

NEWS REVIEW



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum award for Arab Management awarded to Sobhi Batterjee

ENGINEER Sobhi Batterjee, CEO of Saudi German Hospitals Group, has recently received the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum Award for Arab Management in Dubai.

The panel of judges made their decision based on Engineer Sobhi Batterjee's achievements and accomplishments during his lifetime as a developer of healthcare in the region. This is one of the most prestigious awards for Arab managerial excellence that recognizes outstanding managerial achievement in the region.

Responding to the recognition, Engineer Sobhi Batterjee said: "I am touched upon receiving this

award and thank Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum for this recognition. I hope that the award lights a spark amongst people across the region and inspires them to adopt a greater degree of social development related causes. I will continue to do my work in reaching out to help and treat patients across the region and in other Islamic nations."

This is one of the many awards received by Engineer Sobhi Batterjee in healthcare and community service in the region. He is not only focused on profit and investment but is keen to help people with his contributions to a variety of social

activities. The social causes Engineer Sobhi Batterjee supports include the Blood Bank Charity Society, the Institute for Developing Saudi Businessmen, the Institute for Training and Health Management Research and the Family Business Academy.

Engineer Batterjee established the largest private higher education network in the region that operates nine colleges. This includes the Batterjee Medical College in Jeddah that is run in collaboration with the University of Tubingen in Germany. He has designed, financed and operated multi-purpose hospitals and contributed to the health and medical management and develop-

ing the society through non-profitable organizations.

The Saudi German Hospitals Group has initiated strategic moves to grow at a much faster pace in the region and beyond and add to the innovative services it provides.

The SGH Group is a leading regional healthcare provider that is expanding by establishing additional medical and healthcare facilities. It will launch the biggest healthcare facility in the region in Barsha, Dubai in June 2008, built with an investment of US\$200 million. ■

Above His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum with Engineer Sobhi Batterjee

New hope for diabetics revealed

EMIRATES DIABETES Society Warns: Untreated diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death.

Anti-diabetic drug slows the progressive loss of sugar control in early type 2 diabetes

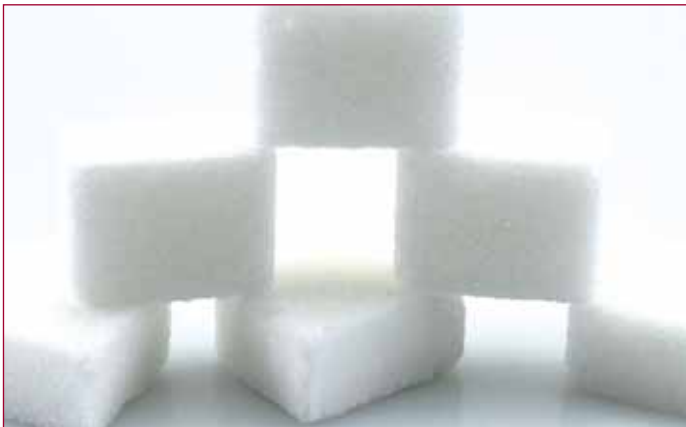
Type 2 diabetes is a chronic, progressive illness often linked to premature death, and affects approximately 230 million individuals worldwide, nearly 6 percent of the world's adult population. The IDF (International Diabetes Federation) estimates that by 2025, more than 350 million people worldwide will suffer from this disease.

A body with type 2 diabetes makes too little insulin or uses the hormone inefficiently. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes in UAE and accounts for about 95 percent of all people with the disease. Obesity and inactive lifestyle in UAE is underlined as the main cause of the disease which is affecting twice as much people in emirates than else where in the world.

The result of a new study called ADOPT (A Diabetes Outcome Progression Trial) was recently discussed in UAE with key physicians and its positive implication on people with recent diagnosis of diabetes who are drug naive. This study demonstrated that initial treatment with rosiglitazone maleate reduced the risk of monotherapy failure in people with type 2 diabetes by 32 percent compared to metformin ($p < 0.001$), and 63 percent compared to glyburide ($p < 0.001$) at five years.

