EDITORIAL NOTE

After the positive feedback, we received following the release of the first issue of AAHCI-MENA newsletter, we are proud to release the second issue, which highlights our newest member, the launch of the new AAHCI-MENA website, and our members’ achievements, events and publications.

As an academic health center, we continuously seek, and through being an integral member of AAHC, to educate the future generations of health professionals on key issues that would benefit our communities at large. I believe that through such communications, we will be able to give a glimpse of the work being done and the products that are in the making.

AUBMC will be “in the spotlight” for this issue. Enjoy the read.

Mohamed H. Sayegh, MD
Regional Ambassador
Chair-Designate of the AAHCI Steering Committee

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MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBER!

Bezmialem Vakif University
Bezmialem Vakif University, originating from the roots of Gureba-i Müslimin, the first modern hospital of the Ottoman Empire that was founded in 1845, was transformed into a university in 2010 as a thematic university in health. It is a non-profit foundation university which aims to make progress in education, health care and research. BVU aims to keep being a reference institution worldwide especially with its School of Medicine and attaches great importance to the international cooperations among the leading top-notch universities in the field of health. BVU is a member of AAMC also listed in ECFMG.
The Arabian Gulf University (AGU) launched a new post-graduate program in November 2019. The new program is a Clinical Master in Family Medicine. Its vision is to fulfill the international standards for health and safety in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and to meet conditions for universal health coverage. This program aims to develop the capabilities of its trainees to become competent and safe practitioners.

This two-year program comprises mainly clinical training in primary health care settings; blended with online content and horizontal courses. The trainees are exposed to a wide range of activities including regular meetings of journal clubs and morning reports. Trainees are expected to conduct a quality improvement project focused on health policies and clinical practice.

A multidisciplinary committee including faculty from medical education and family Medicine departments at AGU designed the curriculum, which will be reviewed and accredited by WONCA. The governance of the program is insured by a steering and an academic committee through a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Click for more information
1) How old is your academic health center (AHC)?
The American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) has been providing the highest standards of care to patients across Lebanon and the region since 1902, 150 years ago. It also serves as the teaching hospital for AUB’s Faculty of Medicine (FM) that was established in 1867 to train generations of medical students and physicians. Today, our graduates can be found at leading institutions around the world.

2) What are your flagship specialized centers and programs?
In light of the regional demand for outstanding medical services and education, AUBMC continues to progress towards becoming a regional hub for clinical practice and research through the establishment of stronger regulatory guidelines, centers of excellence, educational services, and specialized clinical services aligned with the needs of the community and the region. In addition, AUBMC constantly assists others in capacity building through increased partnerships and research collaborations. Our specialized clinical services and programs include our Special Kids Clinic, Children’s Heart Center, Cleft and Craniofacial, Epilepsy, Developmental Care and Early Intervention, Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, Hepatopancreatobiliary and Liver Transplantation, Pain Management, Pulmonary Rehab, Robotic Surgery, Outpatient Surgery Center, Agnes Varis Healing Program for Substance Use Disorders and others. AUBMC also houses clinical Centers of Excellence that carry out three primary missions namely: the provision of clinical services, teaching, and research. AUBMC has fully established five unique centers of excellence that include Abu-Haidar Neuroscience Institute, Nehme and Therese Tohme Multiple, Sclerosis Center, Children’s Cancer Center of Lebanon (CCCL), Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute, The Mufid Farra Heart and Vascular Outpatient Center. Being an academic institution with a strong focus on research, AUB’s Faculty of Medicine continuously fosters a culture of interdisciplinary research, to promote innovative high impact fundamental and applied biomedical research, and training of biomedical scientists. Currently there are seven research Centers of Excellence: Cancer and Stem Cells, Cardiovascular, Renal, and Metabolic Diseases, Immunity and Infections, Neuroscience, Genetics, Calcium Metabolism and Osteoporosis Program and Center for Infectious Diseases Research.

