

Local

Diabetics could reach 784 million worldwide by 2045

Diabetes in Kuwait reached around 23 percent in 2019

KUWAIT: Diabetes is a ruthless chronic illness affecting the lives of millions across the world. According to the tenth report by International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the number of diabetic patients around the world are expected to rise from 537 million adults today to 784 million by 2045. The United Nations' General Assembly in 2007 chose November 14th to be the International Day for Diabetics, to recognize the urgent need to further multilateral efforts and encourage the betterment of human health by facilitating the attainment of medication, and education in field of healthcare. Diabetes imposes a grave danger to all efforts made to achieve internationally agreed upon objectives, aiming to boost healthcare systems, and put forth national preventive policies.

On the occasion of the International Day for Diabetics, Consultant of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Fellow of Joslin's Diabetes Center in Harvard University, and Chief of Kuwait Diabetes Society, Dr Waleed Al-Dhahi said yesterday that diabetes is one of the most widespread non-infectious diseases in the world, and the gulf region ranks high in terms of diabetic numbers. Dr Dahi clarified that currently there are 537 million diabetic people around the world, ages between 20-79 and it is expected that numbers will rise to 784 million by 2045. He also indicated that the disease is responsible for around 6.7 million deaths this current year, i.e. one death every five seconds. Furthermore, he indicated that the disease caused the spending of around \$966 billion, or a 316 percent increase within the last 15 years.

A report in 2019 revealed that diabetes' spread in Kuwait has reached around 23 percent; up from 19 percent the previous year when there were nearly 400,000 diabetic patients in the country. Dr Amna Shaghoul, Consultant of Internal Medicine, Endocrinology and diabetes in the Ministry of Health (MoH), said meanwhile that according to the IDF report, the average of diabetes' spread in Kuwait reached 14.2 percent in 2006, which means that one in every seven people has diabetes. She also indicated that the percentage could reach 20 percent in case of people older than 79 years. Dr Shaghoul also pointed out that recent studies explore the deep-rooted connection between a person's lifestyle and the probability of becoming diabetic, adding that the probability of avoiding type two diabetes could reach 60 percent via a change of daily lifestyle.

Three types

Dr Dahi explained that there are three types of diabetes: Type one, type two, and gestational diabetes. Type one diabetes affects children and is quite widespread in Kuwait, as it ranks first in the Arab world and third globally. He indicated that it happens at an early age because of the pancreas ceasing to work and therefore comprising its ability to produce insulin. As for type two, it generally affects middle-aged people and is most prevalent type in Kuwait, as it is considered one of ten countries with highest numbers in cases around the world. Dr Dahi stated that this type could be a



Dr Waleed Al-Dhahi



Dr Amna Shaghoul



Dr Qais Al-Duwairi

result of genetics, obesity, or lack of movement and exercise, and it does not happen suddenly. Type two diabetes happens due to insufficient insulin production. The third type, gestational diabetes, is diagnosed during pregnancy and ends with giving birth.

Dr Dahi cited the genetic factor as the main reason for rising numbers of diabetics in Kuwait, as well as lack of exercise and poor nutritional habits. He also indicated that patients must have complete comprehension of the nature of the disease to avoid future complications. Dr Dahi recommended exercising for no less than 150 minutes per week, reducing fast absorbing carbohydrates and fats intake. He also urged patients at home to commit to routine check-ups to know



One death every five seconds

whether medication is working properly or the dosage must be adjusted. Patients must also follow up with diabetic foot examination, testing cholesterol levels, diabetic eye screening and measuring blood pressure.

Dr Dahi also touched on latest developments in the field of treating diabetes. He mentioned newly developed smart bumps for type one diabetes: it measures sugar levels and stops insulin secretion. The smart bump is available in Kuwait in addition to the adhesive patches. As for type two diabetes, Dr Dahi stated that many medications are available, some are weight reducing injections that adjust sugar levels in blood and is considered one of the best options, as well as new tablets that work on getting rid of sugar via urine, and are safe for the heart and kidneys. He stated that research on stem cells shows a bright future in treating type two diabetes, but has yet to be approved by scientific centers. However, Dr Dahi added, many centers override science and use it commercially. Dr Dahi cau-



KUWAIT: The Dasman Diabetes Institute. — KUNA



A machine used at a research lab in the Dasman Diabetes Institute.

tions against commercial use as long-term effects are not yet known. He indicated that Kuwait is a pioneer in the area in terms of combating diabetes, as it provides all types of medications, from tablets and bumps, to providing blood glucose monitors, and overseeing programs that aim to raise awareness on the matter in cooperation with Ministry of Health and Kuwait Diabetic Society.

Diabetes research

Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, General Director of Dasman Diabetes Institute, stated meanwhile that the institute is considered a comprehensive institute for research, treatment, and awareness in regards to diabetes. He added that the institute works in collaboration with MoH, many universities, and esteemed international institutions to prevent and combat dangers associated with the disease. Dr Duwairi illustrated the institute conducts research

and runs many projects revolving around diabetes and its various complications, amongst which is beating type two diabetes clinic, for patients with certain qualifications.