" The ADOPT study's results will have a very important impact on people with type 2 diabetes in UAE, particularly those patients who have been recently diagnosed and those with whom monotherapy failed to work. We are talking about a huge number of patients here" said Dr. Madani, Head of Emirates Diabetes Society. " These results will help physicians choose the best way to manage their patients earlier in the disease and ultimately help avoid long-term complications of diabetes. It is really a hope for diabetics and their families". Over time, untreated or under treated type 2 diabetes makes it more difficult to maintain blood sugar levels and can cause blindness, kidney failure, nerve damage, amputation, heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease.

" We know that type 2 diabetes is a progressive disease. We also recognized that it's imperative to aggressively manage the disease earlier with effective therapies in addition to lifestyle changes such as regular exercise and dietary options. Unfortunately lifestyle changes alone are often not sufficient. In order to achieve and maintain optimal diabetes control, patients need effective treatment. This is the first long-term study to demonstrate that the progressive loss of blood sugar control can be delayed and target blood sugar levels can be maintained for a longer period with rosiglitazone than other prescribed oral antidiabetic agents" " said Dr. Madani. ■



Research Study Reveals Major Impact of Heart Disease in the Middle East in 2006

Coordinated Action against Leading Cause of Death "Essential," say Physicians from Twenty Nations

THE CHALLENGE of heart disease - one of the most serious health issues facing the Middle East - was recently assessed at a major medical congress. Over 300 specialists attended the event held in Dubai.

According to data revealed at the conference, a staggering 41 percent of all deaths in the UAE are the result of heart disease, strongly indicating that it has continued to be the leading cause of death in 2006.

Furthermore, acute myocardial infarction represents 28 percent of mortality for heart disease, cerebrovascular disease 16.2 percent, hypertensive disease 13 percent, and ischemic heart disease 12.3 percent of mortality.

Deaths due to cardiovascular diseases are reported among more males than females across all age groups. In addition, over 90 percent of such deaths occur over the age of 45 years.

These figures are matched by similarly shocking statistics from across the region, with the data suggesting that heart disease remained the leading cause of death in Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in 2006.

Chronic diseases related to the heart, such as diabetes and hypertension have become the main public health problems in these countries.

Co-chair of the Conference, Dr. Wael Almahmeed, Consultant Cardiologist & Deputy Director of Medical Services, Sheikh Khalifa Medical City- Abu Dhabi, explained: "The aim of the Partners International Cardiovascular Conference is to bring together the collective understanding of some of the world's leading experts to discuss how we can reduce the incidence of heart disease in the region, and how we can reduce the impact upon sufferers."

The high prevalence of a number of risk factors within commu-

nities in the Middle East is under discussion at the event, including the comparatively high rates of smoking and the rising levels of insulin resistance and diabetes.

Patterns of food consumption, which may play an important part in the increasing incidence of heart disease in this region, are also being examined.

The traditional diet, which was characterized by a high-fiber content and low in fat and cholesterol, has changed to a more westernized diet with high content of fat, free sugars, sodium and cholesterol. Daily per capita fat supplies showed a sharp increase in many countries, ranging from 13.6% in Sudan to 143.3% in Saudi Arabia over the past decade.

Advances in managing risk factors and improving heart health will also be under the microscope at the Partners event.

New data presented at the Conference from the TNT trial shows that, in patients with pre-existing heart disease who also had a specific cluster of cardiovascular risk factors, treatment with high doses of the popular cholesterol lowering medication Lipitor also reduced their chances of having a heart attack or stroke by nearly 30 percent.

These findings are from an analysis of 5,584 patients with heart disease. The TNT study is the largest analysis conducted to assess heart disease patients who have metabolic syndrome and have taken statins.

Co-chair Dr Mohammed Saeed Ali, Senior Consultant Cardiologist and Head of Cath. Lab at Mafraq Hospital, Abu Dhabi, noted: "With the support of the Ministry of Health in the UAE, we have seen an important increase in awareness of the challenges of heart disease and related illnesses."

