



Qatar-based study to explore depression link to heart diseases

An inter-professional and multidisciplinary team from the University of Calgary-Qatar and Hamad Medical Corporation, is pursuing the project supported by Qatar National Research Fund's National Priorities Research Programme

By Bonnie James
Deputy News Editor

For the first time in the Gulf region, a study is underway in Qatar to explore the link between depression and cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), a major health concern across the world.

An inter-professional and multidisciplinary team, from the University of Calgary-Qatar and Hamad Medical Corporation, is pursuing the project supported by Qatar National Research Fund's National Priorities Research Programme.

"In Qatar, CVDs are accounted for 20% of the main causes of death," the team has mentioned in a paper in *Global Cardiology Science & Practice*, a Qatar Foundation academic journal published by Qscience.com

Given that depression is associated with an increased morbidity (the incidence of illness

in a population) and mortality among cardiovascular patients, early detection and intervention can be beneficial.

At present, public information on mental healthcare needs of cardiovascular patients and research programmes aiming to develop and implement intervention strategies to address the issue specific to Qatar's healthcare context are limited.

In Qatar, an in-depth systematic assessment of mental health status and screening for depression among cardiovascular patients are not routinely performed, the research team has observed.

Tam Truong Donnelly, Najla Abdul Qader, Tak Shing Fung, Nidal Assad and Carolyn Byrne from UC-Q as well as Jassim M al-Suwaidi, Awad al-Qahtani and Rajvir Singh from HMC are the team members.

Earlier studies conducted across the world have identified depression as predictive of both developing cardiovascular disease and adverse outcomes among patients with existing cardiac disease.

"Depression has repeatedly emerged as a common co-morbidity in patients with coronary heart disease," it is pointed out.

In the initial phase of the research programme, two studies are to be conducted using quan-

titative and qualitative methodologies.

The first survey is being conducted during a six-month period ending in June this year, covering Arabic speaking in-patients admitted to HMC's Heart Hospital.

The second survey is expected to cover the same patients in another two to four months at the out-patients' clinic.

HMC statistics for the first six months of 2010 has indicated that 2,573 patients were admitted as cardiology in-patients.

"Therefore, we anticipate that our survey might involve approximately 3,000 participants and aiming for at least 80% response rate, our minimum sample size would be 2,400," the researchers have revealed.

The team behind the project is comprised of experts from cardiology, psychiatry, nursing, statistics and epidemiology.

Their objective is to understand the mental health issues, specifically depression, as experienced by cardiovascular patients in Qatar, identify and implement strategies that would prevent depression and assist patients to deal with the condition, and evaluate, facilitate and sustain effective strategies to reduce depression and foster its treatment among the target group.



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