A milestone for Qatar as New Trauma and Emergency Center becomes fully operational

ATAR healthcare has reached an important milestone as state-of-the-art Trauma and Emergency Center at Hamad General Hospital (HGH) became fully operational recently.

The largest in the region, the facility was inaugurated together with Hamad Medical Corporation’s (HMC) new Hyperbaric Therapy Unit, which houses a cutting-edge hyperbaric oxygen therapy chamber, the first of its kind in Qatar.

The facility was inaugurated by The Amir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani.

The new Trauma and Emergency Center marks a significant expansion of trauma and emergency services in Qatar. In addition to a new Emergency Department, it also offers trauma, urgent, and critical care services and features a dedicated ramp for ambulance arrivals at Hamad General Hospital. The Center’s state-of-the-art hyperbaric chamber can hold up to 18 people and provides oxygen therapy for a range of medical conditions as well as decompression treatment for diving accidents.

The facility also benefits from five trauma and emergency rooms which are fully equipped to be converted into mini operating theaters in the event of a mass casualty incident or an accident requiring immediate surgical intervention. Patients can then be rapidly and seamlessly transferred from there to the Trauma or Surgical Intensive Care Units as well as the operating theaters at Hamad General Hospital via the link bridge on the first floor.

While the ground floor of the new Trauma and Emergency Center is dedicated to walk-in emergencies and the first floor to critical and trauma care patients, the second floor is dedicated to urgent care patients, whilst the third floor has been designed to care for patients requiring isolation or monitoring before being discharged.

Commenting on the opening of the new Trauma and Emergency Center, Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al Kuwari, said the inauguration represents an important milestone in providing emergency and trauma care in Qatar.

“The inauguration of the new Trauma and Emergency Center underlines our ongoing commitment to expanding capacity and improving services. This commitment will...

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New Trauma and Emergency Center becomes fully operational

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ensure that the people of Qatar will continue to receive the best possible care delivered in leading-edge facilities, now and for many years to come. As well as offering the best possible treatment and care, the new Trauma and Emergency Center - at four times the size of the former Emergency Department - also offers a greatly improved patient experience. This new facility will serve as a beacon of excellence in our network of emergency services.”

HMC’s Acting Chief Medical Officer Dr Abdulla al Ansari said, “Not only does the new Center offer a spacious healing environment equipped with the latest technology, but it also benefits from the delivery of care by the very best doctors, nurses, and other clinical staff. These highly trained professionals have been recruited from across the globe and have spent many months preparing for the opening through a number of simulation exercises. Their experience and expertise, coupled with our state-of-the-art facility and ultra-modern equipment, will ensure the best possible care experience.

HMC’s Assistant Executive Director of Nursing in Accident and Emergency Enaam Saleh al Naemi said that if the case is seen at the health center and it is an urgent one, the patient is transferred to the emergency with an ambulance. Al Naemi added that the new facility will help to decrease the waiting time for the patients because they have more equipment and space. “We have 7 X-ray machines, 3 C-T scanners, four ultra sound machines as well as the imaging and the MRI. This is a big achievement also when it comes to imaging because it will reduce the waiting time for the patients who need to do imaging. The lab is also bigger than before.” According to her they have more rooms for mental health services including 7 for males and 3 for females. “The facility has around 256 beds including isolation and VIP rooms.

“The rooms have more privacy because they are meant for one patient. There is now confidentiality and privacy for the patients. The rooms are much bigger and more beds are available compared to the old building,” she said.
Minister of Public Health: MoPH Plays crucial role in ensuring safest quality care

HEALTH Minister has recently said that Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) plays a crucial role in ensuring that the people living in Qatar receive the safest quality care available across the globe. The ambition to provide the safest care comes from the visionary leadership of the Amir HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani as part of attaining Qatar National Vision 2030.

Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohammed al Kuwari recently inaugurated the fifth Qatar Patient Safety Week which coincided with the celebration of the first World Patient Safety Day under the theme, “Speak up for patient safety!”

“Our healthcare system has progressed dramatically in the past few years, and the implementation of the National Health Strategy 2018-2022 shall make a remarkable difference to Qatar’s health journey. Patient safety has been identified as one of the pillars that guides the process of strategy development and implementation.”

As part of Qatar’s commitment to the Global Action on Patient Safety, the minister said this year Qatar Patient Safety Week was joining hands with the WPSD celebrations adopting their slogan; “Speak up for Patient Safety!”.

