



YOUR WORLD, YOUR CITY, YOUR LIFE



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This front page piece is a paid post by Al Ain English Speaking School in response to the recent allegations against it. The post was prepared by the school and expresses their view of the matter.
Al Ain Times



AAESS REASSURES COMMUNITY

Al Ain English Speaking School (AAESS) has served children of many nationalities for over 20 years. The primary concern of the School is always to provide a high quality and holistic education for its pupils in a safe environment. The School's approach is always to be honest, fair and transparent in all its activities and we have a high regard for our position in the community we serve: public responsibility and accountability is at the core of the School's being. This is why we have invited members of the media here to discuss these important issues and to share facts which we hope will help all members of the School and wider communities, not only here in Al Ain but throughout the United Arab Emirates.

In response to recent anonymous and very public website postings, flame emails and the subsequent reports regarding an incident in the Primary School at AAESS, the School wishes to make the following statement:

The authors of the website postings have produced a factually inaccurate account of the recent events at the School. They have not been in full possession of the facts and, therefore, have misled the School and wider communities by making untrue statements and distorting the events out of all proportion.

The incident involved a

closed group of five mutually consenting boys in the upper level of the Primary School behaving inappropriately in the toilets: these pupils are minors. All the appropriate staff members were notified, a detailed investigation was begun and appropriate action was taken, all in accordance with the School's Child Protection policies, procedures and advice from the Ministry of Education.

It is clear that this behaviour started outside School. The School has been in close consultation with, and is working alongside, the families involved. The unfortunate reporting of untrue facts has not helped the School or the wider community deals with this matter.

In every school, in every country around the world, there are occasionally incidents with children which are of an inappropriate nature. This does not mean that AAESS takes these matters lightly. On the contrary the School, both its management and its staff, view this as a serious incident and are committed to ensuring the continued safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Since the new management took over last September, new policies, guidelines and initiatives have been put in place, particularly those relating to child protection. It was through the implementation of these

policies and guidelines, and the vigilance and intuition of staff members, that the problem was uncovered on Thursday, 25 January 2007.

At all times, the prime concern of the School was, and continues to be, the wellbeing of the five pupils together with the wellbeing of all other pupils. Central to the School's Child Protection policies and procedures is the need to establish and to maintain confidentiality. This is to protect the individuals involved and their families from victimization, further distress and to allow the School to work closely with the individuals, their families and the Ministry of Education to ensure that all issues are addressed sensitively and effectively. This does not constitute a 'cover-up' as claimed in the emails.

Those responsible for originating the emails, those responsible for propagating them and those responsible for relaying inaccurate or false facts to the media have all breached the confidentiality central to any Child Protection investigation. They have also hindered this investigation and, most importantly, they have undermined the privacy, safety and wellbeing of the pupils and families involved and caused unnecessary distress to pupils and families not involved. As mentioned above, one of the School's primary concerns was to maintain a sense of normality for

all children not involved in this incident and had the required confidentiality been maintained this would have been the case. It would then have been a straightforward decision for parents whether or not to inform their children of the issues contained in this letter.

The investigation into this incident has now been completed and a full report made to the Ministry of Education. Sanctions taken by the School include suspension, encouraging the pupils to undergo psychological treatment and provision of special teaching supervision. The School awaits further instruction from the Ministry of Education with regard to the transfer of these pupils to other schools.

The guidelines and policies that the School has in place include: a Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme focusing on appropriate and acceptable behaviour, at all levels of the school; increased timetabling for PSHCE during the school week; more "circle time" with the class teachers; greater supervision in all activities during the school day, particularly during break times and other initiatives such as the pupil's "Thought Box".

In addition the School is arranging counseling of the pupils involved and for any other pupils or families who believe they require such as-

sistance. One School Counselor was appointed last term and will arrive in September 2007 and the School continues to advertise for an Educational Psychologist.

The School is confident that children in the School were not, and are not, in any danger as a result of this incident. The School would also like to be absolutely clear that no further specific information about the investigation will be divulged. This is an extremely distressing time for all those involved. The safety and interests of all pupils and the confidentiality afforded to all families remain of paramount importance to the School.

This sad event has devastated our community, the pupils, parents and teachers alike. Gossips and irresponsible reporting have created a vicious cycle of distress and pain. Rumours and unfounded accusations breed and feed on fear, insecurity and mistrust. None of this is in the public interest and does nothing to add to the protection and continuing wellbeing of our children. It is in everyone's interest that the responsible and caring sections of the media help us all to interrupt this cycle by providing a fair and clear account of what has actually happened and help everyone refocus on the main objectives of our School, which are education and safety.

Al Ain English Speaking School suspends five male students

- Lucky Mae F. Quilao

In response to the alleged 'flame emails, website postings, and subsequent media reports' about an incident that took place at the Al Ain English Speaking School-Primary School, the AAESS had imposed suspension on the five male students – all minors – believed to have behaved 'inappropriately in the toilets.'

"The investigation into this incident has now been completed and a full report made to the Ministry of Education. Sanctions taken by the school include suspension, encouraging the pupils to undergo psychological treatment and provision of special teaching supervision.

The school awaits further instruction from the Ministry of Education with regard to transfer of these pupils to other schools," said Jon Siviter, Principal of AAESS.

"Personally, and as far as the school is concerned, there is no want to transfer the children to other schools. The Ministry advises that in these circumstances, they only would transfer the children to another school. And we also agreed that it is a right of the parent and the child to decide if they want to stay in this school or whether they want to get into another school. [But] the situation has become complicated... the Ministry has been forced by the publicity that surrounded the incident, the pressure they were under was increased many times and technically unnecessary," he added.

