

BARIATRIC NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER DEDICATED TO THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY FOR THE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Taking action to tackle obesity in the Middle East

- An emphasis on quality, partnership and education are at the heart of Johnson & Johnson's commitment to addressing the Middle East's growing obesity crisis

Every journey begins with a single step

OBESITY and its associated diseases such as Type 2 diabetes are having a serious effect on the health of people in the Middle East. Some of the highest rates of obesity have been seen in the region, where more than 58% of men and 65% of women age 20 or older were found to be either overweight or obese.¹ One in 10 adults has diabetes, half of them undiagnosed, and cases of Type 2 diabetes are rapidly increasing in the region.² Far from alone in this crisis, the Middle East joins the global struggle against a disease that is set to put a staggering burden on health services and economies worldwide.

Recognizing that it is time to take action, Ethicon, a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson Medical, is reinforcing its commitment to tackling obesity in the region. To address the significant burden for patients and healthcare systems alike, the company is dedicated to collaborating with pioneering experts who are leading the science, research and treatment of obesity.

Earlier this year, a number of such experts joined senior members of Johnson & Johnson Medical at a roundtable event in Dubai where solutions to the obesity crisis were discussed and three key areas of unmet need were identified: quality, partnership and education.

Subsequently, Johnson & Johnson enlisted the help of the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity (IFSO) to highlight the importance of accreditation for bariatric centers in the region. The company also plans to further its commitment to resolving the obesity crisis in the Middle East by supporting the third annual Gulf Obesity Surgery Society (GOSS) meeting taking place in December, in addition to launching a new, educational website, challengeobesity.com.

These activities are geared towards ensuring that obese patients in the Middle East are aware of, and have access to, effective treatment.

"Patients suffering from any disease deserve easy access to the highest quality treatment" says Said Haddad, Managing Director for Johnson & Johnson Medical Middle East. "In the case of obesity, there are treatments proven to be effective for eligible patients, and we must act now to ensure they are available to those in need across the region."

Improving the quality of patient outcomes

The IFSO endorsed Bariatric Accreditation Council offers accreditation to bariatric centers that meet its high standard of practice. Accreditation ensures a center has the skill-set, process knowledge and metrics that accompany best-in-class treatment.

In September, Ethicon ran a series of accreditation workshops in collaboration with IFSO in both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Dubai with a view to increasing the number of accredited centers in the region. These workshops were a huge success with over 80 clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals in attendance, including surgeons,

medical directors and CEOs from over 15 of the largest bariatric centers in the Middle East.

At each workshop, tangible guidance on how to become accredited by bodies such as IFSO was delivered and attendees were able to hear the benefits of accreditation directly from three bariatric centers that have already been granted accreditation.

Increasing the number of accredited bariatric centers in the region is vital, as according to Professor Karl Miller, Bariatric Surgeon and Chief Medical Officer for Johnson & Johnson Medical Middle East, "There can be a significant difference in the clinical outcomes between accredited and non-accredited bariatric centers."^{3,4}

Partnering to provide surgeons with critical skills to advance treatment

Ethicon's commitment to partnering with experts has led to the company's continued support and attendance of the GOSS meeting, to be hosted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December.

Ethicon is a primary corporate sponsor of the event and as a result of the company's focus on enhancing surgical capabilities across various bariatric procedures and due to popular demand, Ethicon are hosting a pre-congress 'Mini Gastric Bypass Workshop' to educate healthcare professionals on this emerging bariatric procedure.

Delivering education through engaging platforms

Education is at the heart of Ethicon's plan to help combat obesity and in December the company will launch challengeobesity.com; the region's first fully dedicated online platform focusing primarily on obesity, its complications and possible surgical treatment options. The website, which is available in both English and Arabic, has been developed to serve as an educational platform for surgeons, consultants, nurses, societies, nutritionists and any healthcare professional seeking additional guidance on treating obesity.

Simple navigation enables visitors to access information regarding the pathophysiology of obesity and the life threatening illnesses associated with this disease. The website also features a BMI calculator to help medical professionals identify a patient's eligibility for bariatric procedures, and resources available through the website include videos on the three approved bariatric procedures (sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass and gastric banding), international infographics and support tips.

"The website will further educate those on the front line of obesity treatment in the Middle East", said Ola Fadda, Obesity Manager for Johnson & Johnson Medical Middle East, "Guiding key stakeholders on the eligibility and effectiveness for



Professor Karl Miller, Bariatric Surgeon and Chief Medical Officer for Johnson & Johnson Medical Middle East

all available treatment options, we hope will enable them to provide patients with information which will lead to the best treatment decisions."

Making progress in the journey to solving the obesity crisis

Ethicon is undertaking definitive action in response to the obesity crisis in the Middle East. As a result of the company's commitment to supporting positive outcomes, Ethicon will be hosting a second series of accreditation workshops in 2016 to drive further insights on this critical topic.

Furthermore, Ethicon's partnership with the GOSS could lead to increased availability of surgical treatment options for patients, while their online educational platform will aid the discussions that medical professionals are having with those patients regarding how best to treat their obesity.

Through raising the bar on quality, partnership and education, Ethicon is helping obese patients in the Middle East to be aware of and have access to effective treatment, for what is fast becoming a global health emergency of pandemic proportions.

References

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