“Fear of speaking up is a persistent challenge that needs to be addressed in our collective efforts to reduce patient harm. Silence between patients and providers, between healthcare professionals working within the same facility, between public and governing bodies can inadvertently lead to inevitable harm. It is important to acknowledge everyone’s role in bringing issues to light as soon as they are identified and acting proactively to mitigate the risk.”

Speaking up is only attained if the organizations have a well-established safety culture. It can only be achieved when everyone, from the cleaning staff to the CEO of the organization, from the patients receiving care to their family members, feel comfortable and encouraged to voice their concerns as everyone has a role to play in advancing safer healthcare.

This national campaign shall provide a platform to encourage and empower the healthcare actors to explore ways to actively contribute to delivering safer care.

Buildings light up in orange to celebrate the WPSD

As the world marked the first World Patient safety Day (WPSD), on September 17, Qatar was not left behind. A number of buildings including the Ministry of Public Health, Aster Hospital and the Torch Doha were lit up in orange for two days to show solidarity with the day.

The WPSD was endorsed by the World Health Organization this year during the 72nd World Health Assembly as they adopted the Global Action on Patient Safety Resolution, both of which aim to highlight the importance of patient safety as a global priority.

(CATHERINE W GICHUKI)
RE you planning to visit a healthcare soon? If yes, there is no need to worry because the physician will explain to you about the diagnosis, proposed treatment or procedure, its benefits, possible complications and alternatives.

This is because the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has recently developed a National Informed Consent Policy, a policy that informs and emphasizes that each organization has to consider that the patient receives full information about the procedure if undergoing surgery or any other procedure. The physician will use simple language to communicate to the patient and a family member should also be given an opportunity to read and understand the consent form.

The healthcare provider has to obtain a signature before providing the treatment or procedure in the presence of a witness.

Speaking at the MoPH pavilion on the sidelines of the fifth Qatar Patient Safety Week which coincided with first World Patient Safety Day, MoPH Guidance and Standardization Specialist Dr Rasmeh al Huneiti said, “The patient has to be fully informed about the treatment, alternatives, complications, if any, and has to sign the consent. Throughout the treatment journey if the patient has to go through another procedure that might be invasive or require special intervention he/she has to re-sign the policy.”

According to her, all organizations have to comply with the national policy. “The patient needs to read and understand the policy. There has to be a witness and the patient has to be in the right mindset.” She added that if the patient is a minor, a guardian or a legal representative has to sign the policy.

According to her, they have also made the ‘Moments for Medication Safety’ that should be followed throughout from the prescribing, taking the medication, considering the side effects of the medication; making sure the patient is receiving the right medication at the right time, among others.

**Understand and sign consent policy for a proposed treatment or procedure**

**CATHERINE W GICHUKI**

**DOHA**

A

**THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS**

1. Discuss with the patient the diagnosis, proposed treatment / procedure, its benefits, possible complications and alternative options.
2. Use simple lay language & non-technical terms while communicating with the patient, check understanding using teach-back method & give an opportunity to ask questions.
3. Allow patient / family time to read the consent, and consider options. Answer questions & repeat the explanation, if necessary.
4. Acknowledge that the patient has the right to accept or refuse the treatment.
5. Obtain signatures before providing the treatment / procedure in the presence of a witness.

**Speak up for patient safety!**

**CATHERINE W GICHUKI**

**DOHA**

MINISTRY of Public Health (MoPH) has encouraged patients and family members to speak up on patient safety as they go to seek treatment from healthcare providers.

This year’s theme for the World Patient Safety Day (WPSD) which was celebrated on September 17 was, “Speak up for patient safety”.

Speaking at the fifth Qatar Patient Safety Week (QPSW) which coincided with WPSD celebrations, MoPH Acting Director of the Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety Department Huda al Katheeri said, “Our programme this year is designed to emphasize on the importance of speaking up and the role everyone must play to deliver safer care by speaking up. “Silence isn’t Safe. Speaking up is”.

She reiterated that speaking up on patient safety concerns can have a profound effect on preventing harm, promoting employees’ psychological safety, teamwork among units, opportunities to learn and improve.

According to her, it also helps in decreasing staff turnover, and ultimately costs. “Encouraging patients and family members to speak up when they perceive a potential harm adds a crucial safety net as well as it improves their relationship with the care team and builds trust in the system that acknowledges their role in the safety of their loved ones.”

She said that to achieve this, organisations should encourage and empower both staff, patients and their families to speak up and voice their concerns if patient safety is at stake.

