit/forums/dementia>

For more information about the Qatar National Mental Health Strategy, *Changing Minds, Changing Lives* (2013-2018), please visit <http://www.sch.gov.qa/health-strategies/national-mental-health-strategy>

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About the World Innovation Summit for Health:

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) is a global healthcare community dedicated to capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices. WISH is an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, its Chairperson.

The inaugural WISH Summit took place in Doha in 2013 and convened more than 1,000 global healthcare leaders. Through annual Summits and a range of ongoing initiatives, WISH is creating a global community of leading innovators in healthcare policy, research and industry.

Together, they are harnessing the power of innovation to overcome the world's most urgent healthcare challenges and inspire other stakeholders to action.

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential:

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness the Father Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF carries out its mission through three strategic pillars: education, science and research, and community development. QF's education pillar brings world-class universities to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. Meanwhile, its science and research pillar builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. Finally, its community development pillar helps foster a progressive society while also 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 www.qf.org.qa. For more information about Qatar Foundation please contact our press office at: pressoffice@qf.org.qa



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World Innovation Summit for Health

An Initiative of Qatar Foundation

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