



UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

where civilizations meet

College of Medicine

College of
Medicine
Newsletter

February 2016

Dean's message of the month

By Professor Qutabya Hamid

Firstly, I would like to welcome everyone back after the exams. I hope all the hard work paid off and the results reflected all the efforts put into the preparation of these examinations.

2016 has been busy so far, despite it being early on in the year. The College is proud to host two conferences during this month of February; Sharjah 1st Arts Therapy Conference and the 7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy. We also received a special visitor, Professor Ferid Murad, Nobile Prize Laureate, who spoke with our students and faculty and inspired them.

Professor Hajjaj and I are working on creating three Endowment Chairs (Diabetes, Cancer and Asthma) which will bring revenue of approximately Dhs 10 million to the college. A policy will be introduced where we visit the families over a period of 4-6 months and inform

them how many papers have been published.

The UOS Staff Clinics will be renovated and will be ready in March 2016. There are two Staff Clinics, one in each of the Men's and Women's Campuses. These have been advertised for already and soon will be in practise. This will benefit us in this College greatly.

There are some excellent events lined up in the next few months and I look forward to seeing participation from students, staff and faculty to ensure we keep our College dynamic and active.

**Professor Qutayba Hamid
MD, PhD, FRCP, FRS**

Dean College of Medicine

UPCOMING EVENT

**Communicate Your Research &
Explore New Horizons**

**College of Medicine Student-Based
Research Week**

Abstract Submission is now open!

See Page 12 for more details

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COLLEGE NEWS

- The College of Medicine is proud to host two conferences during this month of February; Sharjah 1st Arts Therapy Conference and the 7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy. Please refer to the Events section of this newsletter for more information on those conferences.
- Our faculty and Year 3 students were lucky to meet with Professor Ferid Murad, Nobel Prize Laureate. Murad's key research demonstrated that nitroglycerin and related drugs worked by releasing nitric oxide into the body, which relaxed smooth muscle by elevating intracellular cyclic GMP. The missing steps in the signalling process were filled in by Robert Furchgott and Louis Ignarro, for which the three shared the 1998 Nobel Prize. Professor Ferid is an inspirational and motivational speaker and both faculty and students were excited after meeting with him.



- A new Mobile Clinic unit has been ordered which will be ready by September 2016. This has already been advertised for. Six GPs will be hired and will work for both the University Clinic and the Mobile Clinic. The Mobile Clinic will cater to Sharjah, Khorfakkan, Al Dhaid and Kalba only.
- The Curriculum committee and faculty from our College have been working hard to implement a Credit Hour Unit to our PBL program units to help graduate students, especially those applying for residencies abroad. The curriculum map has been standardized and credit hours mentioned against each unit, with a total of 240 credit hours when students graduate. It has been officially endorsed by the Curriculum Committee and sent to the College Council who will then send it to the University Curriculum Committee. Drs Emad, Mohamed Elhassan, Zein and Ghalib have been working on preparing the format of the new transcript with the new credit hours.
- The University is currently reviewing the new salary scale. Employees will be ranked on this scale and then procedures for promotion will be reviewed. The new policy will be announced soon.
- Dr. Susanne Frontier, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University in Canada will be visiting us March 7th- 9th. We recently signed an MOU with McGill so we look forward to future collaborations and exchanges between both universities.

- The College of Medicine- University of Sharjah will host the second medical education conference organized by the Association of Medical Education in Eastern Mediterranean Region (AMEEMR), the conference will take place in November 26th to 30th 2016. The conference program will start with 2 days of pre-conference workshops and 3 days of keynote presentations and research presentations. In preparation for this conference, Prof. Ibrahim Alwan the chairman if AMEEMR visited University of Sharjah to discuss the College and University leadership the needed arrangements for the conference. If you wish to be part of this conference organization, please contact Dr. Mohamed Elhassan Abdalla on melsayed@sharjah.ac.ae



- Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, the American University of Sharjah (AUS) recently established “AUS Enterprise”. This new body will seek to develop companies, attract foreign companies and develop a research base in Sharjah. This research base, which will focus on Digital Health and Medical Technologies, will be a regional hub and a place that companies can come to develop new capabilities in these sectors. This can be achieved by extending the connection to the Healthcare environment in Sharjah. The first workshop titled “Sharjah Med Tech (The future hub of health care solutions in Sharjah)” was held on 17th of February, at AUS campus. Dr Nihar Dash and Dr Adel Elmoselhi represented the College of Medicine and University of Sharjah in the conference.
- The 6th Pan Arab Human Genetic Conference was held in Dubai from the 21st to 23rd of January, organized by the Centre for Arab Genomic Studies and Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Medical Sciences. Seven of our faculty members attended as well as twenty five students, including Ahmed Abd Alwahab Nugud, who presented a poster for his Boehringer Ingelheim funded research, under the title of ‘Role of TGF- β and HIF-1alpha Signaling in T-cell Activation’. The faculty members who attended this conference are: Dr. Mohamad Al Homssi , Dr. Samrein Ahmed, Dr. Maha Saber, Dr. Bashair Mussa, Dr. Nermine Nosseir, Dr. Anu Ranade and Dr. Ahmed El-Serafy who presented two posters.



VIRAL NEWS

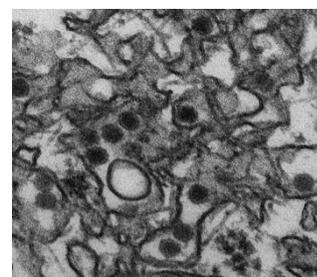
Introducing 'Viral News': a segment addressing interesting and new topics that have recently spread in the public discourse.

Zika Virus

Submitted by: Dr. Nihar Dash

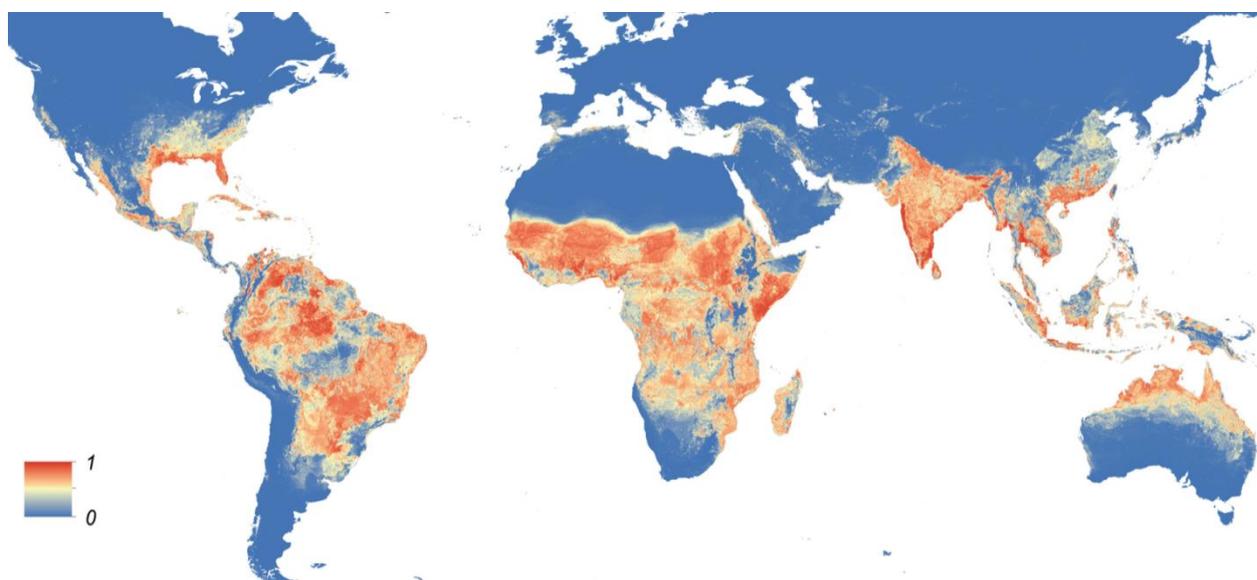
Zika virus (ZIKV) is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that was first isolated from a rhesus monkey in the Zika forest of Uganda in 1947. ZIKV is closely related to other mosquito-borne flaviviruses such as the Dengue, Yellow Fever, West Nile, and Japanese Encephalitis viruses. In 1968, isolation from human hosts occurred in residents of Nigeria. In 2015, ZIKV first appeared outside of Africa when it was isolated in Brazil, where it has caused an outbreak.