The AAESS maintained that the author of the website posting has produced factually inaccurate accounts of the unfortunate event. "They have not been in full possession of the facts and, therefore, have misled the school and wider communities by making untrue statements and distorting the events out of all proportion... The sad event has devastated our community, the pupils, par-

ents and teachers alike. Gossips and irresponsible reporting have created a vicious cycle of distress and pain. Rumours and unfounded accusations breed and feed on fear, insecurity and mistrust. None of this is in the public interest and does nothing to add to the protection and continuing [of the] well-being of our children," Siviter explained.

The school did not divulge the details of the investigation. It reasoned that the 'safety and interests of all pupils and the confidentiality afforded to all families' are their paramount importance and, thus, just being protected.

Regrettable move

The school's Board of Trustees also backs the action of AAESS and even thinks that the five male students should be shifted to another school. "We had a meeting last night. One of the agendas was this one, about the children, about whether they should be transferred or should be kept in school. We spend a long time talking about it, and lots of people have very strong opinions about how the children could be kept in school had it not gone out to the public and not become a public issue. Because of that, we support, regrettably, that the children should be transferred," said Peter Hodge, Chairman of the AAESS Board of Trustees.

Likewise, parents of the students including the students themselves of the AAESS support the decision of the school and intend to just move on with their lives. "Although we have no opportunities to meet formally, I feel that the parent community regrets the possible consequences... I believe, as a parent, that the children will suffer more the longer this issue is drag at... We do not want our children to distrust their pride in the school. Although this has been a painful learning experience... now we should focus to the educa-

tion of our children," said Rachel Logan, Chairperson of the Parent's Association and Librarian of AAESS.

"We, as the students, were about as disappointed with the matter placed in our school. We have full confidence and trust and respect that actions are taken on the matter. Unfortunately, this issue has gone out to the public. As a student body, we were not upset so much by the action that took place, but what occurred to the community. The bad image, the bad rumors, and more often, unnecessary facts, inaccurate facts that led to the destruction of the school... such things do happen in other schools not only in Al Ain, in UAE but on the whole world. Things like that happen. We like these issues to be resolved today, the rumors and the allegations... we only want to continue the education the school provides us, which in my opinion, is the best education in Al Ain city," said Alex Milenkovic, Senior Student Representative of AAESS.

The AAESS emphasises that they are not taking these matters lightly. "In every school, in every country around the world, there are occasionally incidents with children that are of an inappropriate nature. The school, both its management and staff, view this as a serious incident and are committed to ensuring the continued safety and well-being of all its policies," defended Siviter.

Actions & Precautions

Since September last year, new policies, guidelines and initiatives, particularly those relating to child protection, have been enacted in the school. "It was through the implementation of these policies and guidelines, and the vigilance and intuition of staff members, that the problem was uncovered last January 25," said Siviter.

The said child protection policies values the need to establish and maintain confidentiality to protect the youngsters concerned and their families from further distress, and also for the school to be able to work closely with the individuals, their families and the Ministry of Education sensitively and effectively without unnecessary interference.

"This does not constitute a 'cover-up' as claimed in the emails. Those responsible for originating the emails, those responsible for propagating them and those responsible for relaying inaccurate or false facts to the media have all breached the confidentiality central to any child protection investigation. They have also hindered this investigation and, most importantly, they have undermined the privacy, safety and well-being of the pupils and families involved and caused unnecessary distress to pupils and families not involved," Siviter added. The AAESS has a Personal, Social, Health

and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme on appropriate and acceptable behaviour, at all levels of the school; increased timetabling for PSHCE during the school week; more 'circle time' with the class teachers; greater supervision in all activities during the school day, particularly during break times; and other initiatives such as the pupil's 'Thought Box.' «The school is also arranging for the counseling of the pupils involved and for any other pupils or families who believe they require such assistance. One school counselor was appointed last term and will arrive in September 2007 and the school continues to advertise for an educational psychologist.»

«[But] the school can only do so much. The parents must also take responsibility in the way they bring up their children... the education of the parents is very important. There has to be community awareness.»

- Monique Holtzhausen

The citizens of Al Ain were recently shocked by rumors that five boys were caught for their involvement in inappropriate acts in one of the school's washrooms. However serious and shocking these allegations are, parents should be made aware of the fact that incidents such as these could (and do) happen anywhere and that children need to be given age and culturally appropriate sexual education and information to prevent this from happening to them.

The Ministry of Education has been fully briefed of the incident and the course of action taken by the school in dealing with the matter and has fully supported every decision made. However, despite the best intentions and efforts to avoid situations such as these, parents and teachers need to be aware of the fact that even the best

policy can fail. Children are by nature inquisitive and will search for answers to their questions in any way they can. Whilst it is natural for society to want to lash out in a "knee jerk" reaction when we feel a child's innocence has been taken advantage of and for fingers to be pointed, we need to realize that that we too have a responsibility.

We live in a broken, messed up world where impressionable and innocent children have access to information and images that can cause serious harm if they land in the wrong hands. The best type of protection we can give our children is through open communication with them and giving them factual, age appropriate information and empowering them to know the difference between right and wrong.

(See our Awareness Campaign on page 3 for more advice on protecting children against sexual exploitation and recognising the danger signs)



AL AIN TIMES AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: PROTECTING YOUR CHILD FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Although sexual experimentation may be a taboo and even be forbidden in most cultures, it does not stop it from taking place on a regular basis. "Boys and girls naturally develop sexually as they grow older. As they mature physically, mentally, emotionally and socially they will want to know about the birds and the bees", says Dr. Leon Holtzhausen, a lecturer in Social Work at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).