3) How did hosting the regional office of AAHCI-MENA support your institution’s mission and vision?
AUBMC is dedicated to the passionate pursuit of improving the health of the community in Lebanon and the region through the delivery of exceptional and comprehensive quality care to our patients, excellence in education and training, and leadership in innovative research. The AUBMC 2020 Vision is transforming medical education, research and practice, and most importantly, medical care in the region, bringing them to new levels of excellence.
AAHCI-MENA actively works to bring together regional academic health centers to collaborate, share experiences and provide valuable insight and actionable steps on key issues and challenges faced in this region. By having valuable insight on the challenges faced in the region, AUBMC can tackle these challenges and support its mission and vision. It reinforces AUB’s commitment to medical advancement, while acting as a platform to collaborate and assure high quality patient care to the whole MENA region. This will ultimately lay the ground for further development in the future, and overall elevation of the standards of healthcare provision, medical education and research.

4) What are your AHC’s focal areas of research?
Focal areas of research at AUBMC include both basic and clinical research. Basic research, also known as fundamental research, aims to expand the existing base of scientific knowledge leading to innovation. The Clinical Research Institute aims to foster a culture of collaborative approach to conducting innovative and high impact clinical research. It also invests in the capacity building of its community members including physicians, nurses, trainees, students, and research staff. Currently there are seven research Centers of Excellence: Cancer and Stem Cells, Cardiovascular, Renal, and Metabolic Diseases, Immunity and Infections, Neuroscience, Genetics, Calcium Metabolism and Osteoporosis Program and Center for Infectious Diseases Research.

5) Can you give us details about one innovative program or an area of thought leadership within your institution?
Because we know that learning difficulties can stem from a variety of causes such as medical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral we have recently launched the first-of-its-kind Learning Center in Lebanon. The outpatient multi-disciplinary Center is an extension to the Department of Psychiatry. It provides a spectrum of services ranging from evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, advocacy and support for a wider population of persons with learning difficulties, their parents, and other professionals involved.

LAUNCHING NEW AAHCI-MENA WEBSITE

AAHCI-MENA launched its new website in December 2019. The new website provides comprehensive information about the association, the regional office, its members and other relevant details with the aim to provide a user-friendly browsing experience. There are also useful information about membership benefits, membership criteria, and future meetings and events.

The new website also contains a live Twitter feed (@AAHCImena) that is continuously updated with helpful information, publications, quarterly newsletters, webinars, presentations and regional events’ announcements.

ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTERS INTERNATIONAL (AAHCI) MENA REGIONAL OFFICE

WHO WE ARE
The Association of Academic Health Centers International (AAHCI) is a member-based association founded in 2008 as a subsidiary to the US-based AAHCI. AAHCI currently has four regional offices. The AAHCI Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Office is hosted by American University of Beirut Medical Center located in Beirut, Lebanon. The AAHCI-MENA Regional Office plays a pivotal role in a growing platform to customize region-specific interests and tailored programs; facilitate important regional networking opportunities, educational programs, exchange of best practices, data collection and analysis, and community/regionaL relationships; and promote understanding of the academic health center concept to government, industry, and the public.

For more information about AAHC, AAHCI, and other AAHCI Regional Offices, please visit AAHC main website.
AAHCI-MENA Regional Office would like to congratulate AUBMC and its regional member institutes for their recent awards and recognitions.

AAHCI-MENA would like to recognize its member accomplishments regularly. If we missed something, please let us know.

