



## BULLETIN

*December 2008*

### **Events/Happenings**

#### **High School Students And Parents Experience the World of Medicine at WCMC-Q Event**

WCMC-Q held its largest outreach effort to date on November 15 with Medicine Unlimited, a fun, interactive science-based educational event. Doha high school students and their parents flocked to the Intercontinental Hotel in great numbers, making the evening an outstanding success.

The event was organized by WCMC-Q, in partnership with Hamad Medical Corporation and Qatar Diabetes Association, with the goal of raising awareness of the many opportunities available in the health professions and encouraging students to consider a career in healthcare.

“Events such as this play an important role in the future development of Qatar,” said Dr. Maya Hammoud, Senior Associate Dean for Education at WCMC-Q. “Cultivating the talent of Qatari students into the doctors and researchers of tomorrow is essential to ensuring high quality patient care, and to advancing biomedical research in the country and the region.”

A variety of activities explored the complex relationship between our bodies and the world around us, including live experiments, hands-on simulations, quizzes, and fun demonstrations. Medical mannequins allowed them to try out a range of medical procedures, from providing CPR to giving ear and eye exams. A virtual microscope provided a view into the unseen world. Science tables explored the areas of anatomy, physics, chemistry, biology, neurology, surgery and transplantation, while a Research table offered insight into the fascinating field of biomedical research.

Two Qatari high school students, who were winners of the medical college’s essay-writing competition earlier this year, gave presentations about their two-week trip to observe cutting-edge research in the laboratories of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

Faculty and students from WCMC-Q as well as physicians from Hamad Medical Corporation conducted many of the activities, and answered questions and advised about being a medical student and becoming a doctor.

In addition to the informational and educational opportunities for students, their parents benefited from free health screenings provided by WCMC-Q partners, including tests for blood pressure, blood sugar, pulmonary function and bone density.

---

**Office of Public Affairs**  
WCMC-Q  
Education City  
P.O. Box 24144  
Doha, Qatar

**Michael Vertigans**  
Director  
Phone: +974 492 8650  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: miv2008@qatar-med.cornell.edu

**Chris Gibbons**  
Assistant Editor/Writer  
Phone: +974 492 8657  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: cag2027@qatar-med.cornell.edu

contd./-

### **5th Annual Student Research Forum**

On November 11, Medical Program students presented the fruits of their summer research projects at the fifth Annual Medical Student Research Forum. The evening began with a series of oral presentations, followed by a poster session where the first and second year students took questions from faculty, fellow students and guests.

Prize for the top oral presentation went to Farah Siam for *Exploring the Functionality of a Meiosis-Specific Cre in Transgenic Mice*. Mohamed Al-Kazaz took second place for his presentation *New Therapeutic Approach to Alzheimer's Disease: Blocking the Amyloidgenic Pathway Using the Catalytic Site of Pin1*.

The winning poster presentations were Karima Becetti and Sumeja Zahirovic for their joint work on *Diabetes SNPs in Qatar* and Shady Nakhla for *Effects of VEGF on placental morphology and overall fetal health in a mouse model of pre-eclampsia, BPH/5*.

Most of the placements for these research projects were funded by eight-week summer research fellowships awarded by competition. The majority of the students were assigned to leading research teams in the labs of Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medical College in the U.S.

### **WCMC-Q Student Authors Published in New Collection**

WCMC-Q has announced the publication of *Qira'at: Readings from the Students of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, 2004-2008*. Containing the best essays produced by students of the Medical College over the last four years, the book was compiled by the WCMC-Q writing faculty to bring these excellent academic works to a wider audience.

The essays were selected by competition earlier in the year. From over 40 entries, 27 essays were chosen for publication. Of those, the WCMC-Q writing faculty determined the best ten as contest finalists, the top three to be recognized with certificates and prize money ranging from \$300 for first prize to \$100 for third.

Writing faculty from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York were then called upon to judge the finalists. Dr. Paul Sawyer, Director of the Knight Writing Institute, and Dr. Katy Gottschalk, Director of the First Year Writing Seminars, reviewed the ten finalists and selected the award winners.

