Celebrating 4 decades of safe, effective and compassionate care

HMC’s 40th anniversary marks the journey of its transformation into a world-class healthcare provider

HEALTH CHECK TEAM
DOHA

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) is celebrating 40th anniversary in the month of December 2019, marking four decades of delivering safe, effective, and compassionate care to Qatar’s population. HMC was established by Amiri decree in 1979.

Minister of Public Health HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al Kuwari said, “Under the direction of Qatar’s visionary leaders, we are proud to have delivered a wide range of healthcare services to millions of people throughout the past 40 years.”

She said that she was proud of Hamad’s journey and its transformation, not only in terms of capacity but quality as well. “Hamad is now a healthcare provider that ranks alongside the world’s best and it is the tens of thousands of dedicated staff who have worked at Hamad over the past 40 years who have driven this success.”

HMC has expanded its capacity with the opening of many new hospitals throughout the past four decades and today it operates 12 hospitals across Qatar. Additionally, the number of patients being cared for by its clinical teams has grown at an exponential pace.

HMC’s Acting Assistant Managing Director Ali al Janahi, explained how the rate and scale of HMC’s transformation is unmatched around the world. “If I look back at Hamad as a healthcare provider when I first joined 40 years ago, it is unrecognizable today. Qatar’s population, when HMC was established in 1979, was just 225,000. Today Qatar is home to more than 2.8 million people. This rapid population growth has driven the expansion of HMC and it is hard to think of another healthcare provider anywhere in the world that has undergone this scale of transformation.”

Ali Janahi said that it was remarkable to think how much HMC has changed since the early years. “In the 1980s healthcare systems and technology were very basic compared to today. For example, the ambulances used in those early years were ordinary suburban cars without any specialist equipment, operated with only a driver and technician, if available. And most of our processes and patient records were carried out using paper-based files. Today we have some of the most sophisticated and advanced systems and technology available in the world, right across our network.”

Despite treating greater numbers of patients each year for the past four decades, HMC has worked hard to not only meet this increasing demand but to also advance the quality of care it delivers to patients in all areas of service. In the past ten years alone, HMC’s services have been assessed and successfully accredited more than 30 times by leading accreditation bodies around the world. This accreditation process culminated in HMC’s greatest international accreditation success to date earlier this year, with thirteen of its facilities and services being accredited by US-based Joint Commission International (JCI).

Throughout December, HMC is organizing a series of activities to celebrate its 40th anniversary. HMC’s Chief Communications Officer Ali Abdulla al Khatar said, “This is a significant milestone for HMC and one which we wish to share with the people of Qatar.”

First Qatar Arthroplasty Conference in February 2020

More than 400 orthopedic specialists will gather in Doha from February 7 to 9, 2020 for the first Qatar Arthroplasty Conference, organised by Hamad Medical Corporation. The three-day Qatar Arthroplasty Conference (QACON 2020) – organised by Hamad General Hospital’s Orthopedic Surgery Department, in collaboration with the HMC Medical Education Department and the Bone and Joint Center - will focus on adult hip and knee reconstruction.

Does your child need occupational therapy?

Are you a parent and have noticed that your child has some developmental delays? Hamad Medical Corporation provides Occupational therapy treatment which helps people with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability and be as independent as possible in all areas of their lives. In children, occupational therapy helps them with various needs to improve their cognitive, physical, sensory, and motor skills, among others.
You have an idea on how to access mental health services in Qatar? If not, worry no more. The Minister of Public Health HE Dr Hanan Mohamed al Kuwari, has recently launched Qatar’s first Guide to Mental Health Services at 8th Qatar International Psychiatry and Mental Health Conference.

The Guide has been developed by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in partnership with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC), Sidra Medicine, and Naufar with the aim of making it easier for people to access mental health services in Qatar and helping them choose the right service for their needs.

Dr Al Kuwari explained that the provision of mental health services has expanded in recent years. “Qatar’s healthcare sector has undergone enormous growth throughout this decade and the expansion of mental health services has been an important part of this transformation. Qatar’s health system now offers a wide range of mental health services and it is vitally important that people understand how to access these services and they can choose the right service for their individual needs. The launch of the new Guide provides a clear and concise resource for mental health services in Qatar.”

