

# Qatar Tribune

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## SCH partners 2 Italian bodies for social rehab

LANI ROSE R DIZON  
DOHA

THE Supreme Council of Health (SCH) has collaborated with renowned Italian San Patrignano Rehabilitation Community and the Uninettuno University to provide social rehabilitation programmes for the residents.

The Italian delegations, led by former Italian education minister Letizia Moratti, are currently in Doha to discuss future projects with their Qatari institutions.

According to Dr Mohammed al Thani, director of Public Health at SCH and chairman of the National Advisory Committee for establishment of the addiction treatment centre, Qatar will benefit from the over 30-year experience of the San Patrignano Rehabilitation Community in education, prevention, rehabilitation and research.

"Through the partnership, social rehabilitation practitioners from Qatar and the region can now obtain a Master's degree in psychosocial rehabilitation from the Italian Uninettuno University's distance learning programme," Dr Thani said.



Officials of the Supreme Council of Health with delegations from Italian San Patrignano Rehabilitation Community and the Uninettuno University at a function, in Doha, on Sunday. (HANSON K JOSEPH)

The one-year Master's programme, tailor-made for the Qatari culture, will be available in four languages—Italian, French, Arabic and English.

Moratti, who is the Ambassador of San Patrignano Community (appointed as Goodwill Ambassador in 2000 by the United Nations), said, "It's important that Qatar aims to develop the necessary tools to tackle drug abuse through San Patrignano's cooperation and expertise.

"The excellent results

obtained by the therapeutic model of the community, which are already recognised in Europe, can be developed in Qatar where drug addiction is now on the rise. Only through international cooperation at this level can we be able to prevent, fight and facilitate recovery from drug addiction worldwide."

He added, "We're not just after the person recovering physically from drug abuse. We also provide education programmes such as vocational training courses in addition to legal and health-

care programmes. We make sure that the person regains his/her self-esteem, motivation and willingness to live a life free of drugs, be ready to re-establish a family and have something to give back to society."

Dr Mounir Soussi, medical director of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre at SCH also said that plans are underway to establish a joint committee between Qatar and Italy that would make a full assessment of the cases from Gulf countries seeking rehabilitation programmes.

For four decades, the San Patrignano Rehabilitation Community has welcomed over 20,000 young men and women with serious problems linked to drug addiction completely free of charge. The centre currently has around 1,300 residents, including over 100 people from various countries around the globe.

The programme at the centre has a 72 percent success rate, which is significantly higher than other rehabilitation programmes, with usually between 40 and 60 percent success rates.

## '3 to 5% population is drug addict in Qatar'

LANI ROSE R DIZON  
DOHA

A 28-BED interim addiction control centre, which will cater mainly to victims of drug abuse, is expected to open in July, a senior official of the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) has said.

Speaking at a function on Sunday, Director of Public Health at SCH Dr Mohammed al Thani said the interim facility would provide rehabilitation and occupational therapy services to Qataris suffering from drug addiction until construction of the 250-bed permanent facility by November 2014.

The director said the new addiction control centre in Doha would help drug addicts and other patients suffering from other forms of addictions to come back to their normal lives faster.

"The new centre, which is also supported by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Social Affairs, will

feature best medical practices to treat addiction, mainly patients addicted to narcotic drugs and hazardous psychotropic substances in addition to other forms of addiction such as alcohol, gambling, internet and food control," Dr Thani said.

Talking about drug addiction in Qatar, Dr

Mounir Soussi, medical director of Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre at SCH, said between three and five percent of the population in Qatar is affected by drug addiction, with amphetamines and cannabis being the most commonly used drugs.

He said, "Stigma attached to drug addiction still runs deep very high here. Sometimes the family doesn't accept the patient back into its fold. He finds difficulty in getting reintegrated to the university or his work either. These are the most common relapse reasons for many."