Tasnim Khalife's (class of 2010) essay "Rieux: A Willing Victim of Abstraction" was named the First Place Prize winner for being "the most nuanced and elegant of the ten semifinalist essays". Marwa Saleh's (class of 2013) essay "Gulf Research: Stem Cell Research" took Second Place and Third Place went to Anayah Sarkar (class of 2010) for "Adolescent Ethics". Samarpit Rai's (class of 2013) essay, "The Psycho-analytical Theory – Is it relevant today?", received Honorable Mention from the judges.

In addition to the initial effort of writing the essays for the classroom, additional honing under the direction of WCMC-Q writing faculty was done to prepare the works for professional publication.

To celebrate the release of the anthology and honor the contest winners, a ceremony was held in November where the winners and honorable mention recipient read excerpts from their essays and received plaques recognizing their achievement.

---

**Office of Public Affairs**  
**WCMC-Q**  
**Education City**  
P.O. Box 24144  
Doha, Qatar

**Michael Vertigans**  
Director  
Phone: +974 492 8650  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: miv2008@qatar-med.cornell.edu

**Chris Gibbons**  
Assistant Editor/Writer  
Phone: +974 492 8657  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: cag2027@qatar-med.cornell.edu

contd./-

*Qira'at* will be available for purchase by the general public at select Doha bookstores later in the year.

### **WCMC-Q comes out on top at Education City Cricket Tournament**

For the second consecutive year, WCMC-Q students are champions of the Education City Cricket League, defeating Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMU-Q) in the league finals. The 20-over match was played at Education City before an enthusiastic crowd of supporters for both sides. Exceptional batting by Nigel Pereira (2010) and team captain Farhan Zakri (2012), and strong bowling led the WCMC-Q to win by a score of 143 to 106.

After a jubilant celebration on the field, the teams gathered for trophy presentations with supporters from both sides there to share the moment. Trophies for second and first place were awarded, and the teams also recognized the contributions of the game officials. Zakri was declared the Man of the Match for taking 4 wickets and his outstanding batting.

Bowler and Batsman of the Tournament were named later in the week. WCMC-Q student Nigel Pereira (class of '10) took the top batsman nod for scoring more than 200 runs and remaining "not out" throughout the four matches in which he played. The Best Bowler trophy went to Misam Jaffer, captain of the TAMU-Q team.

The Cricket League is just one example of the inter-campus cooperation taking place between the various institutions of Education City, the flagship project of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

### **Faculty News**

#### **Cornell Participates in BioQatar Symposium 2008**

Representatives from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and the United States participated in BioQatar Symposium 2008 held at Sharq Village & Spa in Doha November 17 and 18. Dr. Javaid Sheikh, Deputy Dean and Vice Dean for Research WCMC-Q gave a presentation on building academic-industry collaborations in biomedical research and also participated in a panel discussion entitled *Biotechnology in Translational and Clinical Research for Treating Cancer*.

Professor Ronald Crystal, Chairman, Genetic Medicine Department, Weill Cornell and Director of The Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Gene Therapy Core Facility, focused on exciting work being done in his own lab for a vaccine to combat nicotine addiction. He also participated in a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities of establishing a medical technology company in Qatar.

Dr. Sheikh assured the audience that "Research in Qatar is very much reality-based. Yes it can be done, and it is being done here."

---

**Office of Public Affairs**  
**WCMC-Q**  
**Education City**  
P.O. Box 24144  
Doha, Qatar

**Michael Vertigans**  
Director  
Phone: +974 492 8650  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: miv2008@qatar-med.cornell.edu

**Chris Gibbons**  
Assistant Editor/Writer  
Phone: +974 492 8657  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: cag2027@qatar-med.cornell.edu

contd./-

He addressed the benefits – and challenges – of being on the ground floor of such an ambitious venture. Research infrastructure is still in the startup phase and not fully established, he noted, and there is a lack of trained biomedical research personnel. Cost of recruitment, while high, is not insurmountable, he said.

