

PRESS RELEASE

HBKU's Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) holds Symposium on Cancer Research in the Middle East

Doha, November 01, 2015 – The Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) of Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) held a symposium on cancer research in the Middle East on Thursday October 29th where cancer experts from Doha were joined by representatives from leading cancer research facilities across the Gulf and wider MENA region.

QBRI devised the symposium as a way to promote knowledge sharing and encourage collaboration when investigating, understanding, and treating cancers that are particularly prevalent in the Arab world. Studying cancer at a local and regional level is essential, since cancers and their behavior can vary significantly within a population according to geographical, social and environmental factors as well as genetic factors. With this in mind, the forum's participants discussed several opportunities for future collaboration, and looked towards finding ways of widening the population sample base.

At the QBRI symposium, experts from research institutes and medical centers in Lebanon, Tunisia, Jordan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar took turns outlining their experience before taking part in a roundtable discussion titled "Regional collaboration and consortia: challenges and opportunities".

Several countries in the Middle East have begun to develop health-care transformation programs. Qatar, in particular, has published a National Health Strategy, in which cancer is one of the main concerns. In order to develop effective health-care strategies relating to cancer, countries across the Middle East will need to be at the forefront of integrated research initiatives.

The next symposium will specifically focus on investigating breast cancer in the region and will take place in early 2016.

Commenting on the initiative, Dr. Hilal Lashuel, Executive Director of QBRI and chair of the symposium's panel discussion, stressed the importance of developing ever-stronger connections between the scientists and clinicians who are involved in cancer research and treatment across the region. "It is vitally important that knowledge is shared regionally if we are to have a positive impact on the cancer research being carried out across our region. In Qatar, for instance, we have talented experts fully able to conduct in-depth cancer research but our sample pool of people living with any particular cancer is small. By sharing information between institutions and across national borders, we not only get to share ideas but also to share data and our experience with working with that data.

"It is vital that this symposium becomes an active forum where experts can come with difficult questions, with ideas, and with a willingness to share their research, and to go away with a strong sense of where useful collaborations can be developed that can answer their questions and to develop their ideas. This is what we're looking for when the symposium meets again early next year to consider the challenges relating to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer."

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About Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI)

Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) is a national research institute within Hamad bin Khalifa University. As a national research institute, QBRI aims to improve and transform healthcare through innovation in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases affecting the Qatari population and the region. As a disease-focused institute, QBRI concentrates on applying integrative and multidisciplinary approaches to provide novel insights into the molecular basis of grand challenges of breast cancer; type 2 diabetes; and neurological disorders such as autism and epilepsy, and the development of novel biomarkers, diagnostic and therapeutic strategies to facilitate early diagnosis, treatment and management of these devastating diseases towards improving personalized medicine and healthcare. For more information, please visit www.qbri.org.qa

About Hamad bin Khalifa University

Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university building upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU seeks to provide unparalleled opportunities for scholarship, teaching, discovery, and learning for all of its students through an array of interdisciplinary programs.

HBKU's partners are Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Northwestern University in Qatar, HEC Paris in Qatar, and UCL Qatar.