



HEALTH

GluCare Integrated Diabetes Center estimates 75% of cases poorly controlled

Thousands of UAE children not receiving proper care

More than 24,000 children living in the UAE are currently living with Type 1 Diabetes, which is a chronic auto immune condition, requiring insulin for survival, and for which there is no cure. The youngest diagnosed patient was recorded at just two years old, and the current healthcare system is designed purely for managing the condition at a very basic level, as opposed to minimising the long-term damage to vital bodily functions to help these children live a healthy and normal life. Although it can be diagnosed at any age, it usually appears during childhood or adolescence and typically, peaks in diagnoses are between children aged four to seven years and 10 to 14 years old.

Approximately 75% of all Diabetes cases in the UAE are considered poorly controlled, which can lead to life-changing complications such as nerve damage, heart and blood vessel disease, as well as damage to the kidneys, eyes and feet. In an already stressful time for parents with newly diagnosed children, additional challenges presented by sub-standard medical care adds more distress to many families. The American Diabetes Association states that most healthcare facilities lack the entire support required to effectively manage the condition, including nurse educators, dieticians and paediatric endocrinologists. To add to this, most health insurance companies do not pay for critical services such as nurse educators, dieticians or medical devices needed to provide a good way of life for juvenile Type 1 Diabetics.

Commenting on the current approach to Type 1 healthcare in the region, Ali Hashemi, GluCare Co-Founder and Chairman said; "The approach to Type 1 care, here and in many parts of the world, is fundamentally flawed, and

is leading to many complications for patients that could easily be avoided. Diabetics are currently offered blood tests every three months to assess their control of the condition. The results then indicate changes that need to be made to their diet and insulin ratios, and then are checked again three months later. The time between visits is essentially a "black hole" because healthcare providers have no way to collect data or manage patients remotely, usually resulting in very little improvement in their blood glucose levels and making it almost impossible to improve their management.

Hashemi continues; "We offer our patients 24/7 care and monitoring, so we are able to make changes with them daily! We track their glucose, insulin, and nutrition in real-time and are able to guide them continuously, including supporting them in their lifestyle choices and their mental health. Diabetes is not just a condition that impacts you physically, it is hugely stressful mentally, especially in children and their parents. We are able to work with them to create real time solutions, each day, which means they can live happier, healthier lives, without living in constant fear of dangerous future complications."

Selina Jorinde, a parent who has experienced first-hand the Type 1 Diabetes medical provision at GluCare for her 10-year-old daughter, said: "With Type 1 Diabetes there's no break, even if you have a good day, you know a bad day might follow, this is why I always say it's like tightrope walking, and this is what parents and kids are having to deal with on a 24/7 basis. Before joining GluCare I was taking my daughter back to our hospital in Amsterdam every three to four months as we couldn't find the same level of care in Dubai.

However, with the Coronavirus pandemic and all the restrictions, we couldn't do that anymore and they urged us to find a good hospital in Dubai. After some bad experiences with other hospitals, I didn't believe that a reliable place existed for Type 1 Diabetic kids, but we really landed in good hands with GluCare. The technology and support they offer is fantastic, especially in comparison to other places in Dubai. It's great to have the support of the doctors and the whole team through the app."

GluCare is calling for a country-wide increase in awareness for the signs of Type 1 Diabetes in children, as many schools and even hospitals don't know how to spot the symptoms. This leads to a delay in diagnosis and ultimately results in children being admitted into intensive care, which could be stopped if people know how to spot the signs.

Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes in children include:

- Increased thirst
- Fatigue
- Unintentional and dramatic weight loss
- Frequent urination
- Changes in behaviour

Parents who notice these symptoms in their children are advised to see a doctor as soon as possible. These parents, along with parents with a diagnosed Type 1 Diabetic child, are encouraged to call GluCare Integrated Diabetes Centre to book a consultation on +971 (0)4 220 1570 or visit the clinic on Al Wasl Road.



Doctors insert a small device that clips onto the flaps that seal the tricuspid valve.

First tricuspid heart procedure in UAE

Previously untreatable patients with severe tricuspid valve regurgitation in their hearts can now benefit from an innovative new procedure to control their symptoms as Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, an integral part of Mubadala Health, joins a handful of hospitals worldwide with the expertise to perform it.