- Zika virus is a positive sense single-stranded RNA molecule
- Structure of ZIKV follows that of other flaviviruses
- Reproductive cycle of ZIKV follows that of other known flaviviruses

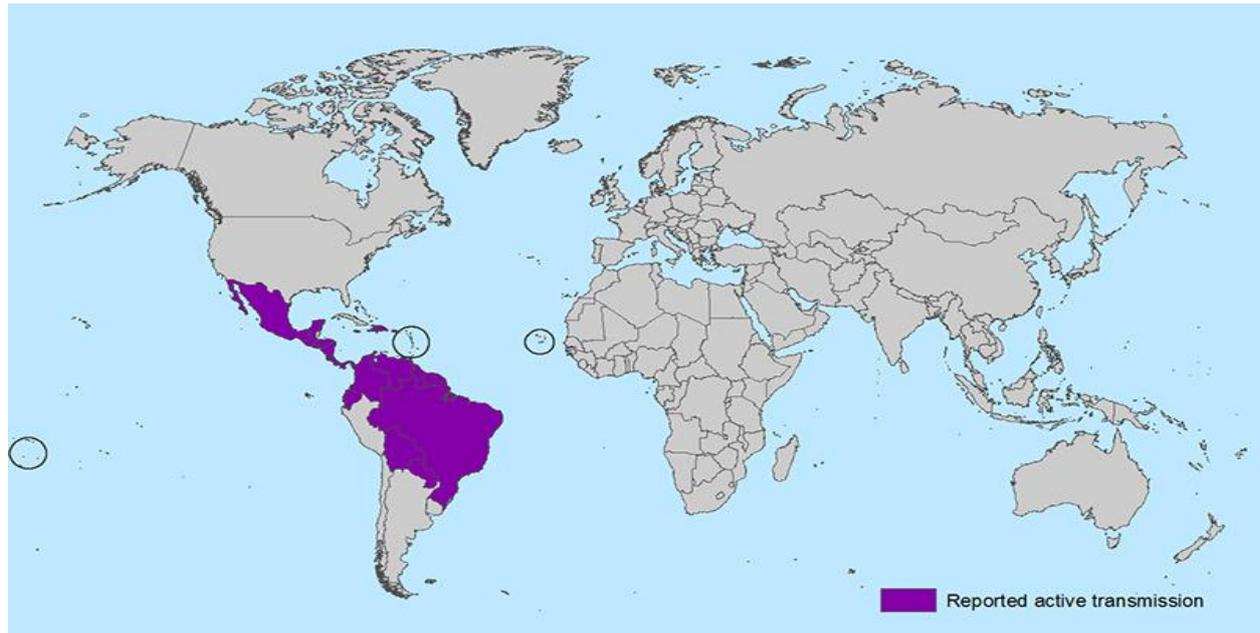


Transmission of this virus is predominately through a mosquito bite:

- Day-time active *Aedes* mosquito (mainly *Aedes aegypti* in tropics)
- Reservoir: Unknown
- However, a recent case shows that human-to-human contact is possible (the first time an insect-borne disease was passed via sexual contact)
- Rarely from mother to child
- Transfusion-derived transmission is theoretically possible



Global *Aedes aegypti* predicted distribution



Countries with active Zika Virus Transmission

In May 2015, the PAHO notified first confirmed case of Zika virus infection in Brazil. It spread to much of Central and South America. The spread of the virus led to reports of health problems such as birth defects and poor pregnancy outcomes. As a result, the CDC issued travel advisories for those traveling to affected areas. Most reported cases elsewhere are travel-reported (35 cases in the US).

