

## Diabetes specialists meet to discuss the metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease

### ICLDC's experts on stage at Primary Healthcare Conference; Diabetes and cardiovascular disease are a fatal combination

Primary Healthcare Congress 2008 Speakers  
Metabolic Syndrome & Associated Diseases  
Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre  
Abu Dhabi, UAE  
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**Abu Dhabi, October 2008:** Incretin therapy signals a new era for Diabetes treatment and management, according to Karim Meeran, Professor of Endocrinology and Lead Clinician, Imperial College London.

He was speaking at the opening day of the Primary Healthcare Congress 2008 (Abu Dhabi National Healthcare Centre, October 26-28, 2008).

Professor Meeran suggested that the treatment of hyperglycaemia, or high sugar levels, must start with the simple steps of adopting a balanced diet and embarking upon a regular exercise regime.

However, he warned that some mainstream treatments actually increase appetite and this has led to overweight patients gaining even more weight.

"Incretin therapy introduces an incretin hormone, GLP-1, which can be used on its own or with insulin. It is known to help normalise blood sugar levels by increasing the insulin produced by the pancreas, at the same time decreasing the release of glucagons.

"Findings show that this generally promotes a feeling of fullness after eating a meal, thus suppressing the need to eat more," Professor Meeran explained.

One of the UAE's leading voices in the management, treatment and prevention of Diabetes, Dr Maha Taysir Barakat, confirmed that it is becoming increasingly clear that the epidemic of type 2 Diabetes is associated with decreasing levels of activity and an increasing prevalence of obesity.

Dr Maha was chairing the session on metabolic syndrome and associated diseases.

She said that research has revealed the more than 80 percent of people with type 2 Diabetes are obese or overweight.

"Obesity has reached alarming proportions in the Middle East. Women and children feature prominently in this rise with more than 45 percent of women in the 15-49 age groups identified as overweight or even obese.



“Likewise, there has been a staggering increase of type 2 Diabetes in younger people in the UAE. Children as young as ten are being diagnosed with the disease, many due to obesity driven by physical inactivity and unhealthy diet.”

Dr Maha, the Medical & Research Director and Consultant Endocrinologist at Abu Dhabi’s Imperial College London Diabetes Centre, agrees that exercise is a vital component in prevention of Diabetes, and not just diet alone.

“It is proven that a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day, five days a week can reduce the risk of developing Diabetes by 58 percent,” she said.

**Diabetes and Cardiovascular disease: A fatal combination**

ICLDC’s Consultant Cardiologist, Dr Jenes Peder Bagger is set to chair at the day three session on Cardiovascular Disease.

Dr Bagger, an international expert in heart disease and other metabolic conditions, noted that many people are unaware of the increased risks to the heart that are associated with Diabetes.

He said that, like Diabetes, the symptoms of cardiovascular disease (CVD) may go undetected and untreated for years.

“Most people with CVD do not feel pain or experience any notable early symptoms. This results in around five percent of Diabetes patients suffering what we call a silent heart attack. This is likely to cause damage to the heart and could also lead to sudden death.”

Research shows that both men and women are at equal risk of developing Diabetes, a disease currently estimated to affect more than 19.5 percent of the adult UAE population and predicted to increase to 21.5 percent by 2025.

Dr. Bagger warned that CVD in people with Diabetes is two to six times higher than in people without. This means that the risk of a sudden death related to CVD is consistently greater among patients living with Diabetes.

He further confirmed that research continues to look for the cause or causes of Diabetes and in particular the associated higher risks of heart disease.

“We are constantly looking at methods to effectively manage, prevent, and even reverse CVD associated with Diabetes,” he confirmed.

For more details visit: [www.icldc.ae](http://www.icldc.ae); [www.Diabetesuae.ae](http://www.Diabetesuae.ae)

**~News Release Ends~**

**For media enquiries:**

Anu Bhatnagar,

Strategic Solutions for ICLDC

Tel.: + 9714 3903018, Mobile: + 97150 7286803



Email: [anu@strategicsolutionsonline.com](mailto:anu@strategicsolutionsonline.com)

### **Notes to the Editor**

#### **About Imperial College London Diabetes Centre**

The Imperial College London Diabetes Centre is a state-of-the-art specialised out-patient one-stop facility 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 will be to provide continuing education for health professionals and the general public. For more details visit: [www.icldc.ae](http://www.icldc.ae)