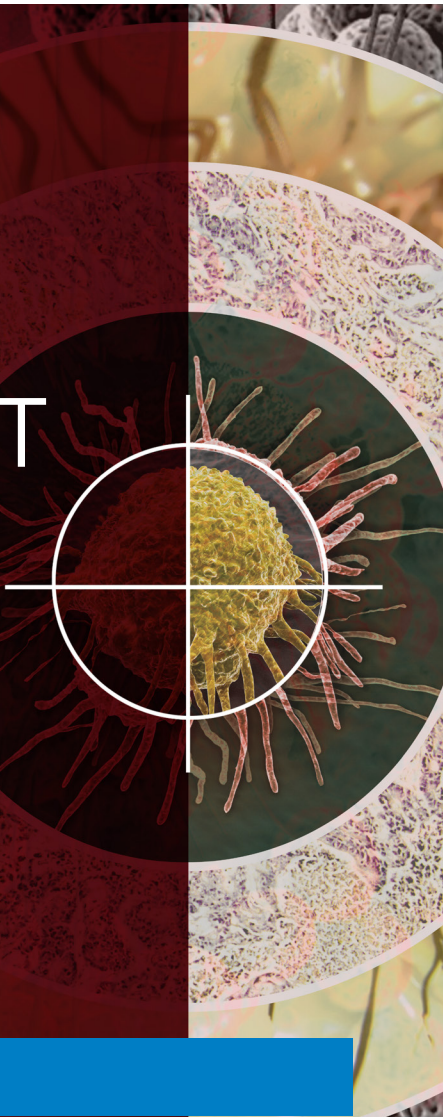
The Economist EVENTS

WAR ON CANCER MIDDLE EAST

Care for all

March 12th 2019
Dubai



SUMMARY PAPER

waroncancerme.economist.com

@EconomistEvents
#WarOnCancer

Diamond sponsor

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
Finding cures. Saving children.

Accredited by

CPD CERTIFIED
The CPD Certification Service

Unlocking innovation

"Screening must be more accurate, more personalised," added Dr Jhetam. How could AI be leveraged to improve the accuracy of screening? And how can western and alternative medicine be brought together to develop integrated oncology?

Ridwaan Jhetam
Clinical oncologist and pharma executive

How can innovation revolutionise cancer care in the Middle East, and in time to meet the challenge of a doubling in cases by 2030? "People talk about treatment; they should talk about management," said Sunil Anand, the executive director of ECHO Trust, at the start of the day's final session. "You need team-based care, closer to where the problem lies [...] Even if you double the number of specialists you won't deal with this problem; you have to take it to the peripheral. Don't call it the last mile, call it the first mile; you go there and see how the problem is addressed."

"A lot of practical measures could be levelled at tapping innovation from elsewhere," said Ridwaan Jhetam, a clinical oncologist and pharma executive, questioning why colorectal cancer has declined in the US and Europe but risen in the Middle East. One solution might be home testing kits for colorectal cancer, as issued in the post to over 50s in the UK. "Screening must be more accurate, more personalised," added Dr Jhetam. How could AI be leveraged to improve the accuracy of screening? And how can western and alternative medicine be brought together to develop integrated oncology?

Management of costs is one area where a more innovative approach could be taken, suggested Danijela Jelovac,

assistant professor of oncology at Johns Hopkins Medicine. "It's important to engage all stakeholders when assessing costs and insurance costs. Targeted therapy could ultimately be more cost-effective than inefficient drugs." Extra care or complications of drugs could drive costs in such a situation, said Dr Jelovac. "You need good monitoring to see if treatment is working," she added.

Dr Jhetam added that this could tie in with innovative "success-based" access models, through which insurers only cover patients for a treatment if they respond to it. Dr Jelovac in turn suggested that regulations needed adapting to cut the cost of drugs by allowing for wider use of generics and biosimilars. "An innovative treatment can come to the market within a year," she said, "whereas it might take four years for generic drugs to become available."

The Middle East could do more to appeal to pharmaceutical firms to come to the region ahead of Europe once FDA approval had been granted, said Manel Chikh, founder and CEO of Zaphyr Pharmaceuticals. "We have excellent infrastructure, good clinics, fast-track approval is strong; the challenge is that firms go to Europe first, they don't think about the Middle East—but they can start immediately here."

True innovation should view a problem through a different lens—and in this case one is more important than the rest. "Patients should be the centre of all your activity," said Dr Anand. "Then, innovation will come."

Copyright
© 2019 The Economist Group. All rights reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of The Economist Group. Whilst every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of information presented at this conference, neither The Economist Group nor its affiliates can accept any responsibility or liability for reliance by any person on this information.

The Economist Events
The Economist Events is a part of The Economist Group, publisher of The Economist newspaper. Sharing The Economist's commitment to informed, impartial and independent debate, we are recognised the world over as a leading provider of highly interactive meetings—including industry conferences, private gatherings and government roundtables—for senior executives seeking new insights into important strategic issues.

20 Cabot Square, London, E14 4QW, United Kingdom
Web www.economistevents.com • Phone +44 (0) 207 576 8118 • Fax +44 (0) 207 576 8472