Signs and Symptoms:

- About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus become ill (Zika fever)
- The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week – average 2 to 5 days
- Incubation period not known
- Most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis
- Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon
- There is a link between Zika fever and neurologic conditions in infected adults, including cases of the Guillain–Barré syndrome

Diagnosis:

- To date, there are no commercially available serological assays for the detection of ZIKV-specific antibodies
- ZIKV diagnosis is primarily based on detection viral RNA by RT-PCR
- This is possible only during first 3 to 5 days after the onset of symptoms
- ZIKV-specific IgM antibodies can be detected by ELISA typically around 3-5 days after infection
- Cross-react with other flaviviral illness like Dengue, Yellow Fever and Japanese Encephalitis

Management:

- Presently, there is **no** vaccine for ZIKV
- **No** specific treatment for Zika virus infection
- Because symptoms are relatively mild and the disease is **self-limiting**, only supportive therapy is employed
- Patients with Zika fever should remain hydrated and rest
- Acetaminophen can be prescribed to combat fever
- Prevent mosquito bites and travel to affected areas
- Due to recent studies that show the possibility of sexual transmission, safe sex practices are also encouraged

Zika and Pregnant Women:

- An outbreak in Brazil has led to reports of pregnant women giving birth to babies with birth defects, **microcephaly** and poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers who were infected with Zika virus while pregnant
- A causal link between the Zika virus and microcephaly is "**strongly suspected but not yet scientifically proven**"
- Additional studies are needed to further characterize this relationship
- Until more is known, CDC recommends special precautions for pregnant women and women trying to become pregnant in these affected areas

This is the first documented outbreak of Zika virus (ZIKV) in the Americas. It is a typical mosquito-borne viral infection. Exposure to infected mosquitoes is the principal risk of infection but imported ZIKV cases are possible. In the UAE, local spread is not viable due to absent of vector mosquitos *Aedes*. Clinicians should remain alert while dealing with pregnant mothers with recent travel history to the affected areas.

The CDC has developed interim guidelines for the evaluation and testing of infants with possible congenital Zika virus infection: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6503e3.html>

FEATURED FACULTY-

Dr. Maha Saber



Dr. Maha Saber graduated with an MBBS (Excellent) from Cairo University, Egypt in 1995. She then obtained her MSc in Pharmacology in 2001 (title: Effect of Angiotensin II Type-1 receptor blockers on cardiac remodelling following acute myocardial infarction- role of AT1- receptor gene polymorphism", and MD in 2006 (title: Pharmacogenomics of streptokinase in patients with acute myocardial infarction).

She worked as a genetic and clinical consultant in the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Research Project under support of Magdi Yacoub Research Institute in Harefield and Oxford University- UK), from 2005-2009. Through the project, she got her training and experience in molecular biology and human genetics.

Dr. Maha joined the University of Sharjah in 2009. She is currently a member of "Diabetes and Heart Disease" and "the Environment and Cancer" research groups based in at Sharjah Institute for Medical Research (SIMR), UoS. She has several publications in Cardiovascular Pharmacogenetics and Cancer Research. She got a research seed grant to explore "The mechanism of action of new imidazopyridine derivatives in breast and lung cancers", (2011-2013). She is working on a project exploring "Prevalence of statin-induced myopathy SLCO 1B1 gene polymorphism in UAE population", supported by the College of Research, UoS; and supervising 2 projects on "Prevalence of FTO obesity gene polymorphisms in UAE population" and "Effect of Galanin expression on caspase 8 –mediated apoptosis and sensitivity to chemotherapy in colorectal cancer", funded by Boehringer Ingelheim research grants.

She is an Associate Professor of Pharmacology; teaching resource sessions for year 1 and 3, and therapeutics for year 4 and 5. She got her MSc in "Leadership of Health Profession Education" from the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland in 2015 (title: Towards better prescribing education for medical students). She is enthusiastic to apply the educational theories in practice with insight. Her passion is to empower students' learning and research skills.

She got the membership of Royal College of Physicians (MRCP-UK) in 2003, and the fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians (FRCP-Edinburgh) in 2013. She has a clinical attachment to the University Hospital in Sharjah (UHS), attending Endocrinology and Diabetes outpatient clinic.

Among her hobbies are playing piano, travelling and horse-riding. She considers reading "a must"; not a hobby. She is interested in Arabic and German literature, poetry, history and sociology. Her favourite writers are "Youssef Idris", "Mostafa Mahmoud", "Mahmoud Darwish" and "Wolfgang Borchert".

