

QATAR GENOME COMMITTEE APPOINTS LEADING GENETICIST AS PROGRAMME MANAGER

Doha, Qatar 29 November 2015: The Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) appointed Dr Said Ismail, an award-winning industry expert, as Qatar Genome Programme Manager, continuing efforts to improve the health of Qatar's future generations.

Incubated by Qatar Biobank, QGP was announced in 2013 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and Vice Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Health during the World Innovation Summit on Health (WISH) 2013.

The Qatar Genome Programme, currently in its pilot phase, differentiates itself from other disease-based research organisations in the region in that it is a population-based initiative using specimen and population samples gathered by Qatar Biobank. Managed by the Qatar Genome Committee, QGP uses expertise and equipment from Sidra Medical and Research Centre.

Qatar Biobank supports Qatar Foundation's mission to enhance national innovation and technology through medical research regarding prevalent health issues in Qatar. Through its collection of samples and information on the health and lifestyles of large numbers of the national population, Qatar Biobank is making vital medical research possible for scientists in Qatar, the region, and the world.

Dr Ismail, a Ph.D. graduate from the University of Oxford, brings over 20 years of experience in molecular biology, biotechnology, genetics and a focus on the screening and characterisation of disease related mutations in the Arab population, with specific emphasis on cancer and drug response to different types of the disease.

"It is an honour to be spearheading the Qatar Genome Programme in their efforts to advancing Qatar's medical profile. The power of our efforts in collaboration with Qatar Biobank may result in the prevention, early detection and treatment of prevalent diseases amongst the local population. Our work, with the collaboration of the Qatari community, will enable the development of personalised healthcare in Qatar, which is the future of medicine," said Dr Ismail.

In addition to his years of expertise in various fields, Dr Ismail is also the president and co-founder of the International Society on Aptamers, which brings together researchers and biotechnology companies working on aptamer nanotechnology from around the globe to an annual meeting in Oxford, UK. Dr Ismail is also an editorial board member across multiple international journals including Nucleic Acid Therapeutics, Journal of Molecular and Genetic Medicine and Frontiers in Chemical Biology.

As Head of the Biochemistry Department at the University of Jordan Faculty of Medicine located in Amman, Jordan, Dr Ismail was awarded the notable Abdul Hameed Shoman

Award for Arab Researchers in BioMedical Sciences in 2013 as an appreciation for his distinguished scientific work that led to raising awareness of issues of national priority on local, regional and international levels.

Dr Ismail was also awarded the Ali Mango Award established by the Hamdi Mango Center for Scientific Research (HMCSR) at the University of Jordan for distinguished research in medicine in 2012. The Award is granted to outstanding researchers in the fields of Science, Information Technology, Pharmacology, Dentistry, and Rehabilitation Science.

Dr Ismail was also previously Head of the Molecular Biology Research Laboratory at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Jordan, Director of Research at the Cell Therapy Centre at the University of Jordan as well as a member of the Jordan Advisory Board of the International Consortium for the American Society for Clinical Pathology International (ASCPi).

Image Caption:

Image 1: Recently appointed Qatar Genome Programme Manager, Dr Said Ismail

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About Qatar Genome Programme:

The Qatar Genome Programme is a population-based initiative using specimen and population samples to map the local population. Announced by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and Vice Chairperson of the Supreme Council of Health during the World Innovation Summit on Health (WISH) 2013, the Qatar Genome Programme is currently in its pilot phase.

Managed by the Qatar Genome Committee, and supported by Sidra Medical and Research Centre, Qatar Genome Programme uses a collection of samples and information from Qatar Biobank contributors to identify individual genome coding gaining unique insight and enabling the development of personalized healthcare in Qatar.

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