Professor Aziz Sheikh OBE, Director, Usher Institute, The University of Edinburgh and Adviser to WHO said, “It is now well recognized that patient safety incidents are very common and that these are responsible for considerable avoidable patient harm. There however remains a fear amongst many healthcare professionals, patients and carers about openly discussing these errors, which in turn impacts adversely on the ability to learn from such events to improve patient care.”
How to prevent school's packed lunch from going bad

HEALTH CHECK TEAM

CHILDREN are vulnerable to food poisoning. Therefore parents and caregivers who send their children to school with a packed lunch should know about the importance of food safety and the risk of food-borne illnesses.

Recently, Hamad Medical Corporation’s (HMC) Director of Dietetics and Nutrition Reem al Saadi said, “Children are among the most vulnerable to food poisoning as their immune systems are not as effective at fighting off bacteria and viruses. If your child brings a packed lunch to school, there are several ways to help ensure their lunch is both healthy and safe.”

She advised that cold foods need to stay cold and hot foods need to stay hot. She notes that keeping food containers closed until lunchtime will help keep foods cold and help prevent bacterial contamination and growth. She recommended packing two cold sources, such as freezer packs or frozen water bottles, with perishable foods that need to stay cool.

“It is essential to keep lunches that contain perishable food items like luncheon meats, eggs, labneh, cheese, or yogurt cold to avoid the development of harmful bacteria that could cause foodborne illness.”

Al Saadi further said, “Pack your child’s lunch in an insulated lunch bag and use frozen gel packs and frozen juice boxes or bottles of water to keep the food out of the ‘danger zone’, which is when a food’s temperature reaches between 5 and 63 °C (41 to 145 °F) and when bacteria grow most rapidly.”

She said that if you pack your child’s lunch the night before school, it should be put in the refrigerator overnight. She added that it is not advisable to send hot foods like soup, salad (stew), or other heated food items in child’s lunch, noting it is difficult to keep hot foods outside the ‘danger zone’. “If possible, your child’s lunch should be stored in a refrigerator or cooler with ice upon arrival at their school. After lunch, make sure your child gets into the routine of discarding any leftover food, used food packaging, and paper bags. Don’t reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause food-borne illness.”

Al Saadi added that lunch boxes or bags should be cleaned with hot soapy water after each use and she recommends packing disposable wipes for children to clean their hands.

She also advised that it was important to provide children with healthy, balanced lunches that include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. She also recommends preparing snack-sized bags of fruits and veggies and involving children in preparing their lunches.

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SAN DIEGO

A HEART attack treatment from San Diego researchers has shown evidence of safety in a human study, along with early signs that it might be effective.

The treatment from the company Ventrix is a liquid that turns into a gel when injected into the heart. It provides a scaffold for new cells to take hold and repair the heart.

By encouraging growth of new muscle, the treatment, called VentriGel, is intended to reduce scar formation and increase cardiac muscle. Since scar tissue doesn’t contract, the burden of pumping is increased for the rest of the heart. Over time, the heart enlarges and begins to pump less efficiently, causing heart failure.

The University of California, San Diego spinoff reported the results last week in Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Basic to Translational Science. A 2013 study in pigs showed that VentriGel can improve performance of damaged hearts.

VentriGel contains a variety of large molecules, collectively known as the extracellular matrix, that support cells. It’s made from connective tissue taken from pig hearts, which are treated to remove all cells. What’s left is the extracellular matrix, said study author Karen Christman, a UC San Diego professor of bioengineering at the Jacobs School of Engineering. She is also a co-founder of Ventrix.

VentriGel provides a porous and fibrous structure for new cells to latch onto. Christman said. The human immune system accepts VentriGel, meaning that immune-suppressing drugs aren’t needed.

The Phase 1 or early-stage trial treated 15 patients, 12 of them men, who had mild to moderate heart failure following a heart attack. Patients received the gel via injections with a cardiac catheter in a minimally invasive procedure similar to how a stent would be inserted.

“Patients in general were feeling better, they could walk further,” Christman said. And heart size decreased for those who had had a heart attack more than one year before treatment.

However, patients knew they were getting VentriGel, so the placebo effect can’t be ruled out. A larger controlled study will be needed to provide more reliable evidence of efficacy.

Ventrix is seeking about $20 million to do that midstage trial, Christman said.

“Ventrix has designed a Phase 2 clinical study and has completed preparations for starting the next phase in the beginning of next year,” she said.
Work, exercise and lead a healthy lifestyle to prevent dementia

Going to work, physical activity and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help in preventing dementia, according to Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) expert.