Khalifa University of Science and Technology: College of Medicine and Health Sciences (KU CMHS)

- KU received initial accreditation, effective 19 December 2019, from the Commission for Academic Accreditation for its newly developed Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree program
- KU CMHS is now an institution member of the Association of Medical Education in Europe (AMEE), an international organization that supports institutions in keeping up-to-date with advances in medicine, changes in healthcare delivery and patient demands, and new educational approaches in the study of medicine

Sidra Medicine

- Received ACGME-I Accreditation in August 2019 effective for 2 years
- Received Joint Commission International (JCI), Gold Seal of Approval® accredited hospital and academic medical center

American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC)

- A three-year, high-impact study led by Dr. Habib Dakik, Chief of the Division of Cardiology at AUBMC, has been published in the highly prestigious Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC).
- AUBMC is the FIRST in the region and the SECOND outside USA to earn Magnet® Status, the Gold Standard of Nursing Excellence, for THREE times
- AUBMC has marked another first in Lebanon by receiving stage 6 HIMSS Certification
- The Bone Densitometry Unit, Calcium Metabolism and Osteoporosis Program (CaMOP), at AUBMC is the first BMD unit to receive facility accreditation, outside the USA, by the International Society for Clinical Densitometry (ISCD).
- The Department of Family Medicine has just been designated as “WHO Collaborating Center for Family Practice”.

Bezmialem Vakif University

- The School of Medicine accredited by the National Accreditation Board of Medical Education (UTEAK/TEPDAD) in October 2019 for seven years
- Ranked 1st in Turkey for universities established after 2000, and 8th among foundation universities with medical faculties according to University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP) 2019
- Prof. İsmet Kırpınar, Ass. Prof. Rabia Keşer Boyraz, Prof. Nafüye Selcan Önür, Psychologist Merve Suma and Psychologist Müge Çombaş received the “Prof. Dr. Günsel Koptagel İlat” award at the 4th Psychiatry Summit & 11th Anxiety Congress, in March 2019
- Prof. Abdurrahim Koçyiğit received the “Sabuncuğlu Şerefeddin Traditional Complementary Science Science Award” at the 2nd International Congress on Traditional and Complementary Medicine (GETAT), in April 2019
- Prof. Ramazan Özdemir, Assoc. Dr. Ahmet Bacaksız, Assoc. Dr. Dr. Mahmut Uluganyan, Dr. Lecturer Asım Enhoş, Dr. Lecturer Nuray Kahraman, Lecturer Aylin Hatice Yamaç, Dr. Nijad Bakhshaliyev, Dr. Ziya İsmayıloğlu and Dr. İlke Çelikkale won the “Best Structural Case Award” at the 26th National Applied Interventional Cardiology Meeting, in July 2019

Specialized Medical Center (SMC)

- Institutional Accreditation by the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) for National Excellence in Health Training
- Re-accreditation of Saudi Board for General Surgery, Internal Medicine and OB-GYN for 4 years
Venous thromboembolism is considered one of the highest risk for hospitalized and community patients. In the hospital, case fatality rate of VTE ranged between 10–12 %. SMC held its first educational event for 2020 on January 2 targeting all health professionals and including a session for residents and interns. The event aimed at increasing the awareness and knowledge of Venous Thromboembolism (VTE), and facilitating advances in the treatment of affected people, as well as the routine implementation on thromboembolism prophylaxis measures among Health Care Providers (HCP). The event focused on improving prevention and treatment of VTE and promoting research. It also disseminated information on VTE to educate physicians on the updated guidelines on diagnosis and treatment of VTE.
On Monday, October 14, 2019, the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) celebrated the Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University, Indianapolis, USA (IU Health). Riley at IU Health was ranked in 9 out of 10 pediatric specialties by U.S. AUBMC and IU Health will endeavor to promote collaboration through a broad range of strategies. This collaboration will add a new dimension in forwarding AUBMC Vision at various levels including, but not limited to, exchange of students/residents/fellows; exchange and visit of faculty members; joint research activities; joint educational programs; exchange of academic materials; administrative collaborations (which entails projects pertaining to infection control, antimicrobial stewardship, quality and safety); and Potential Programmatic Collaborations (which entails humanitarian efforts, Collaborative Children’s Hospital, joint regional and international meetings and conferences, and Hybrid Model - towards building self-standing pediatric centers).

