

Qatar Foundation seeks to increase awareness of breast cancer among community

Doha, 19 November 2013 - As part of its 'Pink Ribbon Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign,' the Qatar Foundation Health, Safety, Security and Environment Directorate (HSSE) held an event yesterday to highlight the critical importance of early detection and diagnosis.

The campaign, which started in early November and will continue throughout the month, has been organised in collaboration with the Primary Health Care Corporation, Qatar Cancer Society, and Al Amal Hospital. It aims to provide women of all ages with comprehensive information about breast cancer risk factors and symptoms, which can lead to its early diagnosis and treatment.

During the event, Qatar Foundation hosted a series of informative lectures and workshops to ensure that women developed a crucial understanding of early detection and self-examination methods. In addition, participants were given an opportunity to attend presentations and learn about the inspirational journey of breast cancer survivors.

Dr Lamyia Bani-Murad, Health Manager at Qatar Foundation's HSSE Directorate, underscored the significance of educating women about all aspects of this prevalent disease.

She said, "Community development is one of the organisation's key pillars. By organising awareness campaigns, we are able to shed light on a pressing health care issue. Although this initiative is only taking place within Qatar Foundation, we know that one person can make a world of difference by sharing their knowledge and experience with others. This is why we are keen to inform and educate women at Qatar Foundation, because we are confident that they will spread this message among the wider Qatari community."

According to Dr Bani-Murad, statistics from 2010 to 2011 illustrate a 17 percent increase in the incidence of breast cancer in Qatar. With this in mind, she emphasised the fundamental role that early detection plays in the effective treatment of cancer and called on women to take immediate action in order to prevent future complications.

Dr Bani-Murad also praised the efforts of health care clinics and hospitals, including Hamad Medical Corporation, which provides a free breast cancer screening programme for all women aged 40 years and over.

“In general, I would recommend that women in their twenties schedule a regular medical check-up annually. However, these visits are absolutely essential for women over 40, including those who have been diagnosed with cancer in the past, or who have a family history of breast cancer. In such cases, women should focus their efforts on prevention and periodic testing, because early detection can result in a survival rate of 90 percent,” she said.

Dr Mahassen Sayed Hassan Okasha, Head of Health Education at the Qatar Cancer Society, echoed the same sentiments and encouraged women to take a proactive and positive approach to staying healthy.

Dr Okasha said, “We are thankful that Qatar Foundation has organised this awareness campaign. It is a testament to the organisation’s long-term vision and deep understanding of the risks faced by Qatar’s community. One of our key objectives is to deliver the most accurate information to people, since fear and ignorance tend to be the main reasons preventing discovery of cancer in its early stages.”

She added, “To achieve our goal of spreading awareness and making a difference, we hope to appeal to women at all stages of life. We have succeeded at creating a healthy level of concern, which has motivated more women to undergo regular check-ups. However, there is no need to be afraid or anxious, because 85 percent of the lumps found are benign. If women feel a change in their breasts, they need to go to their nearest health centre to conduct the necessary tests.”

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, and it is estimated that one in eight will develop the disease during their lifetime. Dr Okasha stresses that although relatively rare and more widespread among women, breast cancer in males can and does occur. “For every 100 women, there is one man diagnosed with breast cancer. It is important to refute the incorrect notion that the disease only occurs in women,” she warned.

Dr Hanan El-Awad, Primary Health Care Corporation Specialist Family Medicine, explained that this campaign is a chance to raise the collective voices to improve the general knowledge around cancer and to dismiss misconceptions about the disease. ‘Screening can help doctors to find some types of cancer because diagnosing cancer in its earlier stages often makes it easier to treat, meaning the chances of recovering are much better’, Dr El-Awad added.

“Breast examinations, clinical breast exams and screenings can save lives. Women who undergo breast cancer screening mammograms have demonstrated significantly reduced deaths from the disease”, she stated.

This campaign is part of an ambitious annual plan developed by Qatar Foundation's HSSE Directorate, which aims to address vital health and safety issues that can be of benefit to the greater community. The HSSE Directorate organised a breast cancer awareness campaign last year, which was also exceptionally successful. This year's event has seen increased participation from various centres and programmes under Qatar Foundation's umbrella, including the Academic Bridge Program, Qatar Academy, and Sidra Medical and Research Center.

The HSSE Directorate ensures a healthy, safe, and secure work and study environment for the Qatar Foundation community. It enhances the learning experience by providing services that support Qatar Foundation's goal of implementing world-class standards and best practices.

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Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization 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. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

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 commercializing 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.

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