This raises the age old question that all parents are confronted with some time or another, namely, "Do I talk to my children about sex or do I leave them to find out about the facts of life from their peers and friends? While many parents would prefer to shy away from confronting this issue head on, children and young people are inquisitive and curious by nature. "If they do not get their questions

answered by their parents, they will go somewhere else to find out about what is going on with them - their friends or from dubious sources such as the Internet", Holtzhausen says.

"Today the ready availability of the Internet and easy access to information via chat rooms, blogs and community portals, compounds the issue of sexual awareness and even sexual exploitation of under age children", he warns.

The truth of the matter is that even if you don't talk to young people about sexual development and sex, they will find out about it some way or another. Surely it is better to try and control some of this by giving them age and culturally appropriate information in a loving, controlled environment of the family and school rather than letting them fend for themselves. The void left by caregivers not "educating" their children about their sexual development is very quickly filled by those that do not have your children's best interests at heart.

PREVENTION THROUGH AWARENESS

Ignorance about sexual development, identity, roles and sex in general leads to the real possibility of exploitation and abuse by others. Says Holtzhausen: "You need to "abuse proof" your children in order to prevent them from being sexually exploited by sexual predators like child molesters, pedophiles and others. Keep it from happening by raising children and young people's sexual awareness in an age appropriate, culturally sensitive and controlled fashion".

According to experts, children as young as three years old can be taught by a parent, teacher or counselor about appropriate touching by teaching them the Yes /

No Touching Game.

In this game very young children are taught that their bodies belong to them and that there are areas where touching is acceptable or "Yes", like from the shoulders up. However, the area from the buttocks up and everything in between is of limits or "No".

ROLE PLAYERS IN RAISING AWARENESS

Holtzhausen says that schools, with the consent of parents and students alike, can play a very important role in preventing sexual abuse by offering voluntary sexual awareness courses. "Qualified professionals like a school social worker or counselor can provide structured culturally sensitive education to students. Schools can even offer courses for parents and children, like father/son or mother/daughter workshops on sexual development and identity facilitated by same gender professionals", he says.

Furthermore, parents and teachers should be taught to recognize the telltale warning signs that may be indicative of some form of physical or sexual abuse of the children in their care. Sudden changes in a child's day-to-day behavior, drop in school grades and participation in class, anxiety when going to the toilet, inexplicable bruising on arms or legs in general should be red flags to teachers and

caregivers alike. "More specifically, possession of pornographic material, preoccupation with own and others genitalia, fear of physical contact, masturbation or self-stimulation at inappropriate times or situations etc. are just some indicators that may signal sexual abuse or exploitation of children by others", says Holtzhausen.

HELP IS AT HAND

Linked to the school's awareness programme must be a referral system that refers at-risk children (and parents) to professional help and support like the school social worker or counselor, government social welfare services or community based organizations.

All schools should institute a child-friendly system where children could ask for help or report abuse linked to appropriate referral systems like school social workers, counselors, the police and other relevant government agencies. "For example, a non-threatening entity like a huge teddy bear or stuffed animal with a letter box where young children can "mail" their letters asking for help or reporting abuse can be placed somewhere in the school where it will be easily accessible to the children", Holtzhausen says. "Of course there is bound to be some pranksters mailing false letters, but this system has shown

great success in schools with known levels of child abuse and domestic violence", he says.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ON THE INTERNET

These days kids are often more computer savvy than their parents. They can easily sign up for a game or subscribe to a chat room service without fully understanding the consequences of revealing personal information to strangers. As a rule, children should not reveal personal information about themselves online without a parent's permission. This includes their name, email address, postal address, phone number, photo, school address, etc.

Teach your children about some of the risks involved if they reveal their name, address, telephone number and/or email address online and print out some of these general rules for your children to follow as they surf online. You can help children protect their privacy and themselves if you teach them to be privacy-wise. Learn more about how to teach your kids to keep their personal information to themselves online by visiting the kids privacy section of

www.GetNetWise.org.

SIGNS OF ONLINE SEXUAL CHILD ABUSE

- Your child spends large amounts of time online, especially at night.
- You find pornography on your child's computer
- Your child receives phone calls from men you don't know, or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize.
- Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.
- Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on the monitor when you come into the room.
- Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.
- Your child is using an online account belonging to someone else.

Dr. Leon Holtzhausen is a Criminal Justice Practitioner with more than 12 years criminal justice and security experience.

He is currently employed as an Assistant Professor in the Social Work Programme, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain UAE.

Sources and further information:

www.GetNetWise.org

www.helpguide.org

www.stopitnow.com

www.alaintimesUAE.com

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Education & Culture

Brisbane business committed to building stronger relationship with UAE and Bahrain

THE Right Honorable, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councilor Campbell Newman said he was delighted to host the first official trade mission to the Middle East by an Australian Lord Mayor.

This trade delegation of highly-respected businesses from Brisbane is here to actively investigate potential trade and investment opportunities with businesses throughout the Middle East, the Lord Mayor said.

The 15 businesses participating in this week's trade delegation to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are committed to growing the emerging relationships and business contacts made during their visit.

The delegation has already met with a number of industry leaders and will leave the region on 5 February.

While the main purpose of the visit was to explore mutually beneficial trade and investment opportunities between the two regions, the Lord Mayor said Brisbane offered extensive benefits for international investment.

As the capital of the Australian State of Queensland and situated in

the States rapidly growing south-east region,

Brisbane has much to offer international business interests and we are also keen to explore business interests in the UAE and Bahrain, he said.

Representatives participating in this mission come from Brisbane's building and construction industry, the education sector, food and beverages sector, engineering disciplines, information and communications, technology and the environment sectors are participating in the mission.

The Lord Mayor said the hand-picked delegation was designed to foster and enhance long-term cultural and economic relationships with businesses in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Dubai, key emerging markets for Brisbane investment.

