

Egypt fights Spinal Muscular Atrophy

SMA is a genetic disease caused by the loss or defect of genes needed by the body to make the proteins needed for motor neuron cells to survive. Without proper protein levels, motor neurons (the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control functions such as speaking, walking, breathing, and swallowing) die, causing weakness and atrophy. Symptoms may be present at birth (type 1), or develop during childhood (type 2 or 3) or in adulthood (type 4). Zorgensma is the only drug specifically prescribed to address the underlying cause of this condition. This is done by altering the missing or inactive genetic function required to make the proteins needed for the survival of motor cells (1).

Cairo - July 2, 2021: Egypt's Health Minister Hala Zayed said the country would begin treatment for 10 cases of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), according to President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Zayed said in a press release that he would be treated with the world's most expensive drug, costing \$ 2-3 million per dose (2). Treatment begins with 10 cases less than 2 years old, Zayed notes. He said political leaders worked to process all SMA cases, ensuring that a sustainable approach to treatment was established for more than two years. However, this phase requires lifelong treatment, he said (3). Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare neuromuscular disease that is usually diagnosed at an early age and can cause death if left untreated. sisi spoke last week about the country's efforts to treat children with muscle atrophy while examining the cars and equipment used to develop the villages included in the Haya Karima program. He said the treatment of muscle atrophy costs up to \$ 3 million per child and Egypt is ready to protect it even though many other countries cannot afford it (4).

"There are ways to diagnose the disease early in the first months of life. If we knew there would be a cure, it would cost up to \$ 3 million per child," Al-Sisi said. When participating in the program, Zayed said that 204 cases of muscle atrophy had been diagnosed in Egypt, of which more than 32 were not treated. Zayed notes that Egypt will begin treating muscle atrophy cases from next week (5). The Health Department has confirmed that Egypt will begin treatment at the Nasser Institute and Ain Shams Hospital for the first 10 cases. The drug is expensive and will be introduced in Egypt. The Egyptian Medicines Authority had previously announced the registration of the first medicine on the Egyptian pharmaceutical market for the treatment of muscle atrophy. It will also contribute to the elimination of drug trafficking. The government complaint system records complaints from muscle atrophy patients, which US administrators worked as hard as possible to meet their needs (6).

Conflict of interest

There is nothing to disclose

References

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