"However, it is essential for all health professionals across the

region to work together to tackle this increasingly serious situation. Speaking with my colleagues at this event, it is clear that there is a growing consensus that this is the most serious health challenge of our age," he added. ■

Left Dr. Wael Almahmeed, Consultant Cardiologist & Deputy Director of Medical Services, Sheikh Khalifa Medical City- Abu Dhabi

Below HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Saqr Al Qassimi, Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for the United Arab Emirates



Increase in Mammography testing in UAE centres

Successful campaign provides local and expat women with free mammography testing facilities for the first time in the UAE

THERE HAS BEEN a very positive response to the National Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, it has been announced. The two-month campaign, which focused on outreach and community education, was designed to increase awareness on the importance of early breast cancer detection in the UAE, and provide expat and local women with free and discounted mammography testing facilities during October and November.

As with most diseases, fear and lack of knowledge are major contributors to delayed detection of breast cancer. "The fact is that although breast cancer may be life threatening, research has shown that early detection significantly increases the chances of survival," explained Dr. Mariam Matar, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health and Primary Healthcare, MoH. "This is why our goal during this campaign was to spread the message that 'early detection saves lives', and drive as many women over the age of forty in the UAE to have mammography tests," she stressed.

One of the most important practical aims during October and November was to facilitate the process of mammography testing for women in the UAE. "Free and discounted testing centres were set up across the Emirates in the hope that expenses would no longer act as a deterrent for women who are concerned about the monetary burden of the test," said Zainab Khazaal, Ph.D. Acting Director, Preventive Medicine Department, Sheikh Khalifa Medical Centre, Abu Dhabi.

Statistics show that the number of mammography tests done in the free centres during October and November was double to triple that of the tests done in other paid health centres. The

number of mammography tests in centres offering discounts increased by an average of 62%.

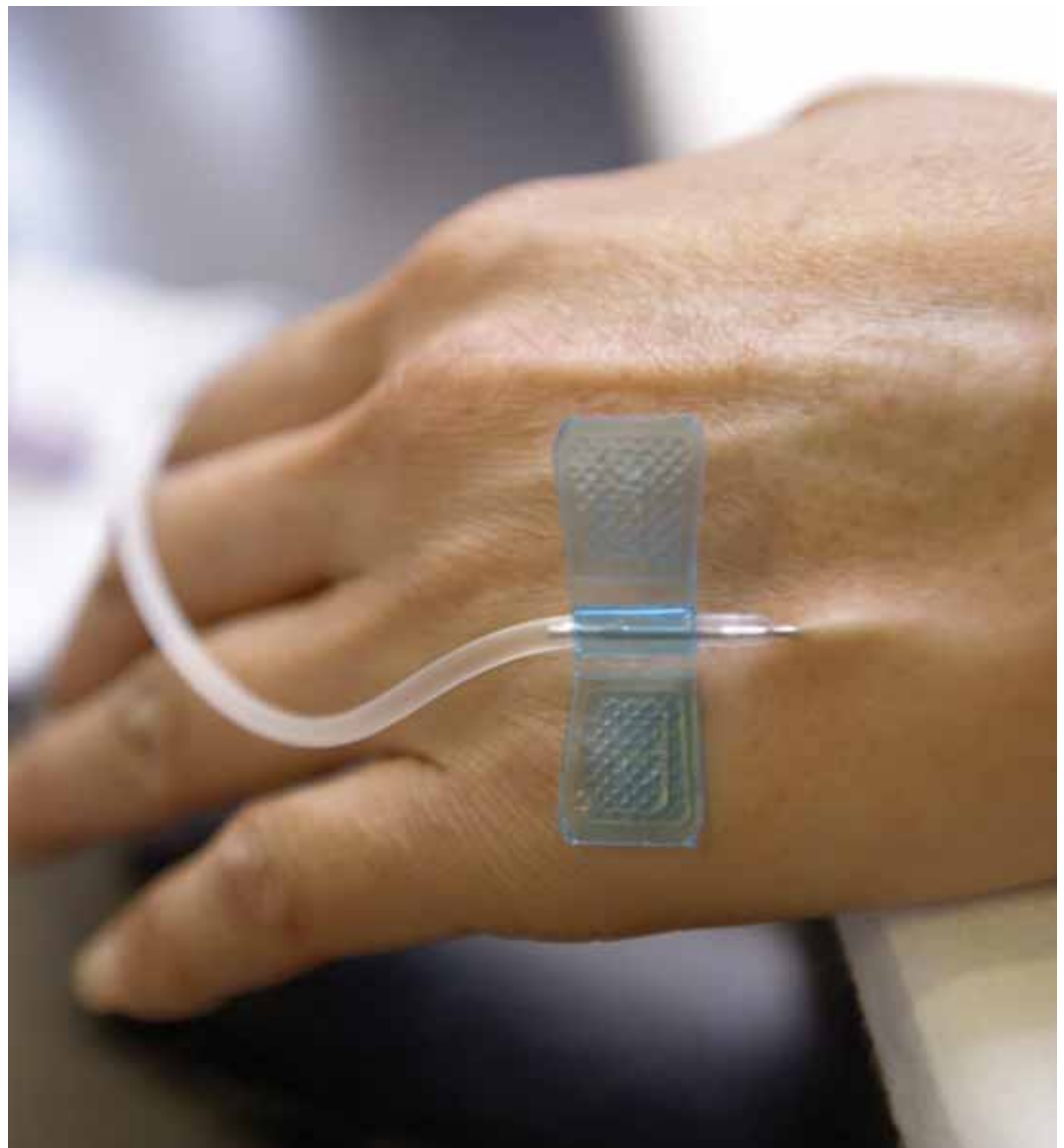
In addition, a temporary toll free line was installed to give information on locations and working hours for all the participating centres. The response was extremely positive with the toll free line receiving more than 1000 calls over the past two months. The calls came from women of all ages and nationalities as well as several

