

## Local

# Kuwaiti doctor warns of increase in serious injuries due to traffic accidents

## Dr Khajah says his clinic receives at least five cases a day

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** According to World Health Organization, every year the lives of approximately 1.3 million people are cut short as a result of the road traffic crashes. Between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring a disability as a result of their injury. In this context, Neurosurgeon Dr Hassan Khajah revealed that the increase in paralysis cases in Kuwait is attributed to many factors, mainly the use of the phone while driving. He noted that the age category that comes in emergency rooms in hospitals due to accidents ranges from 16 to 30 years old.

Khajah, who is a consultant in Neurosurgery, Spine, and Radiosurgery, told Kuwait Times that many serious injuries happen from wrong practices while driving, including posting on social media while behind the wheel. He added that fractures, partial or complete paralysis are among those serious injuries. He revealed that Kuwait receives scores of cases per day due to car accidents, and his clinic receives not less than five cases per day, adding that even after the surgery, the patients will not become the same as before, but rather chronic diseases will be caused.

"A person lost his whole back because he had an accident on his motorbike. He had a serious avulsion road rash when he fell from his bike and dragged along rough asphalt. We had to make a special opening for stool to leave the body. If a person comes out of the accident alive, his recovery may take months, apart from the hundreds of thousands that are paid for surgical operations, and in the end, he may suffer a permanent disability," he added.

Meanwhile, Khajah stressed that Kuwait is among the advanced countries in the field of medical technology, adding that the era of modern medical technology has enabled doctors to put an end to the suffering of patients with congenital malformations of the skull and spine. "Implanting the battery in the spinal cord costs KD 50,000 outside Kuwait. In Kuwait, the value of the device is KD 10,000," he pointed out. "The battery is a substance called Lioresal. There are pills, used as muscle relaxants, but their effect is intense. We have cases such as cerebral palsy, stroke, or brain hemorrhage. In this case, the body does not control the state of relaxation. For example, if the person groped the pen, his muscles will not allow him to drop it, which causes muscle tension, pain, and



**KUWAIT:** Neurosurgeon Dr Hassan Khajah speaks to Kuwait Times. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

damage to the joints. So, we implant a battery to relax the muscles, relieve pain and preserve the body parts in order to not damage the joints, and we aim for nursing care."

"When I traveled to Sweden, I was surprised by the presence of a whole team specialized in neurosurgery, he noted. "When I returned to Kuwait in 2004, I transferred this technology to Kuwait, and the Ministry of Health provided batteries, and within a year and a half, nearly 50 batteries were implanted in Kuwait."

Khajah said that his name is registered in the United States of America and Scandinavia as a consultant for any case in the Gulf region, adding, "They contact me to take the first approval on the case. They have trusted me as the person in the Gulf to follow up on these cases."

Regarding the battery, he said, "Since then, we started implanting batteries and formed a unit to follow up on patients and making sure the batteries and the appropriate doses are available. When I see the patient has muscle tension, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy, I operate trail implanting before transplanting the actual battery. I place a small tube



**Dr Hassan Khajah** poses in his clinic.

in his back, peak effect for eight hours, and during that, if I find him ready for transplant, I give him 100 micrograms and program the battery to inject this percentage within the 24 hours. The Ministry of Health provided the needed ampoules for KD 220-250, while the battery needs four ampoules. The battery should be changed every five to six years."

"Gamma Knife" is a device Dr Khajah managed to bring to Kuwait to treat tumors, vascular malformations, and other abnormalities in the brain, explaining that the

machine is used for surgical operations on brain tumors without a scalpel, just operating the surgery by radiation. He revealed that Kuwait is the only country in the Gulf that provides it, saying that it

was an important technology in neurosurgery because brain and nerve devices are expensive, and even the surgeon must be knowledgeable and must rely on himself without the help of others.

"The operations' methods have changed in the past 20 years," he said. "The methods have become easier, save half the time, and the success rate is better. Medicine must be developed, and development does not require attending abroad forums; the information can be accessed even through YouTube."

Khajah told Kuwait Times that some operations for removing tumor of the base of the brain take 48 hours. "The most difficult operation for me was in Jahra Hospital at midnight. A policeman was involved in a car accident, and was left with a severe head injury. I was alone, and the success rate was half a percent. The operation was very dangerous, and I had to remove half of the skull to preserve the patient's life, and there was bleeding everywhere. His surviving was a miracle," he added.

