



Press Release

GE Healthcare and Qatar Science & Technology Park to research advanced technologies for breast cancer detection

- *GE Healthcare to establish new breast cancer team in Qatar, adding to global research capabilities*
- *Research to focus on developing new technologies for the earlier detection of breast cancer*
- *Breast cancer accounts for about 23% of all new cancer cases in women worldwide¹; incidence rising in Middle East*
- *Aligns with GE's 'healthymagination' initiative, built on the global commitments of reducing costs, improving quality and expanding access for millions of people*

Doha, Qatar; June 2, 2009: GE Healthcare, the healthcare business of General Electric Company (NYSE:GE), and Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP) have entered into a research & development program related to advanced technologies for the early detection of breast cancer. Capitalizing on GE's strong existing partnership with QSTP, Qatar Foundation's research accelerator, the goal of the joint research program is to develop new and innovative technologies for screening and diagnosis of breast cancer using the latest developments in digital X-ray mammography.

According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the world. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women in the Arab countries and accounting for 13–35 percent of all female cancers. Significantly, there is an emerging regional trend of younger women being diagnosed with breast cancer; almost 50 percent of women diagnosed are below age 50, with a median age of 49–53 years, compared with a median age of 63 in industrialized nations. This has important implications for the diagnosis of breast cancer, as breast tissue tends to be denser in younger women, making early detection more difficult. Across the region, locally advanced disease is very common and total mastectomy (breast removal) is the most commonly performed surgery.²

GE Healthcare plans to establish a new breast cancer team at QSTP in Doha, Qatar, which will accelerate innovation breakthroughs in a proven system, and is in addition to its activities worldwide. Based at GE's Advanced Technology & Research Centre in QSTP in Doha, the team will form an integral part of GE Healthcare's global mammography development organization. The research program will include the identification and validation of new and advanced mammography technologies, the development of new software interfaces and the performance of clinical trials. Products developed from this program will be sold by GE Healthcare globally.

Dr. Tidu Maini, Executive Chairman of Qatar Science & Technology Park, said, "QSTP aims to host leading medical research that would contribute to the national strategy for knowledge economy. Our partnership with GE Healthcare is a step towards making Qatar a global medical innovator while delivering real health benefits for the local community."

The State of Qatar continues to increase efforts in fighting cancer through awareness and screening programs in conjunction with the Qatar National Cancer Society and Al Amal Hospital, the primary cancer specialty center of the leading healthcare provider, Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). The programs focus heavily on awareness and prevention of breast cancer, the most common cancer among women in Qatar.



According to HMC, between 1989 and 2004, breast cancer accounted for only 13 percent of the cancer cases in Qatar, but the incidence of breast cancer has been growing alarmingly over the last few years. If detected early, breast cancer can potentially be treated easily and with minimal damage to the body. However, according to HMC, the local stigma attached to this prevalent disease has not been eliminated, despite frequent local awareness programs. Many women still hesitate to consult a doctor even after finding abnormalities during self-examination. Statistics show that if breast cancer is discovered in the early stages, there is more than a 90 percent survival rate of up to 10 years.

Investment in healthcare is a key priority for the State of Qatar, with a budget of \$2.9 billion allocated for Health in 2008/9. As well as significantly increasing the number of hospital beds and expanding associated facilities for diagnosis and treatment, Qatar intends to implement a pioneering e-health program across its hospitals and clinics nationwide. This e-health program will include the introduction of an electronic health record (e-HR) for every citizen of Qatar, with the objective of improving quality of patient treatment while simultaneously reducing overall administration costs. It is anticipated that by 2011 nearly 80 percent of clinicians in Qatar will have access to the e-HR.

GE recently announced that it will spend globally \$3 billion over the next six years on healthcare innovation that will help deliver better care to more people at lower cost. In addition, the company will commit \$2 billion of financing and \$1 billion in related GE technology and content to drive healthcare information technology and health in rural and underserved areas. These worldwide investments totaling \$6 billion are the foundation of GE's healthymagination initiative, which is built on the global commitments of reducing costs, improving quality and expanding access for millions of people.

"Around the world, more than 1.2 million people annually are diagnosed with breast cancer, and the incidence of breast cancer at an earlier age is on the rise in this region. We are pleased to partner with the QSTP team to develop advanced applications to support the earlier detection of this prevalent disease," said Richard di Benedetto, President and CEO, GE Healthcare - Eastern and Africa Growth Markets (EAGM). "We are in the business of finding solutions for healthcare that really bring a change to people's lives. By collaborating with QSTP, we intend to help transform healthcare delivery across the region and globally."

GE and digital mammography

GE Healthcare is one of the only companies today providing the entire mammography imaging chain from tube, detector to review workstation, coupled with integration of the comprehensive local requirements for each customer. GE's Senographe platforms are the first full-field digital mammography systems designed to meet all clinical needs, from screening to diagnostic and interventional procedures and designed for future advanced applications.

The benefits of digital mammography are such that the exam usually takes less than half the time of traditional film-based exam, and there's less of a chance the patient will be called back to retake images. Moreover, as digital mammograms are stored as an electronic image, this means they can be quickly sent to other centers for a second opinion. This will be particularly beneficial to rural hospitals, or where there is a shortage of radiologists, and offers the promise of faster diagnosis.

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Note to Editors

About GE Healthcare:

GE Healthcare provides transformational medical technologies and services that are shaping a new age of patient care. Our broad expertise in medical imaging and information technologies, medical diagnostics, patient monitoring systems, drug discovery, biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies, performance improvement and performance solutions services help our customers to deliver better care to more people around the world at a lower cost. In addition, we partner with healthcare leaders, striving to leverage the global policy change necessary to implement a successful shift to sustainable healthcare systems.

Our "healthmagination" vision for the future invites the world to join us on our journey as we continuously develop innovations focused on reducing costs, increasing access and improving quality and efficiency around the world. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, GE Healthcare is a \$17 billion unit of General Electric Company (NYSE: GE). Worldwide, GE Healthcare employs more than 46,000 people committed to serving healthcare professionals and their patients in more than 100 countries. For more information about GE Healthcare, visit our website at www.gehealthcare.com.

About Qatar Science & Technology Park:

Qatar Science & Technology Park works to transform Qatar into a knowledge economy by attracting commercially-oriented research and development. Part of Qatar Foundation, founded by the Emir, QSTP is co-located with campuses of Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M, Weill Cornell and other renowned universities. QSTP provides an environment for local and international companies to interact with the universities and develop new technologies. EADS, ExxonMobil, GE, Microsoft, Shell, Total and others have already committed \$225m of R&D investment at QSTP. www.qstp.org.qa.

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¹ (International Journal of Surgery (2007) 5, 225 – 233).

² Parkin, M. CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians; March/April 2005; vol 55: pp 74-108. News release, American Cancer Society.