from men who were concerned about the well-being of their wives and mothers.

The National Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign also included several educational lectures conducted across selected schools and corporations, and stands in malls providing shoppers with educational leaflets and information on the availability of the testing centres.

"As this year's campaign draws

to a close, we would like to re-iterate our message that early detection of breast cancer can save lives, and reinforce the importance of annual mammography testing for women over forty," said Dr. Matar. "I would like to think that we have brought the UAE one step closer to removing the stigma traditionally associated with breast cancer, thanks to the commitment, passion and dedication of all those involved," she added. ■



New Welcare Eye Centre opens

A new centre dedicated to ophthalmology services opened recently in Dubai Healthcare City

MANAGED by a panel of internationally recognized medical professionals, the centre aims to provide high quality ophthalmology

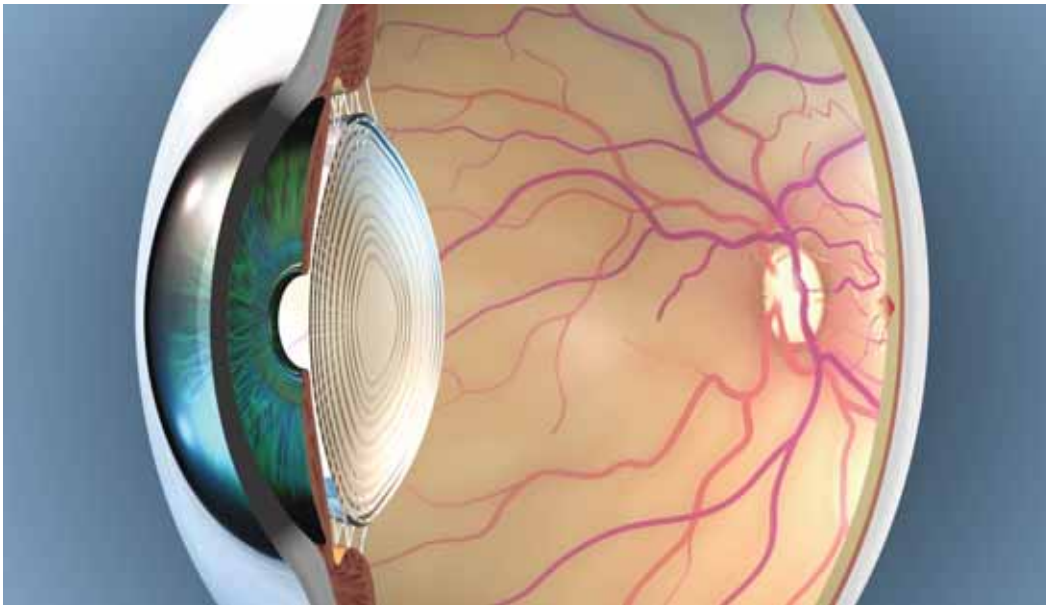
services to the community within the UAE and beyond.