### Use of phone while driving main cause of accidents



## KFH participates in Kuwait University job fair

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in the Human Investment and Job Opportunities fair held at Abdullah Al-Jaber theater at Kuwait University. The bank was represented by its HR team through KFH's pavilion where several employment applications were received. All students and graduates' inquiries were answered including those interested in part time jobs.

KFH's participation in the fair prolonged for four days under the title 'You Success Starts at KFH' to attract young national talents. KFH has been always utilizing its capabilities to support youth at all society levels. KFH's participation in this fair is an extension of several participations which KFH made during the year by collaborating with either Kuwait University or private universities and schools.

In his turn, Group Chief Human Resources Officer, Zeyad Al-Omar, emphasized that KFH is keen on enhancing partnership with Kuwait University and all academic institutions as part of its interest in students, education, and support of national talents.

Omar appreciated the role which Kuwait University plays in the qualification and empowerment of national manpower to work in the private sector. He highlighted the significance of participating in Job Fairs to attract national top graduates and talents. Also, he emphasized the significance of the enhancement and development of all communication channels between universities and KFH in different initiatives that would achieve an added value for both parties.

Omar added that KFH has achieved several accomplishments in the field of students' support and cooperation with government and private educational institutions, thus reiterating that KFH shall continue this trend and provide the best to support qualification and occupational development of students and youth.



## Zain staff contributes to blood donation efforts

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, recently held an internal blood drive campaign for its employees. The campaign was held at the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh in continuation of Zain's strategic partnership with the Central Blood Bank of Kuwait. Zain regularly organizes this initiative in line with its Corporate

Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the health sector. The company actively partners with major health organizations in the country, including the Central Blood Bank and Ministry of Health, to affirm its contribution to the local health sector. The campaign aims at encouraging Zain employees to donate blood and save the lives of those who are in most need of blood transfusion.

As always, Zain's blood drive campaign witnessed immense positive participation from employees who continued to donate blood throughout the entire day with the presence of the Central Blood Bank's medical staff. Zain strives to contribute to the community through its numerous corporate social responsibility initiatives and is pleased with

the success this particular activity achieved.

The company is keen to organize internal blood drive campaigns for employees in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank to encourage employees to donate blood and save lives, further reinforcing the company's productive role in social and health activities, especially those that contribute with saving people that are in urgent need of blood like people with rare blood types.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focuses on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For this reason, the company has maintained its support of numerous initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference to people's everyday lives.

## Calls to cut expats' cars older than 10 years in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's government has received a recommendation to cut down the number of cars owned by expatriates which are older than 10 years, in an attempt to address the traffic jams' problem in the country. A study carried out by a technical committee assigned to find solutions to the traffic problems has concluded that there are thousands of vehicles aged between 10 and 20 years which cause pollution, increase risks of road accidents, contribute to the traffic jams' problem and put added pressure on subsidized fuel consumption.

Sources familiar with the study told Kuwait Times the panel members believe that a majority of those cars are owned by marginal, low-wage expatriate laborers; a segment of Kuwait's labor market which the government already intends to reduce as part of its efforts to solve the demographic imbalance

problem. "The study says banning old cars most likely won't lead to mass exodus of skilled labor, who earn a decent income that enable them to own newer models," said the sources.

Furthermore, the recommendation goes in line with demands made by the Environment Public Authority earlier, which had called for a solution to the pollution problem caused by old vehicles in Kuwait. "Kuwait's hot weather causes more harm to aged vehicles in comparison with countries with milder climates."

These recommendations, according to sources, have been made several times before, but excuses such as the lack of metro stations and railway have halted the process. "However, those excuses aren't viable anymore as public transportation and taxi services have become more available and companies can transport their employees in groups," the sources argued. While these recommendations might interrupt the flow of the replaceable parts market, it might on the other hand revitalize the markets of newer cars, according to the sources.

Putting this recommendation in effect can yield several benefits, such as reducing traffic jams and pollution, while at the same time saving public funds by cutting down consumption of subsidized



**KUWAIT:** This file photo shows heavy traffic on a main highway in Kuwait. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

fuel, the sources further explained.

Other recommendations featured in the study include limiting the number of vehicles expatriates can own, or banning expats from owning more than one vehicle. "This recommendation was also based on an Interior Ministry review which revealed serious violations committed by expats who sold or rented vehicles without proper licenses and paying necessary state fees," the sources noted.