

## Now You Can Get Out of The Age Cage...*Khaleeji Times*

BY ANUPAMA V CHAND  
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### Now You Can Get Out of The Age Cage

Heather Bird, Founder of the HB Health and Director of the World Anti-Ageing Academy of Medicine in the UK, tells City Ties what they are doing to help retard the ageing process.

Women in Dubai can learn all about Anti-Ageing Medicine (AAM) and whether it can really help reduce the roughening and wrinkling of skin, and retard ageing, when a renowned anti-ageing expert conducts a workshop on the subject, ... as part of the 'Simply Health' component of 'Simply Woman', a women-only conference being organised at the Dubai International Exhibition Centre (DIEC) on November 29-30 this year.

Women from all over the Middle East who attend 'Simply Woman' will learn about a range of issues affecting their lives, from leading female role models and professionals who will visit Dubai for the first event of its kind aimed at women.

City Times caught up with Heather Bird, Founder of HB Health and Director of the World Anti-Ageing Academy of Medicine (WAAAM) in the UK, to find out what women could do to retain that elixir of eternal youth, and whether the WAAAM could help retard the ageing process.

'While many women worry about their chronological age, it is their biological age they should really be concerned about,' said Bird, who first became interested in the effects of ageing on the human body, when she started helping care for people suffering from age-related degenerative illnesses.

Anti-ageing practitioners believe that if ageing can be slowed, the prevalence and acuteness of many of the diseases and disabilities associated with it can be reduced. Broadly speaking, the approach is to treat ageing as a disease in itself.

'My presentation at 'Simply Woman' is a vital opportunity for me to make the women of this region aware of the vast array of safe and modern treatments now available to slow down the ageing process,' she noted.

'In an aggressive environment like the Middle East, women and men need to pay that much more attention to their lifestyle choices in order to protect themselves from the harshness of the weather conditions. Once again, this is a two-pronged protection, by reinforcing your body from the inside as well as the outside, thus giving your body the tools to build up defences and to quickly repair in times of need,' she said to a query on problems of ageing quickly in the Middle East.

'We should all know by now that one should wear protective clothing to avoid sun exposure and use a high SPF on parts of the body that are hard to cover such as face and hands, people need to be cautious about the reflection of the sun's rays from large bodies of water and wear a cap and sunglasses when on the beach,' she noted. Different people had different skin types, and needed different types of treatments, she pointed out.

'One should choose wisely their skincare regime to ensure that it meets their skin's particular needs. Caution is needed when doing this, as there are some commercial creams with no real benefit, which often contain detrimental chemicals that put extra burden on the body. I recommend getting a highly qualified dermatologist's recommendation for your skincare regime, whether it be special oils to retain the moisture in your skin, or prescribed cosmeceuticals all the way to anti-ageing cosmeceuticals,' Heather Bird averred.

Referring to the importance of caring for one's body from the inside to fortify it against external ravages, she said: 'Your body needs to have the proper tools to defend and repair. If you follow a balanced diet your body will have the right amount of anti-oxidants needed to gather up and clean out of the system the free radicals and oxidative stress resulting from exposure to the sun, harsh weather conditions and pollution. Drinking enough water is essential in the type of weather that predominates in the region as it allows the body to perform its proper functions of hydrating, eliminating toxins and keeping the proper temperature.

Anti-ageing therapies have the potential to reinforce bodily self-maintenance and thus reduce the impact of the degenerative disease.' Taking that a step further, she said older individuals could therefore remain healthy and unencumbered by disability for a considerably longer period of time.

'Moreover, if current attitudes to employment and retirement are re-examined, anti-ageing practitioners see no reason why the elderly should not remain as productive contributors in the work place as well as at home. Indeed, some studies suggest that if anti-ageing therapies are successfully employed, the average productive life of humans could be extended beyond 100 years!' Heather Bird chuckled.

Asked what were some of the most frequently asked questions (FAQ's) about ageing, Bird said succinctly: 'That's easy. First - Can I really do anything about ageing or reverse it, secondly how can I keep the weight off as I age, thirdly what can I do about pigmentation from sun damage, at number four is - how can I feel younger, not just look younger, and finally - Why am I ageing so fast?'