Tricuspid valve regurgitation occurs when the heart valve no longer closes completely when the heart beats. This allows blood that pumps into the heart to flow back out in the wrong direction, leading to increased pressure that floods the body with excess fluid. This fluid can build up in the body's tissue, causing swelling in the legs and organs that significantly impacts a patient's quality of life.

The symptoms caused by tricuspid valve regurgitation can usually be controlled with medication to help the body reduce the buildup of fluid. However, until recently, patients who did not respond well to medication had no viable options to control their condition as surgery to repair it is

extremely high risk. Recent technological advances have meant that physicians at a handful of centers around the world have begun exploring non-surgical methods to restore lost heart valve function.

"The tricuspid valve is perhaps the hardest of the four valves of the heart to work on – particularly when taking a percutaneous approach. The challenge is that the tricuspid valve is significantly harder to see than the mitral valve, for example. Happily, thanks to advances in imaging technology and a tremendous amount of dedication and effort from my colleagues in our cardiovascular imaging section, we are now able to get a good enough view to repair the valve percutaneously (through the skin) – benefiting patients who were previously untreatable," explains Dr. Mahmoud Traina, an interventional cardiologist at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi.

Doctors at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi spent months working on their imaging capabilities and refining their technique in preparation for their first procedure to repair a patient's tricuspid heart valve- the first time it has

been performed in the UAE.

"Over the last few months, we have worked closely with our interventional cardiology team during procedures to improve our focus on this valve and dial in the details to make sure we can see each individual part. It took a lot of clinical research to improve our imaging capability, building on a great deal of advances in real time and 3D imaging to make all this possible", says Dr. Ahmed Bafadel, director of structural imaging at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi.

During the three-hour, minimally invasive procedure, doctors insert a small device that clips onto the flaps that seal the tricuspid valve and ensures they make a strong seal to prevent blood from flowing back through. This device is inserted through a vein in the patient's leg and carefully guided to the heart. Doctors can see what they're doing thanks to an advanced form of ultrasound and place the device while the heart is still beating. This approach is significantly safer than open heart surgery and allows patients to regain lost quality of life caused by fluid buildup.

Regular self-exams and clinical screening important

Late-stage breast cancer a growing concern in UAE

The best defense against breast cancer is early detection, according to oncologists at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, an integral part of Mubadala Health, as they see more women being diagnosed with advanced disease in the UAE.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UAE. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer accounted for 21.4 percent of all cancer cases recorded in the UAE last year, totaling 1,030 new diagnoses. Risk factors for the disease include age, genetic mutations, personal and family history of breast and ovarian cancer, having dense breasts, being overweight or obese, and an unhealthy lifestyle.

Dr. Ahmad Matakah, a Surgical Oncologist in the Oncology Institute at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, says that the hospital's multidisciplinary Breast Health Clinic has been seeing a growing number of late-stage breast cancer

patients, many of whom are very young. The youngest breast cancer patient at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi is 24 and the oldest is 84 years old.

"There seems to be a combination of factors that may be causing this increase in breast cancer cases, including a lack of awareness of screening guidelines and family history, having to visit multiple specialists when a patient notices breast abnormalities, and a delay in seeking treatment," says Dr. Matakah.

"Patients with an early diagnosis, whose cancer is still localized, have a five-year relative survival rate of 99 percent. That is why it is so important that they are screened earlier and receive treatment at the right time for the best outcome."

Dr. Matakah says women should conduct a breast self-examination to look for lumps, thickening or any changes in the skin, and nipple discharge every

month. Referring to the Department of Health – Abu Dhabi guidelines, he says that a screening mammogram must be done every two years starting from the age of 40 if a woman does not have any known risk factors. Experts recommend screening women with a high risk of the disease at an even earlier age.

"Many women with breast cancer have no symptoms. Breast imaging with a mammogram can help detect cancer even when there are no symptoms. This is when it is most treatable."

Dr. Matakah explains the concern by discussing the case of a 35-year-old patient who recently presented at the hospital with late-stage breast cancer because her symptoms were being treated as a dermatological issue for more than a year.

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editor's choice