We wish Dr. Maha the best of luck and success in her research projects and hope to see more publications of her findings soon.

Faculty Achievements, Awards & Special Recognition

Awards and Special Recognition:

Professor Qutayba Hamid was selected to be the most highly cited scientist in the UAE with over 35000 citations and 500 publications of H index 100 as shown on Research Gate.

Professor Nabil Sulaiman has been nominated as Board Member for the Quality Pharmacy Program – Middle East, with Dr. Alwai Alsheikh-Ali, Professor Abdulrahman Al-Ahdal, Dr. Abdulsalam Al-Asseri and Professor Ahmad Salah Hersi. The program is organized by Globalpharma- A Sanofi Company.

Professor Nabil Sulaiman has also received a special mention and letter of appreciation from the Consul General of Australia to Dubai for his support of Australia Unlimited MENA 2016 Campaign and for presenting, on behalf of the University of Sharjah, at the UAE-Australia Healthcare Education Forum in Dubai on 24th January 2016.

Publications:

Professor Randa Mostafa, Dr. Zein Mirghani and Dr. Emad Nosair had an article published recently: Nosair et al. Measuring Students' Perceptions of Educational Environment in the PBL Program of Sharjah Medical College. *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development* 2015:2 71–79.

Dr. Mohamed Eladl had an article published last month entitled: Jaffar and Eladl. Engagement Patterns of High and Low Academic Performers on Facebook Anatomy Pages. *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development* 2016:3 1–8.

Conference Participation:

Professor Qutayba Hamid, Professor Azzam Magazachi and Dr. Ahmed El- Serafy participated by giving oral presentations in the 7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy which took place 15th-18th February in Al Razi Hall at the University of Sharjah. Professor Qutayba's talk was entitled: 'Anti-cytokines: IL-5 from Discovery to Clinical Implications'. Professor Azzam gave two talks entitled: 'A New Mechanism of Action for Drugs Used to Treat Multiple Sclerosis or Cancer Patients' and 'New Therapeutic Modalities for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Disease'. Dr. Ahmed's talk was entitled: 'Can Epigenetic Modifiers Help in Fat Regeneration and Fat Loss?'

Professor Nabil Sulaiman was a speaker at Arab Health 3rd Middle East Public Health Conference, Interactive Roundtable Discussion: Non-communicable diseases research in

UAE. Moderator: Professor Raghieb Ali, Day 1 at 12:30 pm on 27th January 2016, Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, UAE. Title: DIABETES. www.ahcongress.com

Professor Qutayba Hamid contributed to the “Solutions for Better Life Conference” on 21-23 February 2016 as a member of scientific committee as well as speaker.

Professor Nabil Sulaiman is a member of the Scientific Committee and also a member of the Organizing Committee as well as speaker for “Solutions for Better Life Conference” on 21-23 February 2016, in partnership with West Virginia University as well as WHO and others.

Dr. Ahmed El-Serafy presented two posters at the 6th Pan Arab Human Genetic Conference, which took place in Dubai from 21st to 23rd of January, under the titles of ‘Counterplay between Vitamin D and Busulphan Metabolism in the Preconditioning for Stem Cells Transplantation’ and ‘Can Epigenetic Modifiers help in Designing a Human- Based Adipogenic Model for Anti-obesity Drug Testing?’

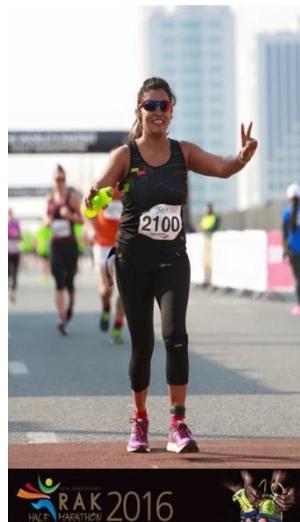
Dr. Mohamad Al Homssi also presented two papers at the 6th Pan Arab Human Genetic Conference entitled ‘Central nervous system primitive neuroectodermal tumors and Diabetes Comorbidity in Arabian Gulf Population’ and ‘Epidemiology of Muscle Diseases in the Arab World’.