The Department of Psychiatry at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and its Medical Center (AUBMC) launched the new “Learning Center” on January 9, 2020. This center, the first-of-its-kind in Lebanon and the region, is an outpatient multi-disciplinary setting providing specialized assessments, interventions, referrals, awareness, training, and research to a wide population of persons with learning difficulties, their parents, and other professionals involved.
Sidra Medicine launched the 3rd Annual Congress of Current Understanding in Diabetes, Obesity, and Related Syndromes (CUDOS), held at the Qatar National Convention Centre in November 2019. The CUDOS Congress 2019 welcomed over 1,300 registrants this year! This year’s event focused on pediatric precision medicine, genomics and clinical research, as well as the care and treatment of children and young people with diabetes, obesity, and related syndromes. The CUDOS Congress 2019 also hosted the first Pediatric Precision Medicine Symposia which looked at current on the ground clinical and research programs at Sidra Medicine.

The 6th World Congress of the World Federation of Associations of Pediatric Surgeons (WOFAPS 2019) congress was hosted by Sidra Medicine at QNCC from 1-4 November 2019. Considered the first ever WOFAPS to take place in the Middle East and one of the largest international medical events, the Congress was attended by more than 800 delegates from 80 countries. Full day urology sessions were held every day of the congress including several live surgery sessions ahead of the launch of WOFAPS. WOFAPS 2019 was held under the theme: “Collaboration, Education and Training: Moving Beyond Borders”, hosting a series of dedicated presentations and sessions on three main pillars related to pediatric surgery; state-of-the-art treatment in a resource-rich setting, optimal treatment in a resource-constrained setting, and complications, and how they should be handled.
On Oct 10 and 11, 2019, the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute, and the Continuing Medical Education (CME) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) held the **Sickle Cell Disease Preceptorship** at the new Halim and Aida Daniel ACC building at AUBMC.

The preceptorship which was attended by several regional and international hematologists and pediatricians from Jordan, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt, Switzerland, Brazil, Belgium, and Spain shed light on the global burden of sickle cell disease.
The international faculty presented their own solutions to the failed orthoscopic treatments of the shoulder, knee and hip diseases. On the second day, the experts discussed their techniques about how to manage failed shoulder, knee and hip replacements. During the interactive case discussions, the experts and the participations were able to share their experiences on “Nightmares after shoulder, knee and hip arthroscopy and arthroplasty”.

Geriatric Emergencies Symposium was held on 20 December 2019 at Bezmialem Vakif University. Pre-hospital management of geriatric patients, crowded emergency department and geriatric patient triage, primary assessment and stabilization of geriatric patients, imaging and nephropathy in geriatric patients, drug use in geriatric patients, traps in geriatric patient management in emergency departments, cognitive changes in geriatric patients, depression in geriatric care and syncope management in geriatric patients, were discussed.

The 2nd Biotechnology Symposium Tackles Clinical Applications of Next-Generation Sequencing was held at Khalifa University on 16-17 December 2019, showcasing the research being carried out by the university’s Center for Biotechnology in the area of genetics. KU faculty and other international experts presented emerging discoveries in the use of genome data for diagnostic and predictive applications.
Pre-Medicine Bridge Program Student Symposium at Khalifa University

Twenty students from the Khalifa University Pre-Medicine Bridge Program presented their biotechnology research during Khalifa University’s annual student symposium, which took place at the KU main campus in July 2019. This year student research addressed topics as diverse as cancer diagnosis, genome sequencing for disease genes causing diabetes and heart disease, personalized medicine, population genetics, and environmental triggers behind diabetes and obesity. KU students presented their results to senior management, students, faculty, staff and industry representatives keen to learn about research taking place in KU.