The publication of the Guide to Mental Health Services follows the launch in 2018 by the MoPH of the three guides to healthcare services in Qatar, one each for children, adults, and the elderly. The Guides explain everything people need to know about accessing general healthcare services in Qatar.

Chair of the National Taskforce for Mental Health and Well-being and HMC’s Chief of the Continuing Care Group Mahmoud Saleh al Raisi said, “The World Health Organization states that 1 in 4 people in the world will be affected by a mental health disorder at some point in their lives. One of the main challenges is the associated stigma, which often makes it difficult for people to talk openly and seek help. For this reason, it is essential that we make people aware of the services available to them and that they understand how to access these services.”

Qatar National Health Strategy 2018-2022 Lead for Mental Health and Well-being and CEO of HMC’s Mental Health Service Iain Tulley said the launch of the Guide highlights the system-wide approach to mental health services in Qatar. “The delivery of high-quality mental health services in Qatar is a result of joint working between healthcare organisations. As is evident within the Guide, HMC, PHCC, Sidra, and Naufar all play an important role in ensuring people struggling with mental health issues can receive the support they require.”

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In order to address risk factors of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in Qatar through targeted local research, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and its partners are developing a national research agenda on diabetes and its complications.

The research agenda will address both basic science and clinical and translational research in diabetes. Research is one of the six pillars of Qatar National Diabetes Strategy 2016-2022 in addition to awareness and prevention, patient empowerment, care delivery, human capability and capacity building and information management pillars.

As part of the development of the diabetes research agenda under research pillar of the National Diabetes Strategy, researchers, clinical experts, university and institutional leaders representing Qatar National Research Fund, Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Diabetes Association, Qatar University, Qatar Computing Research Institute, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, Sidra Medicine, Primary Health Care Corporation and Hamad Medical Corporation recently gathered for a landmark workshop. Organised by MoPH, the workshop aimed to identify key gaps in knowledge and implementation of research that aims to understand, prevent, and treat diabetes and atherosclerotic cardiovascular risk factors.

MoPH Director of Public Health Department Sheikh Dr Mohammed al Thani said, “The National Diabetes Strategy has set the roadmap for diabetes prevention and care for Qatar. The aim is to develop a comprehensive research agenda that directly addresses a serious health problem in Qatar. We are delighted to have the expertise and support in Qatar to conduct key research that will improve our population’s health as well as advance science.”

Chair of the National Diabetes Research Subcommittee Dr Shahrad Taheri said there is already a wealth of excellent research with significant funding support in Qatar. “Once the research agenda is in place, researchers and funders can concentrate on areas of research that will have direct impact on disease prevention and treatment.”

Committee professor Abu-Samra said that the National Diabetes Strategy is already being implemented to improve patient care. “With the development of the research agenda, Qatar will be able to focus on key areas of research that will allow the best care and science to be embedded into healthcare. With the national research strategy, Qatar can maximize the use of its resources and expertise for years to come”
HMC Feto-Maternal Medicine Unit continues to improve outcomes for women with high-risk pregnancies

CATHERINE W GICHUKI

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) Feto-Maternal Medicine Unit has continued to improve outcomes for women with high-risk pregnancies because of its advanced technologies which manage to diagnose congenital abnormalities in the unborn baby. Located at Women’s Wellness and Research Center (WWRC), the unit receives an average of around 400 and 490 cases per month.

Consultant Feto-Maternal Medicine and Obstetrics/Gynaecology Dr Sawsan Hassan al Obaidly said the number has increased since they moved into the new facility at the WWRC.

She said that the unit receives referrals when either the mother has a medical condition that needs to be seen at the unit or when a problem has been detected in the foetus. According to her, the maternal conditions that necessitate referral to the unit include maternal chronic diseases such as pre-existing diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and rheumatological diseases, among others. She added that there are also cases that are referred due to abnormalities or potential abnormalities in the unborn baby which are detected through a scan done in the primary health care of private clinics. “When these cases come to us we do a detailed scan as well as minor invasive procedures and in some cases we do multi-disciplinary meetings in order for us to make a decision and provide proper care and delivery decision.”