He also touched on ongoing research regarding the effect of diabetes on the brain, a study on the effects of lifestyle, and a study on effects of resistance training at home on body composition, muscle strength and diabetes management for type two patients. Dr Duwairi also mentioned that the institute is developing national record for diabetes in coordination with all primary medical centers and hospitals in Kuwait and conducting studies revolving round role of immunity, genetic factors and environmental components, obesity and lifestyle in relation to diabetes. He stated that more than 3,500 patients visited the institute in around 34,000 appointments since the beginning of this year. —KUNA

Kuwait Airways increases flights, resumes others in December

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways announced yesterday increasing commercial flights to some destinations and re-launching other flights effective December. Fayeze Al-Enezi, the KAC Public Relations and Media Director, said in a statement that the corporation rose the number of commercial flights to London at a rate of one per day, along with three to Cairo, four flights to Dubai and three others a week to New York. The KAC will resume flights to Bangkok at a rate of four per week as of November 29, in addition to four to Tehran on a weekly basis in December, along with two a week to Shiraz effective January. Moreover, it will re-stage flights to Alexandria and Sohag at a rate of three per week in December, added Enezi. Furthermore, the corporation has a plan to operate new routes and increase the commercial flights to a number of destinations starting early 2022. Enezi has affirmed that the KAC will continue to hike the number of its flights to meet mounting demand to destinations favored by the clients. — KUNA

Man dead after vehicle crashed into lamppost

KUWAIT: A man died when his vehicle crashed into a lamppost and flipped over, Kuwait Fire Force said yesterday. Mangaf firemen extracted the body and handed it to forensics, it added. An investigation was opened into the accident.

Meanwhile, a man was injured in a gas explosion caused by a leak in the diwaniya of his house, KFF reported yesterday. Sour fire station men responded, ventilated the place and secured it. The citizen was taken to hospital, it noted.

In the meantime, Hawally firemen put out a fire in an apartment in an eight-storey building. KFF also reported. The fire was on the eighth floor. The building was evacuated and no injuries were reported, KFF noted, adding that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



Kuwait successful in combating coronavirus: Ambassador

BRUSSELS: There are several indicators proving that the steps and measure taken by the State of Kuwait to combat and face the coronavirus pandemic were successful, Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium, the EU and NATO Jassem Al-Budaiwi told a webinar titled "Pursuing Global Health Security after COVID-19", organized by the Brussels-based think tank Bussola Institute on Friday. He listed a number of these positive indicators, including an infection rate of less than two

percent, average daily deaths below one percent, and full vaccination rate of more than 80 percent for all people that are eligible. Budaiwi noted that Kuwait was rapidly approaching a complete return to normalcy and is in its fifth and final phase in combatting COVID-19. He pointed out that the Ministry of Health in Kuwait took necessary and creative measures in order to provide the medical staff with the essential equipment to deal with those infected with COVID-19.

The inter-governmental agencies took advanced steps in order to establish tracking programs and a well-organized medical monitoring system was established at all borders in Kuwait during the massive evacuating operation. Kuwait was one of the first countries that was able to secure vaccines and began vaccinating its population in December 2020. Moreover, Kuwait ensured that food security in the country was not affected by the pandemic. He said that Kuwait continues to support international efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Its total

contributions amounted to \$327.4 million, the latest of which was providing \$40 million dollars to the GAVI Alliance and the COVAX facility initiative, to enhance and fortify global health security.

Finally, Budaiwi said the international community needs to deal with a major problem that developing countries are facing in securing vaccines for their nationals, which unfortunately has attained crisis level in the African continent is below two percent which the international community seriously needs to take measures to protect those people. On a brighter note, the lesson learned from this pandemic is that humanity prevails under any circumstances, he concluded. Secretary General of Bussola Institute John Dennehy in his introductory remarks said the webinar would discuss how the development of good practices in Europe and the Gulf states through the course of the pandemic could assist in building effective leadership for global cooperation and multilateral action to ensure better preparedness for the next pandemic. — KUNA

News in brief

Kuwait records 11 days without COVID deaths

KUWAIT: Kuwait has recorded 11 straight days without a single COVID-19 death after the country reported zero deaths on Friday. The last time Kuwait recorded a coronavirus-related death was on November 1, when the health ministry announced that total deaths reached 2,462. Meanwhile, the ministry announced only 24 new COVID-19 cases on Friday, bringing the total to 412,960. The number of patients receiving treatment at ICUs stood at four as of Friday, while there were 290 active cases and 17 patients at COVID-19 wards in hospitals, the ministry noted.

Kuwaitis in Netherlands urged to follow precautions

BRUSSELS: Kuwait's embassy in the Netherlands on Friday appealed to its nationals to abide by all precautionary measures and follow up health requirements imposed by Dutch authorities. The embassy urged Kuwaitis to call at any emergency at +31 6 39 37 41 57, the embassy said in a press statement. Dutch caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced Friday a partial lockdown in the Netherlands for three weeks to control the soaring number of COVID-19 cases.

Kuwait crude oil at \$82.57 pb

KUWAIT: Kuwait crude oil fell 33 cents during Friday's trading to reach \$82.57 per barrel (pb) Friday, compared with \$82.90 pb the previous day, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation said (KPC) yesterday. Brent crude fell 70 cents to reach \$82.17 pb and West Texas Intermediate went down 80 cents to \$80.79 pb.