

***ICLDC in full support of Sheikh Mohammed's spotlight on blindness***

**Early detection of Diabetes and related eye disease reduces the risk of vision loss in up to 90% cases**



Diabetic retinopathy is cited as the primary cause of vision loss in adults

**Abu Dhabi, September 2008** – In the wake of the Ramadan initiative by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE's Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai to help more than one million people manage against potential blindness, Abu Dhabi's Imperial College London Diabetes Centre (ICLDC)

confirms that if left undetected Diabetes retinopathy can lead to vision loss and blindness.

ICLDC's Dr Maha Taysir Barakat applauded the Noor Dubai campaign and warned that eye disease in both type 1 and type 2 Diabetes patients can lead to total vision loss. However, Dr Maha also shared some good news in advising that total blindness be prevented in 90% of cases, if Diabetes and retinopathy are diagnosed early.

More than 19.5% of the UAE population is said to be living with Diabetes. Meanwhile, retinopathy affects more than 2.5 million people worldwide and is found to be prevalent in 21% of type 2 Diabetes patients and almost everyone with type 1 Diabetes.



Dr Maha warned that although Diabetic retinopathy is a relatively common complication in individuals with Diabetes, very often the patient will be unaware of the risks, as well as the ease of management, if it is detected early.

“The reality is that anyone living with Diabetes is at risk of developing some degree of impairment to vision,” Dr Maha said.

She advised that risk of vision loss can be minimised by maintaining blood glucose levels and blood pressure within the normal range.

However, she warned that there are very few symptoms during the early stages of Diabetic retinopathy and that vision may not change until the disease has advanced.

“People living with Diabetes can reduce the risk of complications, such as retinopathy, by managing lifestyle and by having regular medical checks” she stressed.

“We believe that public health education is crucial and, in support of Sheikh Mohammed’s Noor Dubai initiative, ICLDC is committed to continuing to drive awareness on the treatment and prevention of Diabetes and its complications through our ‘DIABETES.KNOWLEDGE.ACTION.’ campaign, in partnership with Emirates Foundation.”

Dr Maha confirmed that the early detection of pre-Diabetes can lead to the prevention of full blown Diabetes, and so greatly reduce the risk of related complications, including blindness.

**(Ends)**

**Notes to the Editor**

**About Imperial College London Diabetes Centre**



The Imperial College London Diabetes Centre is a state-of-the-art, one-stop facility for out-patients that specialises in Diabetes Treatment, Research, Training and Public Health. Located in Abu Dhabi (next to the Zayed Military Hospital), ICLDC allows the highest level of specialised patient care, from first diagnosis to the continued management of all complications associated with Diabetes.

Imperial College London holds a renowned history and expertise in the study of Diabetes, bringing one of the leading medical academic institutions in the world to Abu Dhabi as a core working partner. Under ICLDC practices, one of the Centre's primary objectives is to provide continuing education for health professionals and the general public. For more details visit: [www.icldc.ae](http://www.icldc.ae)

ICLDC has teamed up with another world-famous institute, Moorfields Eye Hospital in London, to provide eye care for their patients living with Diabetes. Moorfields has opened a branch in Dubai and is now collaborating with ICLDC to treat a range of eye patients in Abu Dhabi. For more details visit: [www.moorfields.ae](http://www.moorfields.ae)

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