However, people should not delay approaching a healthcare provider in case of dementia symptoms.

Dementia is an overall term for diseases and conditions characterised by a decline in memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking skills that affect a person's ability to perform everyday activities.

Speaking to media persons, HMC Geriatric Fellowship Programme Director and Deputy Chairman of Geriatrics and Longterm Care Dr Shafi Khan said that many people delay going to seek medical advise because they believe that dementia is associated with old age. “There is a limited understanding of the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. Many people think it is a normal part of ageing. In many cases, family and friends simply do not know how to talk about someone they care about when that individual is experiencing a significant decline in memory, reasoning, and thinking abilities.”

He said that some types of dementia-like conditions are reversible, for instance the dementia caused by depression. “For depression, Vitamin B12 deficiency and underactive thyroid, the symptoms may improve and the person becomes better after treatment.”

Some of the signs and symptoms of dementia are: struggle to remember recent events; forgetting names of friends or everyday objects; repeating things; struggle to follow conversations; problems with thinking or reasoning; and feeling confused even when in a familiar environment, among others.

According to Dr Khan, dementia is preventable if one maintains a working life, being physically active and eating a healthy diet. “Exercise at least 150 minutes per weeks – for instance aerobics- for maintaining a healthy life.”

He said that one has to also have a healthy diet with lots of fish, vegetables and fruits. “One should also decrease the amount of unhealthy fats in the diet.”

According to him, one also needs to stimulate the brain with new things such as finding new hobbies, crosswords, learning a new language. “One can do anything that creates connection in the brain that will improve the condition.”

According to him, brain is like a circuit and the more you keep it active, the more connections will be formed and the lesser the active the brain will under perform.

He advised that if one has any vascular risk factors, they should be corrected.

Lifestyle measures that can help in preventing dementia include not smoking and taking alcohol or substance abuse.

According to Dr Khan, dementia can also be prevented when one maintains a stable working life. “Everyday we come across challenges at our work places and solve them, deal with situations and interact with others. Social interaction is very important. If you don’t interact there is a high risk of developing dementia compared to those who interact.”

He said that having get-togethers and sitting together for a chat really helps. “It’s all about stimulating your brain.”
HAS your car radio been interrupted by an approaching lately? This is because Hamad Medical Corporation’s (HMC) Ambulance Service has recently started a three-month pilot project for a new international FM radio over-broadcast system which will allow its ambulance crews to alert surrounding drivers of their approach.

The system, the first of its kind in the region, is a more advanced version of a system tested by the Ambulance Service in recent years. The internationally used software enables ambulance crews to send a message to cars up to 300 meters ahead.

When activated by the ambulance driver or crew member, the system overrides the FM radio channel playing inside cars within the signal vicinity and relays the message ‘Warning, ambulance approaching. Give way.’ Depending on the registered language of the FM radio channel being broadcast in each vehicle, the warning system will play the message in either Arabic or English.

HMC’s Ambulance Service Executive Director of Healthcare Coordination and Support Services Thomas Reimann said, ‘The radio broadcasting system is interrupting on FM band radios with a message, ‘Warning, ambulance approaching. Give way’ This message can be transmitted 300 metres ahead of the ambulance vehicle. This is a significant distance compared to the lights and sirens which is about 15 metres. The reason why this technology can help us is to get the motorists a better notification of an approaching ambulance so that they get more time to react. We hope that the flow through traffic will be better.’

Currently the warning system will be the message in either English or Arabic depending on the FM radio channel being used by the driver.

Reimann said that in a medical emergency, it is vital that our paramedic teams can get to the scene of the emergency as quickly as possible.

‘For the past eight years we have met, and exceeded, the response time targets set by the National Health Strategy 2011-2016 and we are continuously working to further improve the speed and manner in which we respond to calls. The new warning system will help our ambulances navigate through heavy traffic by alerting drivers clearly and concisely about their approach, giving drivers additional time to make way.’

HMC’s Ambulance Service Senior Manager of Communication Technologies Rashid Andaila said, ‘Drivers can hear our ambulance sirens and see their flashing lights up to 50 meters away, but the new warning system will enable us to give warning to drivers much further ahead.’

In recent years, the Ambulance Service has consistently promoted its ‘Know the 5 to Save a Life’ awareness campaign, which is designed to educate members of the community on the correct action to take when calling an ambulance. The new warning technology supports one of the campaign’s key messages, asking drivers to ‘give way to ambulances.’
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.

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