The Lord Mayor is also inviting a delegation of civic, commercial and cultural representatives to visit the 2007 Asia Pacific Cities Summit, which is being held in Brisbane, Australia, in September this year.

Business from the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain interested in meeting with the Brisbane trade delegation are asked to contact Chris Jenkins at AUSTRADE on 03 3995 7522

- Sharon Al-Khateb

Al Ain Women raise their voice for women in Voices



Al Ain Theatre Society (AATS) is set to stage their first production of 2007, Voices, a series of short plays written and performed by women.

Director, Ann Sandin said this is a charity event and all proceeds from the production will go to Women for Women International, an organization helping women in war torn countries rebuild their lives.

"Voices is a neat suite of ten diverse yet thematically-linked works, all giving voice to different phases in women's lives," Ms Sandin said.

If it sounds like a night of heavy theatre and yawns, it's not! Voices has plenty of humor and absurdity as characters work through situations the audience is sure to find familiar in some way.

Ms Sandin said: "Most of the scripts are by Western playwrights, including the award winning Wendy Wasserstein, but we have tried to stretch

ourselves a bit and incorporated some contemporary Arab drama as well".

A recently translated selection by Palestinian playwright Samia Qazmouz Bakri makes an intriguing addition to the evening.

Dale Taylor, AATS Secretary said she hopes for a large turnout to support the Women for Women International charity as AATS hopes to give a sizable donation for women in Iraq and Lebanon.

Voices will be performed at the Multaqa, UAE University Social Club, Al Ain, 7.30pm, on 23rd and 24th February 2007. Tickets 35AED available at the House of Arts



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- Sharon Al-Khateb



Mayor of Brisbane visits Al Ain

As part of his visit to the UAE, the right honorable, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councilor Campbell Newman and the trade delegation of businessmen spent the day in Al Ain where they were received at the Diwan by HH Sheikh Hazza'a Bin Tahnoon Al

Nahyan, H.E. the Undersecretary for Al Ain Municipality and other high ranking officials. The visiting delegation discussed bilateral relations between the two cities. Currently Brisbane City Enterprises, in collaboration with Cansult Maunsell Consultancy Services,

are undertaking the Landscaping outsourcing projects in Al Ain. A tour was arranged for the visitors to visit Al Ain Oasis and Jebel Hafeet followed by a luncheon hosted by Al Ain Municipality at the Mercure Hotel.

Waitangi Day



Every year on 6 February New Zealand marks the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. In that year, representatives of the British Crown and over 500 Maori chiefs signed what is New Zealand's founding document. The day was first officially commemorated in 1934 and it has been a public holiday since 1974.

For some people Waitangi Day is a holiday; for many, and especially for Maori, it is the occasion for reflecting on the Treaty. Since the 1970s, the style and mood of the commemorations on Waitangi Day have been influenced by the increasingly heated debate surrounding the place of the Treaty in modern New Zealand.

Waitangi Day is recognised as New Zealand's national day, but the long-standing tensions associated with it are always likely to surface in one form or another. The date is an important marker in the country's history; recognition of the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi as the nation's foundation document will continue to encourage leaders, communities and individuals to mark the day in new ways.

Russian lady rockstheskiesoverAl-Ain

Winning the crown for solo aerobatics, Svetlana Kapania not only took the first prize of 50,000 dollars, She also thrilled spectators with her consistent display of dare devil aerobatics. The runner up prizes went to German pilot Klaus Schrodtt and Russian Victor Chmal who win 30,000 and 20,000

dollars each. The Event proved to be a great success and Mohammed Abdullah Bin Barak Al Dhaheri, the general coordinator of the Al-Ain airshow should be congratulated for bringing this superb event to the Al-Ain Airshow.



Al Ghadeer

From Al Ain Land

الغدیر

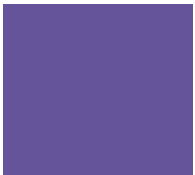
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T Dealing with thalassemia



Lucky Mae F. Quilao

When Dr. Elsadig Kazzam, Senior Consultant Cardiologist and Associate Professor in UAEU-Faculty of Medicine, did his research about the human heart, he saw that a certain blood disorder could affect it and lead to more fatal problems. So he talked to some of his colleagues who also happen to be interested with the infection, considering it not only as scientific research problem, but as a public problem as well. Their curiosity and willingness to improve the quality of life inspired them form a group, chaired by Dr. Kazzam, which will help combat the disease.

"We are building a society now, the Thalassemia Research and Working Group.

This group would try to work with the patients in Al Ain. Our working group is going to check on the four aspects of thalassemia, while the research group, in his or her own specialties, will be doing researches on this," said Dr. Kazzam. "Now, we are currently looking on the effect of thalassemia on heart. Usually, there are two reasons why a patient dies because of his or her heart: because of heart failure or abnormalities. The latter can be brought by the blood transfusions a person with thalassemia needs to have, as the extra iron can accumulate in the heart leading to iron overload," he added.

Thalassemia is a condition that occurs when the proteins

in the hemoglobin is altered or mutated. This happens when one or more of the genes – the alpha or the beta hemoglobin chain – fail to produce protein. It has two types: the thalassemia minor, which is a situation where only one of the genes is not working, and the thalassemia major, which is a situation where genes fail completely. Thalassemia minor is less severe than thalassemia major.