"Welcare is always on the lookout for new medical technologies

and innovative solutions for its patients," said Dr. B.S. Chidamber, the Medical Director of the centre.

The Center offers a wide range of Ophthalmology sub-specialty services such as: General Ophthalmology, Cataract & Refractive Surgery, Vitreo-Retinal Services, Glaucoma, Corneal Surgery, Squint Correction & Oculoplasty, Neuro-Ophthalmology, Uveitis & Ocular-immunology and more. The clinic also features one of the most popular procedures patients are asking their healthcare providers to offer - IntraLASIK and the LASIK refractive procedures.

Welcare Eye Center is an extension of Welcare Hospital's Ophthalmology unit, which has been serving the people of Dubai for over eight years. The Eye Center is a complete premium healthcare facility for virtually all eye related ailments. It contains state-of-the-art technology and equipment for all a patient's eye related needs. ■



Emaar appoint new head of Healthcare Division

Investment of AED 18.35 billion envisaged for healthcare projects in MENA and South Asia

GLOBAL REAL estate company Emaar Properties has appointed Omar Moawiyah Al Shunnar as Executive Director of Emaar Healthcare, the company's healthcare subsidiary. The Division has announced plans to invest AED 18.35 billion (US\$5 billion) in the sector.

"Healthcare is one of our priority growth sectors," said Mr Mohamed Ali Alabbar, Chairman, Emaar Properties. "It fits perfectly well with our core competency of developing master-planned communities and complements our expansion into the education sector. Having steered the sales and marketing operations of Dubai Healthcare City, Omar Al Shunnar brings in a wealth of

domain knowledge and experience to strengthen Emaar's healthcare services plans."

Emaar's move into healthcare is part of its portfolio diversification programme, Emaar will develop and manage over 100 hospitals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and South Asian markets in the next ten years.