On day two of the symposium, Dr. Crystal described some of the novel strategies his lab is developing relating to vaccines – in particular, using the technology of gene therapy to develop vaccines to deliver monoclonal antibodies and vaccines to halt addiction.

The successful development of a nicotine vaccine has implications around the world, and could be of special interest in Qatar, where 39% of adult males smoke. During a panel discussion following his presentation, Dr. Crystal advised potential commercial partners “If you’re going to develop a biomedical company in Qatar, leverage what’s important to this region.”

BioQatar 2008, which kicked off with keynote speaker Professor Sir Martin Evans, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine, 2007, attracted well over 100 bioscientists, entrepreneurs and others from around the world to explore research trends, to learn about Qatar’s strategy and opportunities, and to initiate concrete venture proposals.

#### **Dr. Mohamud Verjee Addresses Launch of New Family-Centered Focus to Health Care**

Dr. Mohamud Verjee, Director of Primary Care and Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar, was invited to speak on June 18, 2008 about family-centered care when the staff of Hamad Medical Corporation was introduced to “My Family,” an initiative that will explore the role of families in the care and support of patients.

“My Family” may be a new program for HMC, but in fact the concept recognizes and encourages the traditional role Qatari families have long played in the recuperation and support of loved ones.

Dr. Verjee describes the key attributes of family-centered care as the education of families and patients to expand their role in decision-making, health-related behaviors and self-management; involvement of family and friends with patient empowerment; collaboration and team management; sensitivity to non-medical and spiritual dimensions of care; respect for family and patient values, needs and preferences; and free flow and accessibility of information.

At HMC, “My Family” aligns well with this idea of a more holistic approach to treatment. The program will endeavor to alleviate one consequence of modern medicine, which is that some families feel shut out from the medical care choices presented to their loved ones.

“My Family” is the first initiative to be launched following the creation of the HMC Center for Health Care Improvement in May this year. The program exemplifies HMC’s ongoing commitment to improving the communication skills of all staff, with the goal of maintaining and strengthening relationships between patients, families and employees.

---

**Office of Public Affairs**  
WCMC-Q  
Education City  
P.O. Box 24144  
Doha, Qatar

**Michael Vertigans**  
Director  
Phone: +974 492 8650  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: miv2008@qatar-med.cornell.edu

**Chris Gibbons**  
Assistant Editor/Writer  
Phone: +974 492 8657  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: cag2027@qatar-med.cornell.edu

contd./-

## **Forthcoming events**

### **Arab Health 2009**

WCMC-Q is participating in the 2009 Arab Health exhibition and congress in Dubai, UAE on January 26 - 31. Several WCMC-Q faculty members will be in attendance, as well as members of the office of Public Affairs.

Established over three decades ago, the exhibition is the region's largest and most prestigious event for healthcare manufacturers, wholesalers, dealers and distributors in the Middle East, as well as some of the most important and influential decision-makers in the Arab world.

Arab Health has grown substantially over the last few years and the 2008 edition occupied the entire Dubai International Convention & Exhibition Centre, covering more than 60,000sqm of gross space. The 2008 edition of Arab Health Exhibition showcased products and services by more than 2200 exhibitors representing over 65 countries and attracting more than 45,000 participating healthcare professionals from all over the world.

Arab Health also features a large and comprehensive conference program – the Arab Health Congress. NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital will be sponsoring two conferences at this year's event: *MINT – Minimally Invasive New Technology* on January 26, and *Prenatal Paediatrics, Neonatology and Surgical Advances* on January 27.

---

**Office of Public Affairs**  
**WCMC-Q**  
**Education City**  
P.O. Box 24144  
Doha, Qatar

**Michael Vertigans**  
Director  
Phone: +974 492 8650  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: miv2008@qatar-med.cornell.edu

**Chris Gibbons**  
Assistant Editor/Writer  
Phone: +974 492 8657  
Fax: +974 492 8444  
Email: cag2027@qatar-med.cornell.edu