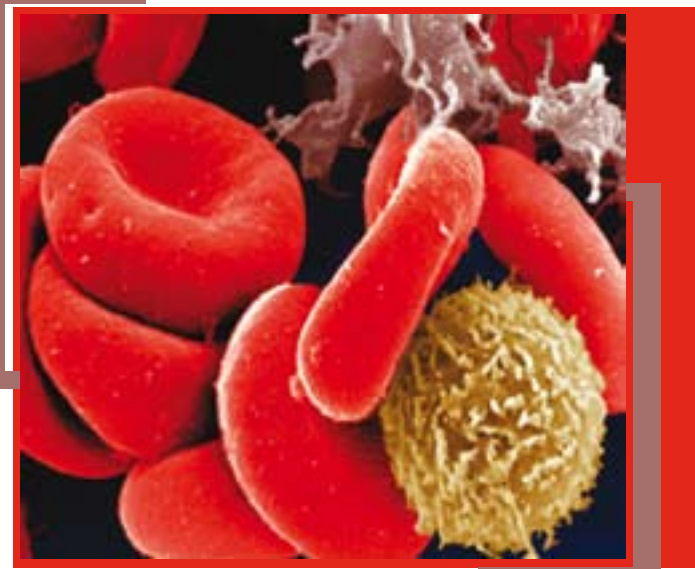
Among the objectives of the group are to have a Patient Care Officer that will give their patients the best possible treatment and follow up on them; have a Family Support Officer who will assure, comfort, advise and give psychological and moral sup-

port to the patients' families whenever they need help; and make a 'thalassemia register' in Al Ain and Abu Dhabi that will contain information on all patients such as their name, age, social condition, and others. "But it will be keep anonymous so that only the people involved will know about it. This will be useful for the government, patients, relatives and researchers," said Dr. Kazzam.

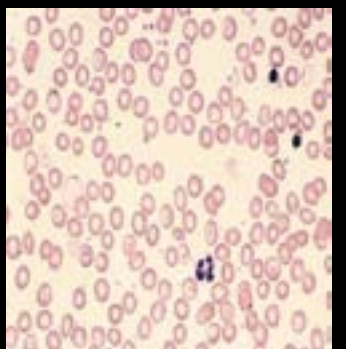
"We also like to increase public awareness and community service. We will have symposiums and lectures, and orient the families, societies, communities, women associations and patients associations. We would also organized highly specialised courses where

we would invite national and international experts to deal and discuss the problem of thalassemia."

The Thalassemia Research and Working Group is composed of hematologists, cardiologists, psychologists, scientists, x-ray technicians, and members of the UAEU-Faculty of Information. It also contacts from the United Kingdom. "I hope that when this group establishes itself, it will be a Thalassemia Society in Al Ain or in Abu Dhabi. After we ascertain this, we will coordinate with the Dubai Thalassemia Centre to work as one team."



Interview with Dr. Inaam Hassan,
Senior Consultant Hematologist and Associate Professor in
UAEU-Faculty of Medicine



Al Ain Times: How do you define Thalassemia in layman's terms?

Dr. Hassan: Thalassaemia is an inherited blood disease due to defective haemoglobin production.

It results in mild or severe anaemia. I think most people know about the haemoglobin, which is the chemical (protein) inside the red blood cells. It carries oxygen from the lungs to all body parts.

Severe forms of thalassemia are usually diagnosed in early childhood and are lifelong conditions.

Al Ain Times: But how can one have Thalassemia?

Dr. Hassan: We all inherit many of our characteristics through the genes we take from our parents, Similarly we inherit our haemoglobin type. We get one haemoglobin gene from our mother and the

other from our father. Hemoglobin includes two kinds of protein chains called alpha globin chains and beta globin chains. The usual, most common (natural) haemoglobin is normal haemoglobin A. In people with thalassemia, the genes that code for alpha or beta globin chains are missing or variant (different than the normal genes). If the problem is with the alpha globin part of hemoglobin, the disorder is alpha thalassemia. If the problem is with the beta globin part, it is called beta thalassemia. There are both mild and severe forms of alpha and beta thalassemia.

A person who inherits a thalassemia gene or genes from one parent and normal genes from the other parent is a carrier (thalassemia trait). Carriers often

have no signs of illness other than mild anemia, but they can pass the variant genes on to their children. If two people with beta thalassemia trait (carriers) have a baby, one of three things can happen:

'The baby could receive two normal genes (one from each parent) and have normal blood (1 in 4 chance, or 25 percent).

'The baby could receive one normal gene from one parent and one variant gene from the other parent and have thalassemia trait (2 in 4 chance, or 50 percent).

'The baby could receive two thalassemia genes (one from each parent) and have a moderate to severe form of the disease (1 in 4 chance, or 25 percent).

In some nationalities where thalassemia trait

is common, the chance of marriage between carriers is high and consequently increasing the number of individuals with the severe form of thalassemia. Pre-marriage test is important to eradicate thalassemia major. In some nations it is compulsory.

Al Ain Times: How grievous can Thalassemia be?

Dr. Hassan: Thalassaemia is not cancer. People who are carriers (they have thalassemia trait) usually have no symptoms and need no treatment. However, in the most severe form of alpha thalassemia (alpha thalassemia major) babies usually die before or shortly after birth. And in Beta thalassaemia major which is the most serious type of the beta thalassaemia the affected individual can not produce

enough mature haemoglobin which is essential for carrying oxygen (air) around the body and after a while the body will not survive unless regular blood transfusion is started. It is usually diagnosed after the first three to six months of life

Al Ain Times: What are the symptoms?

Dr. Hassan: The symptoms of beta thalassaemia major usually start when a child is about three to six months old. Initially the infant starts to lose weight, have difficulty with keeping food down, starts vomiting, has diarrhoea, gets infections easily, fails to thrive and appears generally unwell. Individuals are very anaemic, especially if they are not given blood transfusion. They will appear pale, feel tired and lethargic, breathless and have difficulty with minimum physical activity. There may be yellowing (jaundice) of the eyes and

skin due to excessive breakdown of red blood cells. Growth may be delayed, especially if they are not well managed or have not followed the doctor's instructions for their treatment

Al Ain Times: How is Thalassaemia diagnosed?