We encourage the Faculty of Medicine to contribute actively to conferences through papers and posters. Several speakers from the college are delivering lectures or presenting posters.

Grants:

Dr. Ahmed El-Serafy has obtained a grant from UAEU in collaboration with Dr. Sahar Mohsin, Assistant Professor of Anatomy, UAEU for the project ‘Effect of type II diabetes on postmenopausal rat bones’. The grant value is AED 400,000.

Sports Achievements:



Mr. Nasser Zahra participated in the Muscat Marathon on the 29th January 2016 at 6am. He completed it in 3 hours 53 minutes

Dr. Anu Ranade and Mr. Nasser Zahra participated in the RAK Half Marathon on the 12th February 2016

STUDENT CORNER

Congratulations to our faculty and staff members on their successes and achievements and we wish them the best of luck in all their future endeavours.

Medical Student Association:



Official MSA photo with Professor Qutayba, Dr. Bassam Mahboub and Dr. Nihar Dash



The MSA team (board members and heads), from left to right: Abdulla Maged Salaheldin (Head of sponsors committee), Mohammad Balshi (Head of social committee), Ghiath Ismayl (Head of Registration Committee), Ahmad Hamadeh (Treasurer), Ali Mohd Ayman (President), Noura Musa Nour Boush (Vice President), Dalia Ali Alhabahbeh (Executive Project manager), Muna Hussain Lootah (Head of Media Committee), Sara Yusur Alisawi (Head of community committee), Tala Mahmoud Tillawi (Head of scientific committee)

Emirates Medical Students Society (EMSS) Activities:

SCORP, the Standing Committee on Refugees and Peace, a subcommittee of the EMSS, organised an event '**Labours are neighbours**' to promote equality between people from all walks of life in society. There were different types of entertainment activities including: sports, quizzes and competitions, as well as lunch provided.



EVENTS

Update in Clinical Medicine Seminar Series

The College of Medicine is running a series of lectures delivered by invited national and international speakers to highlight updates and new developments in clinical medicine. The seminar series 'Updates in Clinical Medicine', will run on a fortnightly basis on Mondays/Tuesdays at 3pm at the College of Medicine in Hall M27-029.

The college recently hosted **Dr. Amira El-Messidi**, Consultant of Maternal-Fetal Medicine Subspecialty, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada who gave a seminar on 'High risk pregnancy: Update on blood disorders & on Zika Virus'.

Dr. Amira is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at McGill University.



College of Medicine Research Week

The College of Medicine will soon announce the date for the College of Medicine Research Week. This week will focus on Student-Based Medical Research and it will be an opportunity for both undergraduate and postgraduate students to present their research outcomes. Awards will be given to the best posters and oral presentations. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance the student's communication skills and develop, promote and support student research activities as well as an opportunity for collaboration between different colleges or universities. We hope this event will become an annual one.

The Scientific Committee of the Research Week is delighted to invite all Medical, Dental, Pharmacy and Science students from the University of Sharjah and other universities in the UAE to submit abstracts for consideration of oral/poster presentations. Details of how to submit your abstract will be posted on the blackboard soon so if you are interested keep an eye out for the announcement. Submission is now open, more details can be found on: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1iTqph1CeYHJrmh-0V5x73p82rYsWir-7GMOjXBIOges/viewform?c=0&w=1>. For any queries or more information on this event please contact Dr. Bashair on bmussa@sharjah.ac.ae

College of Medicine Lunch Gathering

Professor Qutayba Hamid invited all faculty and staff to join the 1st Lunch Gathering which took place on Thursday February 4th 2016 at 1pm at the main foyer of the College of Medicine. In the interest of promoting a friendly environment and international harmony at the College Of Medicine, Professor Qutayba invited everyone to participate in this event by bringing their own national dish to place in the lunch area to share the cultural taste among all of us. The participating groups were: Egyptian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Indian and Syrian.



Sharjah 1st Arts Therapy Conference

The 'Sharjah 1st Arts Therapy Conference' was organized jointly by the College of Medicine at the University of Sharjah (UOS), in collaboration with Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services (SCHS), Prasad Family Foundation, Inc. (USA) and Ewha Woman's University, Department of Music Therapy (Korea) with participating members from George Washington University (USA), University of Mississippi Medical Centre (USA), UOS Medical Students Association (MSA) and Art Therapy International Centre (ATIC) in Dubai.

