



International Bureau for Epilepsy

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3 483 000 people with epilepsy – in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

IBE launched today (Wednesday 21st February 2007) its Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee. The launch took place in conjunction with the 1st Mediterranean Epilepsy Congress in Luxor, Egypt, at which His Excellency, Hatem El Gabaly, Minister for Health and Population, is a special guest speaker.

- Epilepsy is more than a medical diagnosis. It is a condition that also brings with it serious social, economical, physical and psychological consequences for the person receiving the diagnosis and for family members and carers. In launching the IBE Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee we plan to bring about real change for the almost 3.5 million people with epilepsy living in the region, says Susanne Lund, President of IBE.

- Epilepsy is the most common serious brain disorder and a global problem that recognizes no class distinction or global boundary, affecting all ages, races, social classes, and countries. Epilepsy is also a very treatable disorder and, according to figures produced by the WHO, up to 70% of persons diagnosed with the condition could lead normal lives, if properly treated. Yet many people with epilepsy suffer silently and alone, Mrs Lund continued.

- Epilepsy not only imposes enormous burdens on persons diagnosed with the condition; the economic burden that it imposes on national economies must also be recognized. Economic studies have shown that it is cheaper to provide treatment for people with epilepsy, thereby allowing them to live normal lives, playing a positive role in their national economies, than it is to provide the social services they require as persons with untreated epilepsy.

- Now, through the introduction of the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee, IBE member associations in the region will come together to share knowledge and expertise on national issues common to all, added Mrs Lund.

IBE members in the Eastern Mediterranean Region are based in Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

Facts about Epilepsy

It is estimated that 50 million people have epilepsy. Epilepsy is the collective term given to a large group of disorders of the brain, which are characterized by seizures.

A seizure is like an internal electrical storm. It is the consequence of abnormal, excessive discharges of nerve cells. Seizures may vary in duration from a few seconds to several minutes. Seizures are only symptoms of the disorder, they are not the disorder itself. Yet it is the seizures and associated stigma, rather than the condition itself, which ruin the lives of people with epilepsy.

Facts about IBE

The International Bureau for Epilepsy is an international umbrella organization that works to achieve a better understanding and awareness of epilepsy; to dispel the stigma, shame and exclusion it can cause; and to improve the quality of life for those affected by the condition. Through a membership of 113 epilepsy associations in 88 countries worldwide, IBE is reaching out to those whose everyday lives are measured by their epilepsy.

Find out more by contacting us at:

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