



Holistic approach 'key to cancer treatment'

UAE EMBRACES CONCEPT OF TREATING PERSON, NOT JUST THE ILLNESS

DUBAI

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Staff Reporter

The UAE is fast adopting a holistic approach to cancer treatment in the country, with senior officials attending the 2013 UAE Cancer Congress yesterday stressing the need for a multidisciplinary care approach going forward.

The officials espoused the holistic approach saying it focuses on treating the person afflicted with cancer rather than only the illness.

They said the approach — which involves specialities such as medicine, nursing, nutrition, surgery, oncology, radiation therapy, psychiatry, psychology and social work — would help to better minimise the pain and, in some cases, the side effects of cancer treatment.

Nutrition factor

To drive home the message, the three-day congress included workshops on nutrition as an integral component of care and nursing-focused education to enhance the role of nurses in caring for cancer patients.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), a community-based voluntary health organisation in the US, holistic methods are becoming more common in mainstream care and may be used alongside standard treatment or preventive care.



FRANCOIS NEL/Gulf News

New technologies on show

Exhibitors at the 2013 UAE Cancer Congress display some of the latest technology used to treat the disease.

Speaking to *Gulf News*, Dr Shaheenah Dawood, Congress president and head of Medical Oncology at Dubai Hospital, said that several health care professionals are involved in caring for cancer patients, whose health depends on the balance of physical, psychological, social and cultural factors.

"You need to have on board various specialities to care for a cancer patient. This year's Congress brings together experts in the field to discuss the best multi-disciplinary approaches," she said.

Dr Bassim Al Bahrani, di-

rector of the National Oncology Centre in Oman and one of the conference organisers, told *Gulf News*: "Cancer treatment is to be tackled as a package — to deal with a person as a whole. From all aspects, cancer treatment should be addressed taking into account a person's priorities and stressors."

He said nutrition is integral to deal with possible side effects of cancer treatment.

"For example pain medication can cause constipation and/or nausea. Looking into appetite and eating habits will help the patient better comply with treatment."