

### **Advances in stroke care discussed at WCM-Q Grand Rounds**

**Doha – July 4, 2016:** Recent advances in the management of acute stroke were discussed by a world-renowned neuroscientist in the most recent installment of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar's (WCM-Q) Grand Rounds.

Dr. Ashfaq Shuaib, Professor of Medicine and Neurology and Director of the Neuroscience Institute at Hamad Medical Corporation, gave a presentation to a full auditorium of physicians, researchers, students and fellow healthcare professionals at WCM-Q, where he explained the importance of recent advances in neuroimaging technologies, data showing rates of recovery and complications of stroke victims, and the need for hospitals to have dedicated stroke care units.

Dr. Shuaib, who is also Director of the Stroke Program at the University of Alberta in Canada, said: "The data shows us that if treatment is given within the first 90 minutes after stroke, then one in four patients will make a full recovery. If treatment is not given until three hours have passed, that number drops dramatically to just one in fourteen who will make a full recovery.

"For every minute that passes, the patient loses about two million brain cells. So you can see that it is absolutely crucial to treat patients who have suffered a stroke as soon as possible."

A stroke occurs when the brain's blood supply is suddenly cut off, causing brain cells to die very rapidly. There are two types of strokes: ischemic, which is when a blood clot stops the blood supply; and hemorrhagic, which is when one of the blood vessels supplying the brain bursts. Around 85 per cent of strokes are ischemic strokes.

Dr. Shuaib explained that a key technological advance in stroke care is the development of smaller and more portable CT scanners. CT scanners, which use a form of X-ray to allow doctors to see an image of the brain, are traditionally extremely large and heavy and cannot be moved once in situ in a hospital. Now, CT scanners that fit inside an ambulance are available, which have the potential to allow doctors to diagnose a stroke and begin treatment far earlier than was previously the case.

Dr. Shuaib said: "This is a very new technology and it is not yet widely available. I am pleased to say that last week we put in an order to have one in Doha, which makes us part of a very elite group of only about ten cities around the world where this technology is available."

Dr. Shuaib also explained that patients suffer far less complications if they are moved quickly from emergency care units to stroke wards. "These are very simple, low-tech and relatively low-cost units where the nursing staff concentrate all their attention on preventing complications," he said. "They have been shown to be extremely effective and a far better environment for preventing complications than a general emergency ward."

Concluding, Dr. Shuaib said research data had shown that making healthy lifestyle choices greatly reduced the risk of stroke. People who take regular exercise, do not smoke, do not have diabetes, have



low levels of harmful cholesterol and have blood pressure below 110/70 have very low risk of stroke, he said.

Dr. Sheila Qureshi, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry at WCM-Q, said: “We are delighted to have heard from Dr. Shuaib, who is one of the most gifted neuroscientists working today. A very large number of people have loved-ones who have been affected by stroke, and it is something that becomes more common with age, so it is extremely encouraging to hear that talented physicians are working hard to develop new ways to manage the condition and improve patient outcomes.”

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**Photos captions:**

Renowned neuroscientist Dr. Ashfaq Shuaib discussed advances in management of acute stroke at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar’s Grand Rounds.

**About Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar**

Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers a comprehensive six-year medical program 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, WCM-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCM-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.

**For more info, please contact:**

Hanan Lakkis  
Media Relations Manager  
Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar  
Mobile: +974 55536564  
Direct Line: +974 44928661  
hyl2004@qatar-med.cornell.edu

