QATAR BIOBANK FINDS INCREASED LEVELS OF OBESITY AND VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY IN LOCAL POPULATION

QF member unveils annual report during International Biobanking Conference 2019


The report provides a wide-ranging health profile and analysis of more than 18,000 Qatari and long-term residents who have participated in the institution’s medical health research initiative. It paints a concerning picture of the local population’s health, including that of Qatari over 18 years and adult expatriates who have lived in Qatar for more than 15 years.

Among the participants in the ongoing study being conducted by Qatar Biobank, 38 percent reported no participation in any physical exercise at all, and 43 percent were recorded as overweight or obese.

Only 12 percent of participants have normal Vitamin D levels, while 25 percent have mild deficiency levels. A further 50 percent have a moderate deficiency level of Vitamin D, while 13 percent were found to have severe deficiency. Vitamin D deficiency is related to several chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular, and inflammatory diseases.

The demographic data obtained from the registration process shows that a similar number of men (49 percent) and women (51 percent) participated in the study, with the highest number of both men and women registering in the age group 25-34.

Dr. Nahla Afifi, Director of Qatar Biobank, said: “The report not only helps us better understand the health of the participants, but also provides useful insights into the health of the entire population.

“The findings are empowering new research in Qatar, which will play an important role in early identification of health problems and taking effective preventative measures. This, in essence, is the primary goal behind Qatar Biobank’s endeavor to collect information and samples from the population.”
The annual report also includes a detailed overview of the achievements of Qatar Biobank throughout 2018, and Dr. Afifi said: “The report is an important learning resource for everyone in Qatar, and can provide insights for members of the community on how to live healthier lives by slightly adjusting their lifestyles.”

A second major study, which Qatar Biobank successfully developed in July 2018, is the Qatar Birth Cohort Study (QbiC). It is the first mother-child cohort study of its kind in the Middle East, and aims to assess the synergetic role of environmental exposure and genetic factors in the development of chronic disease. It monitors the health of women and children, and obstetric characteristics with high prevalence.

“By generating a comprehensive picture of the environmental, genetic, and lifestyle factors that contribute to health issues facing the local population from the start of their lives, we can begin to help researchers and healthcare providers make better diagnoses and provide better treatments for diseases affecting the health of Qatar’s population,” said Dr. Afifi.

Qatar Biobank will continue to collect biological samples from Qatars and long-term residents to enable vital medical research that will enable better healthcare diagnosis and outcomes, and, in turn, a healthier population.

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About Qatar Biobank

Qatar Biobank, a long-term health initiative, was launched by Qatar to reduce the number of chronic illnesses in the population and improve the health of future generations through medical research on the causes of prevalent illnesses. This is done by gathering biological samples and information on the health and lifestyle of Qatar’s people.

In the next few years, research based on the samples and information gathered by Qatar Biobank will reveal the effect of lifestyle, environment and genetics on Qatari population. It will also provide insight into the reasons why certain individuals develop specific illnesses. Qatar Biobank is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, and works in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Hamad Medical Corporation.

To learn more about Qatar Biobank and how to become a contributor, please visit: www.qatarbiobank.org.qa
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Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF’s world-class education system offers lifelong learning opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation’s development.

QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF’s initiatives and projects, please visit: www.qf.org.qa

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