Dr Obaidly said that things that can affect foetal growth or placental function are seen in the unit. “These are quite common especially with the existence of metabolic syndromes, obesity and hypertension. The growth abnormalities are often seen in our unit.”

According to her, the unit is a highly specialized unit that aimed to provide quality based care to high-risk pregnant women and their foetuses.

Dr Obaidly said the services provided include advanced ultra-sound; non-invasive prenatal testing; performing prenatal diagnostic procedures to the indicated cases; prenatal diagnosis of some foetal conditions, besides others.

“We also aim to project and prevent pre-term births in high-risk cases as well as diagnosis and management of cases presenting abnormalities. We assess the women with the high-risk multiple pregnancies, especially twins who share one placenta monochorionic, triplets or more.”

– Dr Sawsan Hassan al Obaidly

Dr Obaidly said that WWRC has been building new educational programmes including a dedicated unit for family education, in the foetal medicine we are in the final stages of making educational leaflets for our patients regarding the unit and the services that are provided.
Arthroplasty is a surgical procedure to restore the function of a joint. A joint can be restored by resurfacing the bones. An artificial joint (called prosthesis) may be used.

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Director of HMC’s Bone and Joint Center and QACON 2020 Chairman Dr Mohamed al Ateeq al Dosari said the conference will allow attendees to learn from some of the world’s best arthroplasty experts. “This First Qatar Arthroplasty Conference has already attracted well-known speakers from the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, and India. We are excited to bring these international experts to Qatar for this event. During this conference, we hope to illustrate our commitment to developing educational opportunities. It is one of the ultimate goals of the Department and is part of our long-term strategy to help expand the knowledge base and surgical skills of our staff.”

The conference features video presentations and hands-on practice sessions and workshops. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn the latest techniques from international faculty and the conference will also include a full day focused on physiotherapy and its importance, both pre- and post-surgery.

Arthroplasty is a highly specialised field within orthopedics; there are approximately 300 cases of hip and knee reconstructions performed in Qatar each year.

“The specialty areas of knee and hip replacement are becoming more common in Qatar. Numerous conditions may result in the need for these procedures - for example, various types of arthritis may affect the joints. Osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease which results in a loss of the cartilage or cushion in a joint, is the most common reason for arthroplasty. Other causes include deformity and dysplasia.”

Al Ateeq said that there are many new techniques and treatments available to patients with these conditions.

“The type of procedure that is chosen will depend on whether the patient meets the stringent selection criteria for the various types of procedures, as well as the location of the joint damage, its severity, and the joint condition.”

For more information on QACON 2020, or to register, visit https://www.hamad.qa/EN/All-Events/QACON-2020/Pages/default.aspx.

First Qatar Arthroplasty Conference in Feb 2020

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Study points to smaller brain region in women on birth control pills

A SINGLE study of a small sampling of women has found that the hypothalamic area of those taking birth control pills are 6 percent smaller than those not on the hormonal regimen.

The hypothalamus sits at the base of the brain just above the pituitary gland, producing hormones that help regulate body temperature, mood, appetite, sex drive, sleep cycles, heart rate and other involuntary functions. The birth control pills studied were the commonly used combination pill, containing estrogen and a form of progesterone.

Researchers led by radiologist Dr Michael Lipton of the Gruss Magnetic Resonance Research Center at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City looked at 50 healthy women, including 21 who were taking oral contraceptives. All 50 were given an MRI, and then their hypothalamic volume was measured.

“We found a dramatic difference in the size of the brain structures between women who were taking oral contraceptives and those who were not,” said Lipton in a statement from the Radiological Society of North America, where he presented his findings at the group’s annual conference recently.

The study was too small to establish a direct cause-and-effect link — Lipton and other experts said that by no means does this indicate that women should ditch the pill — but it showed that the matter merits more study.

A smaller hypothalamus is not necessarily harmful and does not have a discernible effect on experience and behavior, sex researcher Nicole Prause, founder of the California-based Libero research center, told Business Insider Australia.

Lipton said it might not be significant in terms of functioning in women.