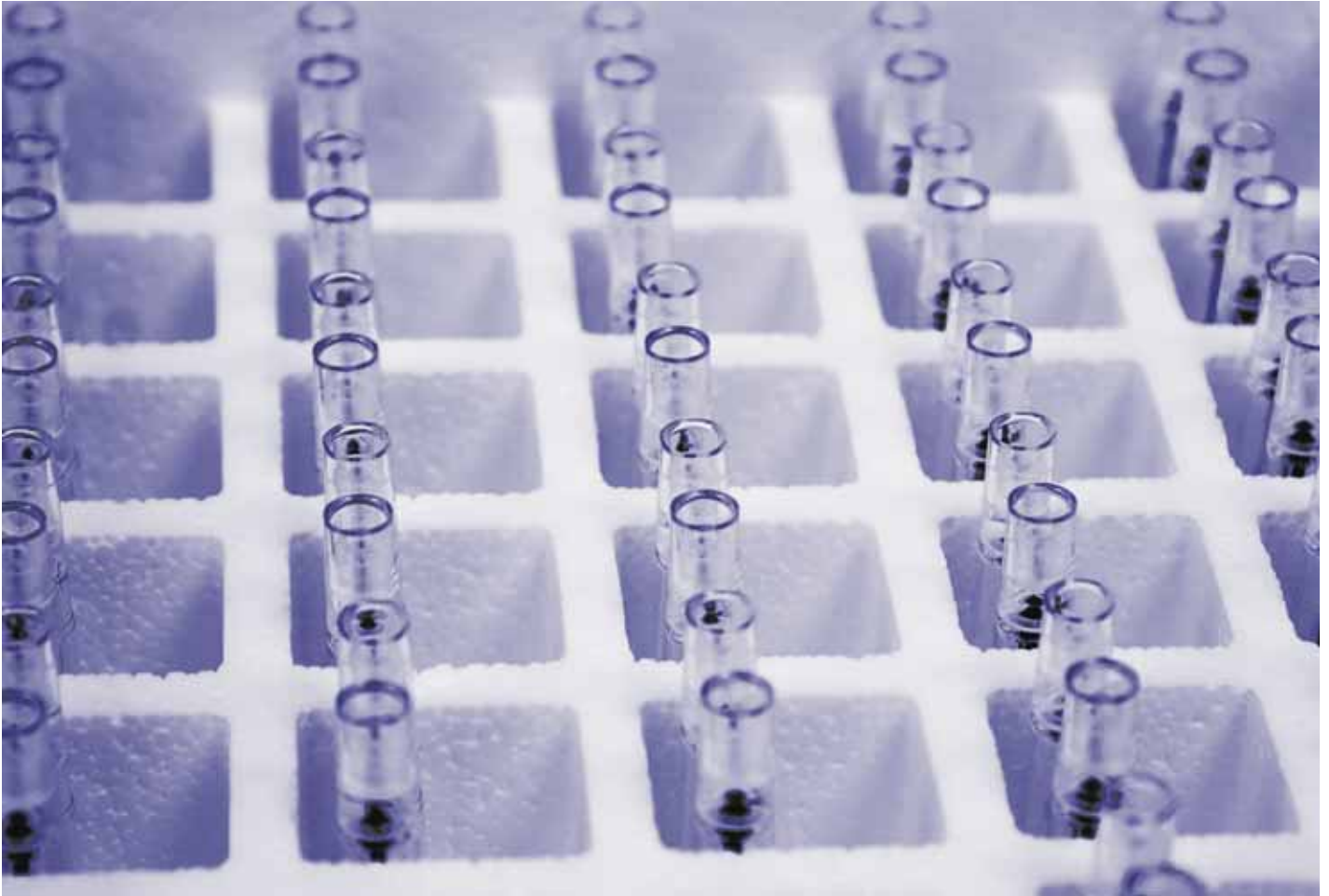
"Healthcare business is not driven by a simple demand and supply equation," said Omar Al Shunnar. "What makes the true difference is quality - not just of the medical services provided but also of the infrastructure support offered. We have a clearly delineated development plan for the healthcare sector, which involves

integrating advanced medical infrastructure in key centres. Emaar Healthcare will also strike strategic partnerships with international specialists to set best practice standards in the region."

The healthcare market of MENA and South Asia, excluding medicine and pharmaceuticals, is currently estimated at AED 36.7 billion (US\$10 billion) per annum. A recent United Nations report said most MENA and South Asian countries spend less than 5 per cent of their GDP on public and private healthcare services. "Emaar Healthcare will step in to meet this need for quality healthcare services also through public and private sector partnerships," added Al Shunnar. ■



Single protein can determine severity of toxoplasma infections, Stanford study shows



NEW RESEARCH has shown how *Toxoplasma* manages to inject a particular protein into the cell it infects which then travels to the cell's nucleus, where it blocks the cell's normal response to invasion.

The discovery offers researchers new insight into the way this type of parasite can hijack a host cell's genetic machinery for its own benefit. The discovery has wide-ranging implications for a number of diseases caused by other parasites in this class, which reproduce only inside cells, including the parasite that causes malaria.

