

Medical News Corner

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Health Care Awards

A two-day event marking World Diabetes Day concluded on the 3rd October, 2005 with an award ceremony, exhibition and free clinic held at the Al Ma'arif Auditorium, College of Health Sciences, in Salmaniya. A total of 58 nurses, students and health care professionals were honored at the event in recognition of their contributions to diabetes care and management. Forty-eight nurses were also recognized for successfully completing a two-day workshop, entitled "How to Educate Clients in Diabetes Foot Care", which was held at the college in the summer of 2005. Certificates were presented by College of Health Sciences dean Dr Showqi Ameen. During the ceremony Dr Ameen gave a short speech on "Diabetes and Foot Care: Put Feet First, Prevent Amputations", which is the theme of this year's World Diabetes Day, celebrated annually on November 14. A speech on diabetes was also presented by Bahrain Diabetes Society (BDS) deputy president Dr Mariam Al Mulla Hermas, on behalf of BDS president Dr Shaikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al Khalifa. Following the award ceremony there was a buffet and diabetes exhibition showcasing information on dental and dietary needs, as well as book fair on diabetes education by Family Bookshop. Around 200 medical professional, students, diabetic patients and members of the public attended the event, which also included free diabetes consultations. In addition, the celebration also featured a seminar on foot care management and awareness held at the auditorium on Sunday.

A Seminar on Eye Diseases

A seminar on eye diseases was held on the 14th October, 2005 at the International Hospital of Bahrain (IHB). A talk on Diabetes Related Eye Problems was presented by IHB consultant ophthalmologist and vitreoretinal surgeon Dr Deepak Khosla. Glaucoma was discussed by IHB senior ophthalmologist Dr Irvathur Vittal Nayak. All those attended the event received vouchers for free eye check-ups at the IHB ophthalmology clinic. The seminar was held to mark World Sight Day (WSD), which falls on October 10. The primary aim of WSD is to raise awareness of the global initiative of Vision 2020: The Right to Sight, which aims to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

'Keyhole' Surgery Conference

Latest developments in 'keyhole' surgery were discussed at a conference held on 21st October, 2005 at the Crown Plaza. The Progress in Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS), under the patronage of Health Minister Dr Nada Haffadh, featured workshops and lectures presented by experts from Germany, India, Italy, UK, and GCC. A clinic was opened for the duration of the symposium, in which patients

requiring the most complicated keyhole surgery were seen by top MIS specialists. The event was organized by the International Hospital of Bahrain (IHB). MIS is cost effective, patients have a reduced hospital stay, morbidity is less, mortality is lower and rehabilitation is quicker. Around 150 medical professionals and students, mainly from the GCC, attended the event.

Genetic Centre on the Way

A genetic centre, dedicated mainly to the treatment of inherited blood disorders, is expected to be completed within two years. The centre, which will cost between BD500,000 and BD1 million, will largely cater for people suffering from inherited blood disorders, such as sickle cell disease and thalassemia, officials stated at a Press conference held on the 28th October, 2005 at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) House, Manama. Sickle cell disease, which causes episodes of pain, increased susceptibility to infections and psychological problems, is the most common single disease related admission to the Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC).

Fifteen per cent of all people in Bahrain (one in six) carry the genetic trait for sickle cell and there are currently between 5,000 to 8,000 people in Bahrain who suffer from the disease.

The centre will mainly address the need for co-coordinated care for people suffering from inherited blood diseases. Prof Serjeant said that sickle cell patients in Bahrain were being seen by different departments, depending on their symptoms, and their care needed to be better co-coordinated.

Prof Serjeant has worked in sickle cell disease in Jamaica in the West Indies for the past 39 years latterly directing a British Medical Research Council Unit on the disease at the University of the West Indies, Kingston.

He currently works with Sickle Cell Trust, Jamaica, promoting public and medical education, developing educational materials and sharing expertise in clinical research.

He has been speaking to doctors at the SMC about sickle cell clinical care and research programmes and giving recommendations on how patients can be better managed. Bahrain has had an active programme for the prevention of sickle cell disease for decades, including a pre-marital screening programme, organised by the SMC genetics department, which began in 1986. Since the beginning of this year, pre-marital screening has become mandatory for all Bahraini citizens.