“It may not represent a risk at all,” he told Discover. “It may just represent a way we see the effect of how the drug works.” Nonetheless, previous studies have implicated oral contraception in changes to brain structure — further indication that more research is needed.
Does your child need occupational therapy?

Catherine W Gichuki
Doha

Are you a parent and have noticed that your child has some developmental delays? Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) provides Occupational therapy (OT) treatment which helps people with a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability and be as independent as possible in all areas of their lives. In children, occupational therapy helps them with various needs to improve their cognitive, physical, sensory, and motor skills, among others.

HMC Chief of the Occupational Therapy Department Sultan Salem Hammam al Abdullah said that they do occupational therapy to help a patient to participate in the activities of daily living.

For pediatrics the patients include those with cerebral palsy, autism, developmental delay, premature children, children with writing problems, social problems, feeding difficulties among others. “We have pediatric clinics for the children aged between zero and 14 years old.”

According to him, they teach the children who have delays on how to perform simple daily living activities.

He said that, for instance, some children who are born prematurely sometimes have a problem with sucking. “We train these babies. Those with sucking difficulties, we train them on how to suck training their mouth.”

Al Abdullah said that they have programmes for children who have difficulties with writing where they train them on how to write so that when they grow up, they won’t have the deformity in the future.

According to him, they also do splinting for some children. “Before they develop any deformity in their hands, we try to splint their hand into a proper position so that when they grow up, they won’t have the deformity in the future.”

He advised that if one discovers that a child has a problem, he/she should ask to have the child referred to HMC to be assessed for early intervention.

According to him, the services are offered for free.

Catherine W Gichuki

Key nutrients for vegans

An all-plant (vegan) diet may lack these nutrients, making supplements a good idea.

Vitamin B12 (cobalamin)
Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine)
Vitamin B2 (riboflavin)
Vitamin D
Calcium
Zinc*

Source: Medical News, American Dietetic Association, Nemours Foundation
Get screened for breast and bowel cancer

SCREEN For Life, Qatar’s National Breast and Bowel Cancer Screening programme, led by the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) has continuously urged the members of the public to go for screening.

Recently, PHCC officials urged the public to mark Qatar National Day with a commitment to preventative breast and bowel cancer screening.

PHCC Manager of Screening Programmes Dr Shaikha Abu Shaikha said that regular screening should be taken as “a national duty” and a mark of respect for the government efforts made towards meeting the Qatar National Vision 2030 healthcare aims. The Program aspires to participate in achieving the health pillar’s objective, one of the four pillars of the National Vision. “Screen for Life” is an important initiative in line with the 2030 Vision of delivering a comprehensive world-class healthcare system whose services are accessible to the whole population.”

She said that in Qatar they were extremely fortunate to have an excellent permanent and mobile breast and bowel cancer screening facilities providing a professional and complimentary service that can lead to survival of these two leading causes of cancer deaths within the country. “In recognition of the efforts the government has made to ensure this exemplary service, citizens should ensure they are screened regularly and take preventative measures to protect their own health.”

“Screen for Life” offers complimentary screening at permanent suites in Al Wakra, Leabaib and Rawdat Al Khail Health Centers and through mobile unit. Women in Qatar aged between 45-60 are advised to undergo mammogram testing for breast cancer every three years while all men and women in Qatar aged between 50-74 are recommended to test for bowel cancer every year.

“It is important to undergo testing whether people have symptoms or not. Screening can significantly improve survival rate by detecting the diseases as early as possible.”

Members of the public can book a breast or bowel cancer screening at any of the screening suites by taking a prior appointment to avoid any hassle. Appointments can be booked by contacting the dedicated call center on 8001112. People can also visit the website www.screenforlife.qa for more information.
SMOKING IN CLOSED PUBLIC SPACES IS PUNISHABLE BY LAW

According to Article 17 of Law No. 10 of 2016 on the control of tobacco and its derivatives:

Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated in any other law, a penalty of not less than one thousand (1000) Riyals, not exceeding three thousand (3000) Riyals shall be imposed on anyone who smokes cigarettes or tobacco or its derivatives, or permits smoking, in closed public places where smoking is prohibited.

VIOLATION HOTLINE 50302001
GHCC@MOPH.GOV.QA
moph.gov.qa