

DIABETES DOCTORS WELCOME NOVEL ONCE WEEKLY DIABETES TREATMENT TO KUWAIT MOH

KUWAIT: An innovative new class of medicines for type 2 diabetes (T2D) will soon be available to patients in Kuwait MoH and provides a much-needed alternative treatment option for people with the disease. T2D is a common disease on the increase. Recent figures from the International Diabetes Federation show that almost 37 million people in the MENA region have diabetes, which if left unchecked is predicted to nearly double by 2035. Kuwait has the second highest comparative prevalence in the region, with an estimated 20% of the population affected.

Dr Waleed Al-Dahi (Consultant Endocrine & Diabetes, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital), Prof Dr Nabila Abdella (Professor of Medicine & Consultant Diabetologist, Mubarak Hospital) and Dr Thaier Almuaili (Consultant Internist & Diabetologist, Al-Amiri hospital and Dasman Diabetes Institute), three experts in the field, said that in the early stages T2D is often managed with oral treatments combined with lifestyle modifications that include increasing

physical activity and following a healthy diet.

Best control

"Unfortunately diabetes is a progressive disease and despite a person's best efforts, the reality is that most people will reach a stage when it is appropriate to consider an injectable therapy to get the best control of their disease," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said.

"Until now this usually meant starting insulin therapy, which is a big step for many people," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said. "A lot of different anxieties come up, including a fear of hypoglycaemia, which is when your blood sugar becomes dangerously low," she said. "People are also concerned about putting on weight," Prof Dr Nabila Abdella said.

Dr Waleed Al-Dahi welcomed the availability of the new injectable medicines - called glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RA) - as an effective alternative to basal insulin therapy for those failing on oral therapy. "Each year brings new advances and

we can now offer our patients an effective treatment with a very low risk of hypoglycaemia and unwanted side effects like weight gain," he said. "And this is with a weekly injection so the needle burden is much lower compared with insulin," he added.

Extensive experience

Following the MoH approval AstraZeneca, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, will launch its Bydureon Pen, which is a unique pre-filled, single-use pen injector containing Exenatide, a medicine with extensive experience globally. In studies Bydureon has shown to significantly reduce HbA1c levels - a marker of how much sugar a person has in their blood - by up to 2% from an average starting level of 8.3%. Weight loss, as an additional benefit to diabetic patients, was also seen in the studies.

Dr Thaier Almuaili said if all the global experience with Bydureon was added



KUWAIT: (From left) Dr Waleed Al-Dahi, Consultant Endocrine & Diabetes, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Prof Dr Nabila Abdella, Professor of Medicine & Consultant Diabetologist, Mubarak Hospital, Dr Thaier Almuaili, Consultant Internist & Diabetologist, Al-Amiri hospital and Dasman Diabetes Institute and representative from AstraZeneca.

together, it would equal around 3.8 million patient years of treatment since the medicine was first introduced. "Patient years" is a representation of the total person-time on

Bydureon in clinical trials, and is calculated by adding the number of patients in a group and multiplying that number with the number of years that patients are in a study.



FOUR YEARS OF POSTGRADUATE DIABETES EDUCATION MARKED

KUWAIT: Diabetes is a significant problem in Kuwait where it has been estimated that up to 1 in 4 of the adult population suffers from the disease. Since 2011 the University of Dundee, a world leader in clinical diabetes care and diabetes research, in partnership with the Dasman Diabetes Institute (which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences "KFAS"), with its mission to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of diabetes in Kuwait have created and delivered a

Postgraduate Masters program in Diabetes Care, Education and Management. This program is available to a wide range of Kuwait based healthcare professionals who study part time while working.

Through face-to-face and innovative blended, interactive teaching, the program enables healthcare professionals to provide more effective care for their patients. They gain specialized knowledge of diabetes along with the educational and management training that

supports them in effective communication with colleagues and patients.

The program is flexible, allowing students to choose modules from a range of clinical, management or education based topics that are most relevant to their professional requirements. Throughout their studies students undertake multiple work-based development projects as assignments with the aim of immediately improving and developing diabetes healthcare provision and reflective practice throughout



Dr Qais Al-Duwairi

healthcare practices in Kuwait. So far, over 260 students have enrolled in the program and collectively they have achieved over 1000 work-based projects, directly impacting diabetes care in Kuwait.