Dr. Hassan: Thalassaemia is diagnosed using blood test of a complete blood counts and special through Hemoglobin studies (Electrophoresis), which measure the type of hemoglobin you have, Family genetic study using DNA tests which is done in special laboratories.

Al Ain Times: What can the patients do to protect themselves from it?

Dr. Hassan: They need to follow their treatment plan and see their doctor regularly for check up and treatment. Treatment for thalassaemia depends on the type and severity of the disease. People

who are carriers (they have thalassaemia trait) usually have no symptoms and need no treatment. Those with moderate forms of thalassaemia (for example, thalassaemia intermedia) may need blood transfusions occasionally, such as when they are experiencing stress due to an infection. Those with severe thalassaemia have a serious and life-threatening illness. They are treated with regular blood transfusions to keep the hemoglobin levels and red blood cell numbers at acceptable levels. Transfusion therapy can allow a person with severe thalassaemia to feel better, enjoy normal activities, and live longer. However, transfusion leads to excess iron in the blood (iron overload), which can damage the liver, heart, and other parts of the body. To prevent damage, iron chelation therapy is needed to remove excess iron from the

body. Without treatment, children with severe thalassaemia do not live beyond early childhood. People with severe thalassaemia who are able to continue therapy successfully may live into their thirties, forties, and beyond.

Al Ain Times: Is it curable?

Dr. Hassan: Yes, through bone marrow transplant. Bone marrow is obtained from a matched unaffected brother or sister or unrelated donor and transplanted to the person with beta thalassaemia disease. It is best done when the child is very young. This treatment has been given successfully to many people world wide. However, this treatment is not without side effects.

Al Ain Times: What are the chances that a UAE citizen would have the disease?

Dr. Hassan: It is rather common to carry a Thalassaemia gene.

A neonatal screening survey of alpha-thalassaemia (alpha-thal) among the United Arab Emirates (UAE) nationals was conducted on 418 consecutive cord blood samples. It demonstrates that 49% of the cases studied were found to have an alpha-globin gene defect (carriers). Of course the percentage of those who have the disease is much lesser. You need to have two genes to have the disease. We do not want to frighten the public. Regarding Beta thalassaemia I do not know its prevalence exactly.

Lucky: What are the consequences if Thalassaemia is not treated?

Dr. Hassan: Death. But almost all patients are diagnosed during the initial stage so there is a chance that they can start treatment early with regular blood transfusions every 3 to 4 weeks, and iron chelation therapy. If they can do this, they can live longer with a

better quality of life.

Lucky: Among the Thalassaemia carriers, how many are able to survive?

Dr. Hassan: Carriers live a normal life.

Lucky: Can they have iron supplements?

Dr. Hassan: Iron supplements will not help. It is dangerous to take iron supplement. They already have a lot of iron in their body. They can not make use of this iron which will accumulate in their body (iron overload), which can damage the liver, heart, and other parts of the body (iron overload), and can damage the liver, heart, and other parts of the body. What they need are healthy red blood cells, which they would get from blood transfusions.

Terminologies

Hemoglobin:

a protein that is carried by the red cells. It is composed of two similar proteins, the alpha and the beta, which "stick together" to be able to pick up and release oxygen in the lungs normally to maintain the viability of cells.

Variant hemoglobins:

abnormal hemoglobins that have accumulated over millions of years. Most of them function normally, found only through specialized research techniques, while others can produce clinical disorders, such as sickle cell disease.

Thalassaemia :

a genetic blood disorder caused by the impaired production of either the alpha or beta hemoglobin chain.

Beta Thalassaemia:

a defect in the production of beta globin protein from the beta genes leading a shortage of beta

subunits. It is caused when the affected gene makes essentially no beta globin protein (beta-0-thalassaemia); or when the production of beta chain protein is lower than normal, but not zero (beta-(+)-thalassaemia). The severity of beta thalassaemia depends in part on the type of beta thalassaemic genes that a person has inherited. One-gene beta thalassaemia has one beta globin gene that is normal, and a second, affected gene with a variably reduced production of beta globin. This condition is considered mild since one-beta gene functions normally and only causes mild anemia, detected only by a routine laboratory blood evaluation. Two-gene beta thalassaemia produces a severe anemia and a potentially life-threatening condition. The severity of the disorder depends in part on the combination of genes that have been inherited. Consequently, the clinical

picture is more complex than might otherwise be the case for three genetic possibilities outlined.

Alpha Thalassaemia:

a defect in the production of alpha globin protein from the alpha genes leading to a shortage of alpha subunits occurs; almost always involves the loss of one or more of the alpha globin genes. In the instance that the person has only one functional alpha globin gene, it could result to a severe, transfusion-dependent anemia called Hemoglobin H Disease. If all four alpha globin genes are missing, the condition is incompatible life. Most fetuses die in utero with this condition (hydrops fetalis). Alpha thalassaemia in which two genes are missing on the same chromosome occurs commonly in people of Asian ancestry.

