



كلية طب وايل كورنيل في قطر
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Member of Qatar Foundation

Press Release

WCMC-Q study finds Arab women at higher risk of aggressive breast cancer

Doha – September 22, 2013: Women in the Middle East often suffer with more aggressive forms of breast cancer than Western women, researchers at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar have discovered.

WCMC-Q's assistant dean for basic science curriculum, Dr. Lotfi Chouchane, was lead author of the research report. He said that Arab populations have some particularities in terms of cancer, especially breast cancer, and also that the clinical features of breast cancer among Arab women are different from other populations.

"Inflammatory breast cancer is the most lethal form of the disease and constitutes 1-2 per cent of all breast cancer tumors in the United States," said Dr. Chouchane. "But a higher proportion of cases are reported in Arab populations. For example in Tunisia, seven to 10 per cent of all breast cancer is inflammatory. Similarly, in a population-based study in the Gharbiah region of Egypt, inflammatory breast cancer was confirmed as more prevalent than in the United States, constituting up to 11 per cent as opposed to 1-2 per cent in the United States."

Breast cancer is a major health problem in both developed and developing countries and the research was published in the latest edition of The Lancet Oncology, an internationally respected medical journal. Co-authors were Dr. Konduru Sastry, a research associate in microbiology and immunology at WCMC-Q, and Dr. Hammouda Boussen from Tunisia.

The report finds that the incidence of breast cancer is lower in Arabic countries than in Europe and the United States but is rising fast. The report also finds breast cancers in women from Arab populations have different characteristics to those reported in women from the United States and Europe. At 48, the average age of presentation of breast cancer in Arab women is 10 years younger than patients in the US and Europe.

Office of Government
and Public Affairs
WCMC-Q
Education City
P.O. Box 24144
Doha, Qatar

Nesreen Al-Refai
Director
Phone: +974 4492 8650
Fax: +974 4492 8444
nma2005@qatar-med.cornell.edu

Richard Harris
Editor
Phone: +974 4492 8660
Fax: +974 4492 8444
rih2004@qatar-med.cornell.edu



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The Lancet Oncology is a peer-reviewed and edited journal that is recognized for providing a global, authoritative, and independent forum for the highest quality clinical oncology research and opinion. With an impact factor of 25.12, the journal ranks among the top three oncology journals worldwide, is the leading clinical research journal in oncology, and is in the top 0.5% of all scientific journals, of any discipline, in the world."

Dr. Chouchane said: "This report is going to be the reference for anybody who wants to undertake studies about breast cancer in Arab populations and researchers will refer to it because here we describe all the characteristics of breast cancer in Arab populations based on our own findings and based also on the literature what is found."

He added that the reduction of incidences of breast cancer and its mortality can be achieved with major efforts in screening and early detection,

"Although several awareness campaigns have been undertaken, no structured national programs exist for population mammography screening in Arab countries," Dr. Chouchane said.

"The cultural value of modesty and misconceptions about cancer, coupled with insufficient levels of education about breast cancer and difficulties in accessing healthcare facilities can often prohibit women from participating in breast screening. And this can lead to delayed detection."

He said breast cancer mortality could be reduced if the disease was detected at an early stage by the implementation of proper awareness and screening programs that would be possible in countries with sufficient resources. Dr. Chouchane also said that further research on cancer should be given priority in Arab countries.

Dr. Chouchane's study was supported by the Biomedical Research Program fund at WCMC-Q and by grants from the Qatar National Research Fund. The rapidly expanding Research

Office of Government
and Public Affairs
WCMC-Q
Education City
P.O. Box 24144
Doha, Qatar

Nesreen Al-Refai
Director
Phone: +974 4492 8650
Fax: +974 4492 8444
nma2005@qatar-med.cornell.edu

Richard Harris
Editor
Phone: +974 4492 8660
Fax: +974 4492 8444
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Department at WCMC-Q has established a state-of-the-art biomedical research program focused on tackling the most pressing health needs in Qatar and the region.

Cancer accounts for ten percent of all deaths in Qatar and the leadership of Qatar has moved to improve the healthcare of patients with the Supreme Council of Health establishing the National Cancer Strategy. WCMC-Q supports the mission of Qatar's National Cancer strategy that was launched in 2011 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Vice Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Health.

It was the first-ever initiative of its kind in the region to combat a disease. The cancer strategy is closely linked to the National Health Strategy (NHS). With an investment of more than QR2.2 billion, the strategy also includes a plan for refurbishment of Al Amal Hospital to establish National Center for Cancer Care and Research, and a new cancer hospital, over the next five years.

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About Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers pre-medical and medical courses leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments.

Through its biomedical research program, WCMC-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCMC-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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Nesreen Al-Refai
Director
Phone: +974 4492 8650
Fax: +974 4492 8444
nma2005@qatar-med.cornell.edu

Richard Harris
Editor
Phone: +974 4492 8660
Fax: +974 4492 8444
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med.cornell.edu



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For more info, please contact:

Hanan Lakkis

Media Relations Manager

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Mobile: +974 55536564

Direct Line: +974 44928661

hyl2004@qatar-med.cornell.edu

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and Public Affairs
WCMC-Q
Education City
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Director
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Editor
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