The conference included a range of lectures and in-depth workshops on art and music therapy that were presented by licensed international specialists and professionals. This took place on Wednesday 10th February 2016 at Al-Razi Hall (M24) from 9am onwards.



7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy

The Medical Student's Association (MSA) at the College of Medicine, in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy hosted the 7th International Conference on Drug Discovery and Therapy on February 15-18th 2016 from 9am onwards at Al-Razi Hall (M24).

This international conference co-organized by Eureka Science and the University of Sharjah, under the patronage of the His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin-Mohammed Al Qassimi, Supreme Council Member, Ruler of Sharjah and President of the University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE is unique in bringing state-of-the-art in the fields of drug discovery and therapy closer to the doorstep of pharmaceutical scientists, internists and primary care physicians from all over the world.

7th ICDDT, being the most innovative event, aims to provide an open and stimulating scientific and cultural exchange that will give all the participants the opportunity to share their experiences, foster collaborations across industry and academia and evaluate emerging technologies across the globe.

As the previous conferences held in Dubai in Feb 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014 (where many Noble Laureates participated) had met with great success, the 7th ICDDT is also augured to be a mega event with a series of exclusive talks to be delivered over a diverse range of thematic sessions along with poster presentations and an associated commercial exhibition.



The banner features a yellow background with three logos at the top: a globe with orange spheres on the left, the University of Sharjah logo in the center, and a DNA helix with a globe on the right. The text in the center reads: **7th International Conference on Drug Discovery & Therapy** and **4th Biotechnology World Congress**. Below this, it states *February 15th – 18th 2016, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE* and provides the website *www.icddt.com / www.biotechworldcongress.com*.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

This Issue's "Doctor's orders" is submitted by Dr. Sarra Shorbagi

A recent report by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), evaluating the cancerous risk of consuming processed and red meats to humans has concluded the following:

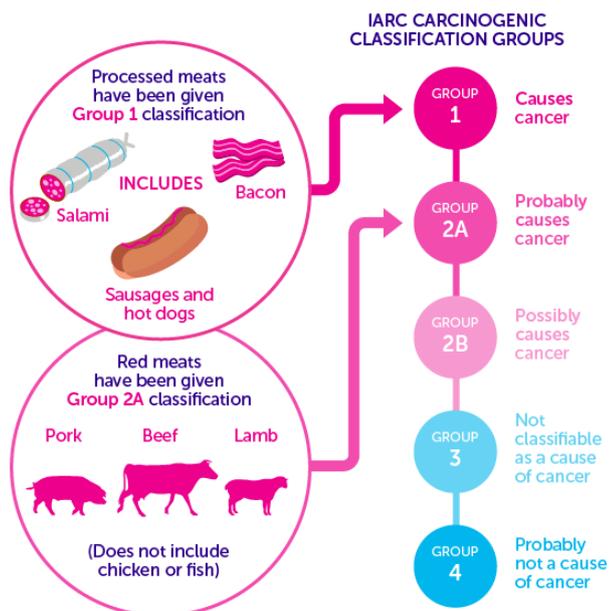
Processed meat is categorized under Group 1 with sufficient evidence suggesting that its consumption causes colorectal cancer, while **red meat** is categorized as Group 2A, thus classifying it as a **probable** cause of cancer.

The risk increases with the amount of meat consumed, but the data available for evaluation did not permit a conclusion about whether a safe level exists. Individuals who are concerned about cancer could consider reducing their consumption of red meat or processed meat until updated guidelines are developed.

For more information visit the following websites:

1. https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2015/pdfs/pr240_E.pdf
2. <http://www.who.int/features/qa/cancer-red-meat/en/>
3. <http://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2015/10/26/processed-meat-and-cancer-what-you-need-to-know/?view=rss>

MEAT AND CANCER HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE?



These categories represent how likely something is to cause cancer in humans, not how many cancers it causes.

WE WILL BEAT CANCER SOONER
cruk.org



For any comments regarding this newsletter or suggestions for improvement please contact the Editor
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