

Re: Our Efforts are Reflected in Our Health

To The Editor,

I write in response to your Message from the Editor-in-Chief, 'Our efforts are reflected in our health' which appeared in the August 2007 issue of SQUMJ.¹ I would like to make certain comments which are very much pertinent to the world in general and Oman in particular.

You have very rightly mentioned the fact that *perhaps no other country in the world has achieved so much in so little a time in terms of health care*. Full credits to our achievement, but even more important now is the challenge to preserve and maintain this achievement and not allow other problems to take root. This can only happen if we are careful about our habits and lifestyle and do not accept everything without question from the West. The statistics of the Oman National Health Survey 2000 show widespread health risks, all related to affluence and life style: High waist-hip ratio - 49.1%; Hyper-cholesterolemia - 40.6%; Overweight - 28.9%; Hypertension - 21.5%; Obesity-17.3%; Diabetes - 11.6%.²

The promise made by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said in his first address to the nation in 1970, that health would be one of his two top priorities, has been only partly translated into reality. It is now necessary for the people of this country to be aware of health issues and act responsibly so as to maintain this achievement and make it a full reality.

You said that *the WHO study of 2000 ranked Oman eighth in the world for providing comprehensive health care*. The word comprehensive entails three things, priority-wise they are: prevention, promotion and then cure. We need to look deeper into the first two aspects as our statistics say something else. Our real goals and needs are to prevent and decrease diseases, but statistics show an increasing trend. Our hopes and aspirations and our children who are our future citizens and workforce, and form 38% of our total population, are falling prey to many preventable risks, putting them in danger as parents, as adults and later in old age. Can't we do something urgently for this new, large and rapidly growing generation?

You said that *Oman has largely achieved self-sufficiency with respect to health care*. We should not take pride in this achievement because, if we do not control our lifestyle, our health statistics show that we are going to overburden our health services with increased demands and increased costs, making it necessary again for many Omanis to go abroad for treatment.

REFERENCE

1. Al Lamki L. Our Efforts are Reflected in our Health - Message from Editor-in-Chief. SQU Medical Journal 2007; 7:189-190
2. Oman National Health Survey 2000. Muscat: Ministry of Health, 2001.

Mushtaq A Khan

Department of Family Medicine and Public Health
College of Medicine & Health Sciences
Sultan Qaboos University
Sultanate of Oman