

Sharm Derma Conference in collaboration with Novartis Pharma S.A.E. promotes better understanding of Psoriasis ^[1]

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- *Psoriasis a common, non-contagious, autoimmune disease affects about one adult in 50 worldwide¹*
- *Many people suffer needlessly from psoriasis due to incorrect or delayed diagnosis, inadequate treatment options, insufficient access to care, and social stigmatization*
- *Novartis launched “Skin to Live In”, a Middle East regional integrated campaign launches specifically in United Arab Emirates last year to inspire hope and drive action. The campaign is expected to be launched soon in Egypt.*

Cairo - October 25, 2018 – During the Sharm Derma Congress taking place in Cairo, October 24th – 27th, coinciding with World Psoriasis Day, Novartis Pharma S.A.E (Novartis Egypt) - in collaboration with the Egyptian Psoriasis Patient Society (under establishment) shed light on one of the world's most prevalent autoimmune skin disorders, to help improve patients' lives by promoting better understanding of the illness among the general public and healthcare professionals.

Prof. Assem Farag, President of the Sharm Derma Congress said, “This edition of the Sharm Derma Conference marks the beginning of many initiatives we have underway to raise awareness of psoriasis and take steps towards advancing patient care on many fronts. Despite its prevalence, psoriasis is one of the most misunderstood autoimmune skin disorders. Many people living with psoriasis experience anxiety, embarrassment and depression, they also face discrimination because others fear the condition is contagious. Our goal is to change that.”

“Psoriasis is a common, non-contagious, autoimmune skin disorder that affects almost 125 million people worldwide – about one adult in 50¹,” said **Prof. Mahira El Sayed**, former head of Ain Shams University Dermatology and Venereology Department, and Head of Egyptian Psoriasis Patient Society (under establishment) “It is not simply a cosmetic problem, but a persistent, chronic condition caused by skin cells multiplying up to 10 times faster than normal with the intense volume of red, scaly patches leading to pain, discomfort and even psychological problems.¹”

Psoriasis symptoms vary from person to person. Depending on type, areas of psoriasis can be as small as a few flakes on the scalp or elbow, or cover the majority of the body. The most common symptoms of plaque psoriasis are red, raised, inflamed patches of skin; whitish-silver scales or plaques on the red patches; dry skin that may crack and bleed; and soreness around patches, to name a few³. Risk factors include family history, viral and bacterial infections, stress and obesity. Physical and environmental triggers including cold temperatures, too much alcohol, smoking and having another autoimmune disorder can all contribute to developing psoriasis or increasing its severity.^{3,10,11}

Prof. Magdy Ragab, Professor of Dermatology and Venereology, Alexandria University, spoke of the diagnosis and treatment of psoriasis, “For many patients, the road to diagnosis is long and arduous, and involves trying various therapies to manage their symptoms. The World Health Assembly highlighted that many people suffer needlessly from psoriasis due to incorrect or delayed diagnosis, inadequate treatment options, insufficient access to care, and because of social stigmatization.”

He also spoke of treatment goals saying, “Clear skin is the aim of psoriasis treatment, and a Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) 75, 90 or 100 response is considered an important measure of treatment success. Treatment options include topical creams, oral pills, phototherapy and biologics - the most recent and effective form of therapy.⁴⁻⁶”

A Psoriasis Patient shared first-hand experience about living with and overcoming psoriasis, “Psoriasis was a tremendous burden to live with, one that I have fought for many years, and still fight. With my family’s great support, I was able to overcome so many challenges. By finding the right dermatologist and right treatment, I am now finally able to control my psoriasis instead of having it control my life,” he said.

Prof. Mahira addressed the need to raise awareness saying, “Healthcare providers need more psoriasis education and training, particularly within primary care settings through a network of specialists, including dermatologists, rheumatologists and psychologists. Patients and families should foster the development of organizations that can provide education, counseling and care programs for people with psoriasis.”

Dr. Assem Farag shared Novartis’s “Skin to Live” Middle East regional campaign launched specifically in the UAE in 2017, saying, “Novartis has been at the forefront of raising awareness about critical disease areas, including psoriasis, with the launch of an integrated campaign designed to inspire hope and drive action for patients to break free from the challenges of living with psoriasis. This is a groundbreaking regional patient activation endeavor seeking to empower all those affected by psoriasis, and encourage them to take proactive steps to overcome its challenges. This campaign is expected to be launched soon in Egypt.”

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