Alpha thalassaemia occurs when one or more of the evenly divided four

alpha chain genes fails to function due to a genetic accident. The loss of one gene diminishes the production of the alpha protein only slightly. A person with this condition is called a «silent carrier» because of the difficulty in detection; it can only be detected in research laboratories. The loss of two genes (two-gene deletion alpha thalassaemia) produces mild anemia. This can be detected by routine blood testing. The loss of three alpha genes produces a serious hematological problem (three-gene deletion alpha thalassaemia) and causes a severe, life-threatening anemia, which would require blood transfusions. With the three-gene deletion alpha thalassaemia, the beta chains begin to associate in groups of four, producing an abnormal hemoglobin, called «hemoglobin H disease,» which is a condition wherein oxygen is not carried out properly, mak-

ing it functionally useless to the cell; and where protein damages the membrane that surrounds the red cell, accelerating cell destruction. The loss of all four alpha genes is the worst. It is not even compatible with life. The gamma chains produced during fetal life associate in groups of four to form an abnormal hemoglobin called «hemoglobin Barts». Most people with four-gene deletion alpha thalassaemia die in utero or shortly after birth.

Thalassaemia Centres:

1. Al Wasl Hospital, Dubai - the only specialised centre in the whole of the Gulf region, accredited by the World Health Organisation and Thalassaemia International Federation as one of the best centres in the world, offers free blood transfusion, daily medication and genetic counseling

2. Emirates Thalassaemia Society - organisation

that aims to eliminate Thalassaemia disease from our population and help, in effect, the progress and prosperity of United Arab Emirates. They arrange Health education and Thalassaemia disease awareness programs, motivate and encourage people to donate blood for Thalassaemia patients, provide information and guidance to those families at risk of having a child with Thalassaemia disease, encourage Thalassaemia patients to be self-sufficient and productive so as to help the progress of our country, and seek the moral or financial cooperation of eminent societies and organizations in UAE, as per the law of the country. You can join their society through being an active member, associate member, or honorary member.

Sports



Al Ain Times : Abu Dhabi , Dubai . Sharjah, RAK

UAE Dream Team honoured



H.H. Sheikh Khalefa Bin Zayed Al Nahian & UAE National football team

UAE President and other Emirates rulers have honoured UAE footballers for their win of the Gulf Cup for the first time in the history of UAE football .

Last week all UAE lived a week long of festivities in celebration, honouring the UAE national football team

win of the 18th Gulf Cup that was held in Abu Dhabi from 17 to 30 January, 2007. UAE President ordered the payment of 500,000 Dhs to each of the players for this great win.

In addition, Sheikh Mohhamad Bin Rashed Al Maktoum Vice President of UAE Prime Minister ruler of Dubai presented

each player with a villa.

Sheikh Sultan Al Qasemi ruler of Sharjah donated 8 million dhs to the national team as a token of appreciation for their victory.

Also Sheikh Saud Bin Saqer Al Qasemi Crown Prince of Ras Al Khaima ordered the payment of 4 million dhs to the members of the UAE national team.

Last but not least, many donations came from private sources by many local business men and private companies and organisations .



JINNAH CUP 2006-07: Quarter-finals Report

Al Jabri CC, WED CC, Pakhtoonkhaw CC and Mughal CC sailed into the semi-finals with commendable victories in quarter-finals of 11th Jinnah Cup played over the week-end in Al Ain.

Al Jabri CC won by a big eight wicket margin against Yaser CC. Al Jabri spinners bowled out Yaser CC for a paltry 159 in 24 overs as they wrecked through their batting line up. Only opener Sajid Butt offered some resistance with a patient 55. As Al Jabri CC turned out to bat, opener Ashfaq took the attack to the sword hitting an aggressive unbeaten 121 (2 sixes, 19 fours) as Al Jabri CC reached the victory target in just 16 overs.

WED CC batsmen unrelenting batting form continued as opener Azeem Ansari (75, 9 fours), Javed Asim (75,

4 sixes, 10 fours) and dependable Sajjad Hussain (80, 13 fours), were among runs to amass a huge 271 in 25 overs. In reply, the task of scoring 11 runs/over proved too tough for Al Ain Sportsplex lads as they were restricted to 176/7. Abhishek hit a brave 55 (1 six, 7 fours) as WED bowlers kept the runs under check with their tidy spells.

Pakhtoonkhaw CC proved too hot for Al Faraa CC beating them by five wickets. Al Faraa CC were bundled out for just 144 in 21 overs with Awad and Nabeeb both taking three wickets each. When Pakhtoonkhaw CC came in to bat, Al Faraa CC had Pakhtoonkhaw in trouble at 68/5 but a defiant unbeaten 51 by Awad sharing an unbroken stand of 74 with Hassan Afridi (45) saw them to

a comfortable five wicket win in the end.

Mughal CC's experience came in handy against Bin Saqr CC in this crucial quarterfinal tie as they beat Bin Saqr by four wickets. Bin Saqr CC who had been performing well so far in the tournament succumbed to 165 in 24 overs as no batsman stayed long at the wicket. Mughal CC reached the target with comparative ease in the end in the 20th over winning by four wickets. Masrur took three wickets but was expensive.

Pakhtoonkhaw CC will now face Al Jabri CC in the first semi-final to be played in the morning while WED CC will lock horns with Mughal CC in the afternoon tie this Friday (2nd February).

Summarized Scores:
Yaser CC lost to Al Jabri

CC by eight wickets.

Yaser CC 159 in 23.3 overs (Sajid Butt 55, Aamir 28, Irfan 3/34, Rashid 2/22, Saif Al Jabri 2/25) Al Jabri CC 163/2 in 16 overs (Ashfaq 121n.o.) Man of the match: Asfaq of Al Jabri CC

WED CC beat Al Ain Sportsplex by 95 runs.

