

Conference Reports

Academy of Medical Sciences and Technology (AMST): Third Annual Scientific Conference

"Prospects of Medical Research in Sudan"

Khartoum, 29th November – 3rd December 2005

AMST convened its 3rd annual conference in Sharqah Hall, Khartoum on 29th of November to 3rd of December, 2005.

The conference theme was about medical research in Sudan. The aim was to bring together investigators from the major medical institutions along with major NGOs in Sudan and several international researchers who have the experiences and interest of working on infectious diseases in Sudan. The end purpose is to build the infrastructure of medical research in Sudan.

Outstanding international institutions were involved in this conference including John Hopkins University, Michigan State University, University of Alabama, University of Colorado, National Institute of Health (NIH) all from USA. Imperial College, UK and Danish Bilharzial Lab. (DBL), Denmark have also participated.

About 30 scientific papers were presented in the conference by National and International researchers and professionals. The papers covered research in the aspects of major communicable diseases in Sudan including malaria, schistosomiasis, leishmiansis and Gunea worms. Some other relevant medical problems were included and a separate day was devoted to the problem of HIV/AIDS.

The last session of the conference included presentations, on priorities of health care and health research in Sudan besides collaboration between North and South in research.

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Report of Khartoum Forum on National Food Fortification: Reinforcement of Universal Salt Iodization Program in Sudan

"Fortify Food, Fortify Nation"

Khartoum, 10 - 12 December 2005

Khartoum Forum on National Food Fortification was held on 10 to 12 DECEMBER 2005 in Grand Holiday Villa, Khartoum under auspices of Dr. Tabita Butrus, Federal Minister of Health. The forum was organized by the Nutrition Directorate, FMOH in collaboration with UNICEF. It was attended by WHO and other UN agencies, state ministries of health, NGOs, private sector representatives and experts in Nutrition.

The goal of the forum was to increase the national awareness on the Iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) situation in Sudan and to define the steps needed to improve coverage of iodized salt consumption by Sudanese households.

The meeting focused on iodine deficiency and reviewed the situation in Sudan. Iodine is a natural element required by the human body for proper physical and mental development. The body normally contains 20 – 30 mg of iodine which required for the synthesis of thyroid hormones that in turn are required for regulation of cellular metabolism of the human body.

Iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) constitute a severe public health problem in Sudan. A round 22 % of school age children have goiter and the prevalence reaches 40% in some regions of the country (Kordofan). Although there is national legislation on iodized salt consumption in Sudan, the household consumption of iodized salt is extremely low (< 1 %). Thus IDD are prevalent especially among children whose physical and mental growth is usually impaired.

Sudan has a high potential of local salt production to cover the national needs and to provide for export- The Red Sea area.

In 1994, salt iodization was adopted as a strategy to control IDD in Sudan and several IDD committees were established. However, little is operationally done to control the problem. Several public and private salt factories exist in the country, but the percentage of iodized salt is still very low, comprising only 2 percent (3000 metric tons). The annual need for iodized salt is estimated to be 140.000 metric tons.

The Khartoum forum went on to recommend some measures to improve the situation of iodized salt consumption:

1. Increase awareness of the population on the importance of iodized salt and consequences of IDD.
2. Campaign among policy leaders and decision-makers to reinforce the legislation on iodized salt consumption through political commitment.
3. Focus on capacity building of salt industry on aspects of production, management and marketing.
4. Increase local production of iodized salt to satisfy national needs.
5. Set up an adequate internal and external quality assurance and control system of iodized salt production according to specification.
6. Introduce micronutrient deficiency control and prevention, including IDD, in all development programmes at all levels.
7. Build solid partnership among public and private sector in addition to civil society organizations and the community to implement and monitor the recommendations.

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The 25th Scientific Conference of the Arab Pharmacists Union, Khartoum, Sudan.

"An Arab Pharmacist to support national Economy"
10th – 12th December, 2005.

The scientific conference was convened during the meeting of Arab Pharmacists in Khartoum under the patronage of H.E Omer ElBashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan.

More than 20 scientific papers were presented during the conference covering most of the areas in pharmacy and drug affairs.

Topics discussed included:-

- Globalization and Pharmacy.
- Pharmaceutical Care.
- Pharmacy Education.
- Medicinal Plants and pharamacobiotechnology
- Pharmaceutical Manufacturing.

A series of parallel workshops were also organized focusing on the following issues.

- Communication skills and counseling.
- Role of pharmacists in management of chronic disease.
- Computer application in pharmacy practice.
- Standardization and quality control of natural products.
- Genetic basis for variability in drug response.
- Clinical pharmacy.

A variety of poster presentations were also exhibited during the conference.

Recommendations of the scientific conference revolved around the following major issues

▪ Globalization, trade and pharmacy

- Encourage regional, Arabic and African collaboration and alliances in drug markets, purchase and manufacturing.
- Promote utilization of the great potentials of medicinal plants and traditional medicine in Africa and Arab world.

- Convention of the Arab Medicine Regulatory Affairs Conference (AMRAC) as a platform to harmonize drug regulation and registration in the Arab world.

▪ **Pharmaceutical Care**

- Integration of pharmacy and pharmaceutical care in the medical profession together with physicians and other health workers.
- Promotion of community pharmacy, clinical pharmacy and hospital pharmacy for the benefit of patients and population.

▪ **Pharmacy education**

- Promote cooperation between pharmacy schools and institutes in the Arab region especially in aspects of curriculum development, exchange of teachers and pharmaceutical research.
- Promote collaboration between public and private sectors and introduce modern educational means such as e-learning.
- Capacity building of pharmaceutical research centers to support the educational institutions to train pharmacists for academic and professional purposes.

▪ **Pharmaceutical industry**

- Promotion of local production of drugs through suitable supportive regulations, bilateral protocols and regional collaboration.
- Establishment of robust quality control systems in drug manufacturing to improve the competitive value of drugs manufactured in the Arab countries.

▪ **Medicinal and Aromatic Plants**

- Utilization of modern technology for the purpose of discovery and development of medicinal plants through regional collaboration and exchange of expertise.
- Adoption of intellectual property principles and regulations to protect drug industry in the aspect of medicinal plants and traditional medicine in the region.
- Establishment of quality control to standardize medicinal plants industry and research.

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