The second Graduation Ceremony yesterday marked the successful achievements of over 40 post-graduate students giving the program a total of almost 100 graduates. For all students the Graduation at the Dasman Diabetes Institute is the pinnacle of three years of hard work and dedication and Sunday's celebration brings together dignitaries from across Kuwait and Scotland to celebrate their considerable achievements.



A PLEA FOR HELP IN BRAZIL CITY WHERE ZIKA FIRST CONFIRMED

CAMAARI, Brazil: Camacari was in chaos, its hospitals overflowing with sick people desperate to know what was happening to them, never suspecting theirs would be the first confirmed cases of Zika in Brazil. In the city where the virus made its explosive debut in early 2015, anxious residents asked themselves: Was it dengue? An allergic reaction to contaminated water? The "mysterious" disease, people called it, while medical reports referred to it as "undetermined exzematous syndrome," noting the skin irritation associated with it.

"My two children and I got sick. In my neighborhood, nearly everybody became infected," said Vanessa Machado dos Santos, who makes a living selling coconut water in this torrid city, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Salvador in the northeastern state of Bahia. "Our skin began to itch, we had fever, headaches and body aches, a lot of pain in our joints," she told AFP. Sometime later, the 35-year-old was told that what she was feeling was caused by the Zika virus, but she still had her doubts. "Nobody knew much about it that it was like dengue, that it was carried by mosquitoes, that it came from another country. We heard a lot of stories about the famous Zika," she said. "Was I scared? Of course! We didn't know what was coming next. You are always afraid of the unknown."

Plea for help

It was April 2015 and the hospitals were inundated in this city of 200,000. Antonio Carlos Bandeira, a doctor at the Santa Helena hospital, thought the syndrome had to be identified with urgency, so he contacted Gubio Soares, a virologist he knew at the Federal University of Bahia. There were so many cases at the time, that the call to Soares was "truly a plea for help," Bandeira recalled. Judging by the symptoms and explosive contagion—"there were entire buildings full of sick people," Bandeira said—they

assumed it was an arbovirus, the generic name for viruses transmitted by insects or other animals, like dengue or chikungunya.

In his laboratory at the university's Institute of Health Sciences, Soares and his colleague Silvia Sardi focused on 20 samples from patients in Camacari. They hit upon the villain: Zika, which was first identified in 1947 in Africa, and had surfaced in the Pacific islands in 2007 and 2013, but with limited impact. "I had read interesting studies on Zika. Parallel to that, I saw pictures of people infected with the virus. I discussed it with Silvia Sardi, we did the tests and they were conclusive," he said.

"And that's how we identified it for the first time in Brazil." That was on April 28, 2015. The next day, Brazilian health officials made the finding public.

Self-diagnosis via TV

At around the same time, Lucienne Ferrera was feeling sick. She had rashes on her skin, some fever and little energy to work at her poultry store in Candeias, 30 kilometers from Camacari. "I had itching, fever and discomfort all day. But at night, watching the news on television, they said there was a new virus, Zika. That's how I found out," she said with a laugh. "Later when I went to the doctor, he told me he didn't know about it. So even for them it was a mystery."

From Brazil, the virus has spread rapidly through the Americas. It is believed to have arrived in the country during the World Cup in mid-2014, with the first cases, only confirmed later, occurring in the state of Rio Grande do Norte. Still to be determined is whether the virus, as researchers suspect, is responsible for a surge in cases of microcephaly, an untreatable condition in which babies are born with small heads and brains. A year after the outbreak in Brazil, Zika remains a mystery, with no known vaccine, and many other countries now feeling its effect. — AFP

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Advertisement for Dr. Fabad Al-Mukhaizeem, Consultant Pediatrician. The ad features a teddy bear in a white lab coat and a stethoscope, surrounded by images of children. Text includes: "Dr. Fabad Al-Mukhaizeem", "مؤيد علي المخيزيم", "استشاري أطفال", "M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM".

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