And her answers to these: 'Yes, with modern medicine and smart lifestyle changes you can manage and sustain ageing from the outside and from the inside of the body. Sophisticated external procedures to help hide the signs of ageing include Botox injections, wrinkle fillers, mesotherapy, skin peelings and plastic surgery. The outward signs of ageing can also be dealt with from the inside using early detection and prevention techniques to slow or even reverse ageing.'

To the second question, she said doctors are now able to medically ascertain the different causes for accelerated/premature slowing down of the metabolism, which is what causes weight gain. Modern medicine can now treat some of these problems, which include hormone deficiencies, problems with the thyroid



gland and vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Nothing beat early prevention where sun damage was concerned, and the use of sun protection from a very young age was vital, she said.

Among the multitude of reasons for rapid ageing, she included poor lifestyle choices, genetic weaknesses enhanced by poor eating, smoking, alcohol abuse, etc. She reiterated that the biggest reasons for premature ageing today were poor nutrition, sun damage, free radicals, sedentary lifestyle (lack of exercise), hormonal decline (i.e. thyroid), high stress and a negative outlook, as well as - yes, its true - environmental pollution and lack of sleep.

Heather Bird countered that anti-ageing is not only about looking younger, but also feeling younger and functioning younger for longer. While chronological age is the number of years that have passed since a person was born, biological age is the physiological age or functioning of an individual's body, brain, and organ systems. The rate at which the body systems and organs age varies with different individuals. Your body and brain can be older or younger than your chronological age.

The five pillars of an anti-ageing lifestyle, which can help delay ageing include diet and nutrition including nutritional supplementation, exercise, stress management, biologically - identical hormone balancing, which is not conventional or patent HRT, but natural (not synthetic) hormones that are biologically identical to those found in the body, and finally prevention and early detection of aging related degenerative diseases.

'As we grow older there is a decline in our body's ability to produce its natural hormones such as thyroid, oestrogen, progesterone, testosterone, DHEA, melatonin and HGH. As our hormone levels diminish so does our body's ability to repair and regulate itself, accelerating the ageing process. This is a subject I will cover in my speech,' she said.

Heather Bird also hoped to give visitors to the 'Simply Woman' event a glimpse of the latest cosmetic treatments which aim improve a person's appearance, including a new treatment called Mesotherapy, which involves injecting microscopic quantities of natural plant extracts, homeopathic agents, pharmaceutical agents and vitamins into the mesoderm (middle layer of the skin) to treat a variety of conditions such as acne, alopecia, cellulite, and localised lipolysis, to rheumatism, tennis elbow and tendon microinjuries.

#### **Rules for Living Longer and Living Better:**

- Avoid stress and depression. These are major causes for premature ageing.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes daily. This is your number one defense against the infirmities of old age.
- Limit harmful fats such as saturated fats and trans fatty acids in your diet. These are directly associated with an increased risk of both heart disease and cancer.
- Sleep 7 to -8 hours a night. Quality sleep is essential for rejuvenation and repair. If you suffer from insomnia or other sleeping problems, get help.
- Consume little or no alcohol. It is neurotoxic.
- Don't smoke. Not only does it stain your teeth and smell bad, but for every minute you smoke, a minute of your life is taken away.
- Try to keep your weight at, or even 5 per cent below, your ideal body weight (IBW). Mortality increases significantly at 20 per cent or more above IBW, and 10 per cent or more below IBW.
- Maintain optimum antioxidant and vitamin blood levels. Animal studies indicate a 20 per cent increase in longevity with optimum nutrient supplementation.
- Early detection is the key to a cure for both heart disease and cancer get blood tests and comprehensive anti-aging physical exams yearly.
- If age 55 or older, consider hormone-replacement therapy, if needed, administered by a knowledgeable physician.
- Drink 8 to 10 oz purified or bottled water daily. As much as 70 per cent of municipal water systems surveyed were polluted with potentially toxic amounts of fluorine and chlorine. According to recent Environmental Protection Agency reports, these chemicals have been associated with an increased risk of urinary-tract cancers.
- Maintain the proper alkaline food intake to help your body keep the acid/alkaline balance. It is said that cancer cannot live in an acid environment.
- Think young. Ageing is as much a state of mind as it is a state of physiology.

Those interested in learning more about the conference can log on to [www.AntiAgeingConference.com](http://www.AntiAgeingConference.com).