"The latest findings reveal a new mechanism for how an intracellular pathogen can interact

with its host, and they may help to explain important differences in how various *Toxoplasma* strains have evolved to exploit this interaction", said Susan Collier, PhD, one of the study's lead authors.

What surprised the Stanford researchers was that a single protein was responsible for the dramatic differences between the strains; they had expected it to be much more complex.

"That it travels to the host cell nucleus is the cherry on the sundae," Collier said. "It's the heart of the cell, the ultimate prize. If you want to affect the cell in a dramatic way, go straight there."

The researchers found that *Toxoplasma* injects a protein called

ROP16 into the host cell. ROP16 is a class of enzyme called a kinase, which is a mediator of cellular messages. Kinases are used by all cells to regulate a variety of key physiological processes, including responding to the presence of an invader. Injecting kinases is an extremely efficient way for a parasite to co-opt a host cell for its own purposes, Boothroyd said.

According to the study, different forms of the injected kinase have dramatically different effects on how a host cell responds to the invading parasite. Knowing what determines the extent of the immune response may allow for therapeutic manipulations, perhaps leading to physicians being

able to tune down a response that's out of control in some cases of toxoplasmosis. Although *Toxoplasma* infections in humans are often asymptomatic, they can cause severe problems in isolated cases, particularly for individuals with compromised immune systems and for fetuses.

In North America and Europe, there are three main strains of *Toxoplasma*. Experiments have shown that the effects on mice infected with *Toxoplasma* are highly dependent on the type of strain. Recent results indicate that differences in infection might exist in humans too.

The results of the study are published in *Nature*. ■

Gates Foundation donates \$46.7 million to leading global health organisations

THE FIGHT against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) has received a major boost with the announcement of five grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation totalling \$46.7 million. The grants will support efforts to coordinate and integrate programmes to fight key neglected diseases in developing countries.

In Africa, more than 500 million people are affected by NTDs, and globally, more than two billion individuals are infected with one or more of the parasites or bacteria that cause NTDs.

The overall goal of the new grants is to develop evidence that controlling NTDs in an integrated way has a greater impact on these diseases than the disease-specific strategies currently in use. The five projects aim to demonstrate that an integrated approach improves the performance and efficiency of programmes, enhances their coverage, promotes sustainability, and reduces the burden caused by NTDs in Africa. This integrated approach is expected to improve the health of hundreds of thousands of people.

Professor Alan Fenwick, who established the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative at Imperial College London, said: "This is an exciting development because we have all started to work together and now we can take an extra step forward to show how much we can achieve. USAID has also recently allocated funds to NTD control, and this will allow the partners to improve the quality of life of millions of people with this complementary funding. Hopefully other donors will offer support so that we can eventually eliminate some of these nasty diseases from the continent and even globally."

Purchasing and delivering drugs

to control five of the most devastating NTDs could cost as little as \$0.50 per person per year if existing drug delivery programmes are brought together. The diseases are trachoma (blinding eye infection), soil-transmitted helminths (hookworm, ascaris, trichuris), onchocerciasis (river blindness), schistosomiasis (snail fever), and lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis).

"Today, most control and treatment programmes for neglected tropical diseases focus on a single disease, but people in tropical regions usually face more than one serious disease threat," said Dr. Regina Rabinovich, director of

Infectious Diseases at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "An integrated approach that addresses multiple diseases at once could reach those in need more efficiently and help save more lives."

The diseases can be treated safely and effectively with single-dose drugs, given once or twice a year to populations at risk. Studies during the past decade have shown that such low-cost interventions can greatly reduce the burden of NTDs, especially when introduced alongside measures to improve water and sanitation and to control the organisms that transmit disease. The new grants

address the greatest remaining challenge - to bring together all the different disease-specific interventions already underway and expand programmes to reach all who are in need.

The organisations receiving the new funds are: the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, Atlanta, Georgia (\$11.7 million); the International Trachoma Initiative, New York (\$10 million); The Carter Center, Atlanta, Georgia (\$10 million); the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative at Imperial College London (\$10 million); and the World Health Organisation (\$5 million). ■