WED CC 271/9 in 24 overs (Azeem Ansari 75, Javed Asim 74, Sajjad Hussain 80., Yunus Rehmani 27) Al Ain Sportsplex 176/7 in 24 overs (Navneet 22, Abhishek 55, Nilesh 36, Aqeel 2/18, Sajjad Hussain 2/20, Waris Baloushi 2/25) Man of the match: Sajjad Hussain of WED CC

Al Faraa CC lost to Pakhtoonkhaw CC by five wickets

Al Faraa CC 141 in 21 overs (Thomas Chacko

23, Ranjeet Singh 22, Zubeen 34, Awad 3/25, Nabeeb 3/35, Mahmood 2/26) Pakhtoonkhaw CC 142/5 in 19 overs (Awad 51 n.o., Hassan Afridi 45 n.o., Allah Ditta 2/21, Ram Singh 2/43) Man of the match: Awad of Pakhtoonkaw CC

Bin Saqr CC lost to Mughal CC by four wickets.

Bin Saqr CC 165 in 24 overs (Bilal 21, Masrur 24, Shah Alam 21, Asif 3/35, Azeem 2/41) Mughal CC 168/6 (Amanat 22, Saeed 36, Ayub 40, Imran 33, Asif 20 n.o., Masrur 3/46) Man of the match: Asif of Mughal CC

SEMI-FINALS FIXTURES FOR FRIDAY (2nd February 2007):

ACA Ground No. 1: Pakhtoonkhaw CC vs Al Jabri CC at 8 a.m.

Dr.Ahmad Tariq Ansari

ACA Ground No. 1: WED CC vs Mughal CC at 2 p.m.

12TH NEHRU CUP STARTS ON 9TH FEBRUARY:

The 12th Nehru Cup 2006-07 starts on 9th February, 2007 in Al Ain. The tournament will be held under the auspices of Al Ain Cricket Association in which sixteen teams are expected to participate.

The Nehru Cup will be sponsored by Al Faraa Group of Companies and co-sponsored by UAE Exchange.

The draws for the tournament will be held on Thursday, 1st February. For further details, teams can contact Mr. Nasir Butt, Tournament Secretary at 050-5633100 or 03-7517618 (working hours).

ALAIN SPORTPLEX CRICKET PROMOTION

Under the Patronage of
H.H Sheikh Sultan bin



Sheikh Sultan bin Hamdan

Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan the upcoming Al Ain sportplex in Al Ain is progressing at a fast pace.

Mohd. Khalifa Al Dar-



maki General Manager of Al Ain Sportplex has announced that

Imran Cricket Coaching Camp which has been conducting coaching classes for school going children for last 5 years has merged with AlAinSportplex.

MrMohd. Khalifa Al Darmaki said that H.H.Sheikh Sultan bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan has shown keen interest in Cricket and has agreed to provide all the facilities of international standard, in the ongoing sports city project at Khatam al Shiklah next to Al Ain Mineral Water factory, barely 7 minutes drive from Hilton Hotel.

Mr Imran Hussain, Cricket Activity Manager of the AlAin Sportplex informing about the cricketing development has said 4 full size practice cement pitches are ready along with the nets.

The ground has been leveled and the grass has been sowed, and after fixing flood lights the practice session will start by 15th February. Two changing rooms ,a cafeteria and a conference hall is also under construction and should be ready before the start of practice session.

Along with the practice wickets work is in full swing for a full sized cricket grass ground with turf wickets. Expert advice has been taken, in making this ground to international standard. The first tournament on this ground with prize money will be held 2007 in which teams from other emirates will be invited.

Imran Hussain is a cricketer whose ambition has been to provide his knowledge to young children has groomed up many players from

schools who are now playing in senior league He plans to take the team to India, Pakistan, and UK for international exposure to players.

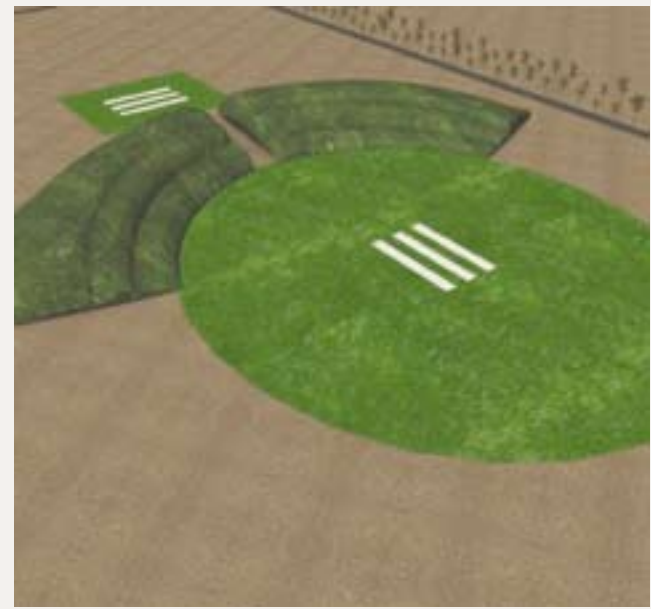


Imran Hussein

He proposes 4 levels of team which is under11 , under13 ,under 17 and senior.

In the on going Jinnah cup at Al Ain , Al Ain Sportplex team comprising of school children, beat their other team in their league and reached the quarter finals.

Al Ain Sportplex Under 17 and Under 13 team participated in the Prestigious Gulf Nissan cup being held in Abu Dhabi Cricket ground in which 24



teams from UAE ,India ,Bahrain, UK are participating and we are proud to inform that on our very 1st appearance, the Under 17 team advanced to Semifinals of the tournament.

Thanking H.H.Sheikh Sultan bin Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Mr. Darmaki for their kind gesture, Imran Hussain feel the cricket is going to go leap and bounds and will help all

the cricket lovers in Al Ain.

Individuals, Parents, Cricket clubs and Schools wishing to have more information may contact Mr. Imran Hussain on:

0507936899 and
037688888.

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