REGIONAL HEALTH DAYS

In celebration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, KU female students took part in activities to raise awareness of the disease on Wednesday, 30 October 2019. In partnership with NMC Royal Women’s Hospital and RAHMA Cancer Patient Care Society, students were screened for their body mass index (BMI), met with a dietitian, and had one-on-one discussions with a radiographer about breast self-examination. Students were given the opportunity to learn about ways to give back to cancer patients. A breast cancer survivor shared her first-hand experience on the effects of the disease and the treatment journey of breast cancer patients.
Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation (LBCF) and the Breast Center of Excellence of the NK Basile Cancer Institute of the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), in collaboration with the Municipality of Jbeil, Directorship of Heritage - Ministry of Culture and the National Commission for Lebanese Women set to light in pink the famous Castle of Jbeil as part of their campaign to raise awareness about breast cancer and advocate for the rights of women with breast cancer to get access to the best modern screening, diagnosis and treatment.

SMC conducted an annual community awareness program as part of the strategic goals and commitment to public service. For Autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, psoriasis, ankylosing spondylitis, uveitis, inflammatory bowel disease, biologics bring promise to the patients. An awareness for the public and for patients in addition to pregnant female with these conditions was conducted. Other lectures were given about nutrition and psychological support. This event focused on the importance of screening. Screening consisted of evaluation for previous or current tuberculosis (TB) infection (based on history, purified protein derivative (PPD) test, chest radiography), serological evidence of hepatitis B and C, history of malignancies or neurological disease. Based on the screening results, the physician assessed which biologic treatment is recommended. The choice of biologic agent is tailored to the patient’s needs and lifestyle.

Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation (LBCF) and the Breast Center of Excellence of the NK Basile Cancer Institute of the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), in collaboration with the Municipality of Jbeil, Directorship of Heritage - Ministry of Culture and the National Commission for Lebanese Women set to light in pink the famous Castle of Jbeil as part of their campaign to raise awareness about breast cancer and advocate for the rights of women with breast cancer to get access to the best modern screening, diagnosis and treatment.
WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS AND WHAT ARE AAHCI-MENA MEMBERS DOING ABOUT THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. A current outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first reported from Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019.

Symptoms of the virus include fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. The illness can be more serious for individuals with comorbidities. Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs, and avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

The Infection Control and Prevention Program (ICCP) at AUBMC has issued recommendations for managing suspected cases to deal with this rapidly developing situation. All suspected cases in the Emergency Department (ED) or in private clinics are triaged and isolated. Patients are screened for the presence of the symptoms of the virus, and are asked whether they have been to China or the other affected countries within a period of 14 days. They are also asked whether they have been in close contact with a suspected or confirmed case within the last 14 days.

- Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation and Primary Health Care Corporation has created a website to provide residents of Qatar with a trusted source of information related to the Novel Coronavirus 2019 from China.
- Dr. Patrick Tang, Division Chief of Pathology Sciences at Sidra Medicine appeared on AlJazeera as a subject matter expert to discuss the latest Coronavirus outbreak originating in Wuhan, China.
- LAUMC shared the following post:
AGU held a seminar on “Novel Coronavirus Challenges” to raise awareness and address frequently asked questions about the spreading of the virus.

AUBMC prepared several collaterals to raise awareness on COVID-19.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-nCOV)

What is a 2019 Novel coronavirus?
It is a new strain of coronavirus that has been recently identified in humans. It was first identified in China.

What is the Incubation period of the virus?
The virus can be transmitted before onset of symptoms with an incubation period between 2 and 14 days.

What are the symptoms of the virus?
The respiratory symptoms:
fever
shortness of breath
and
breathing difficulties are the most common.
In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia.

What is the mode of transmission?
At present, there is no specific treatment or vaccine. Most patients can gradually and spontaneously recover.

Is there a treatment or a vaccine?
• Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or antiseptics
• Avoid close contact with anyone coughing or sneezing
• Report to your doctor if you develop respiratory symptoms within a period of 14 days from returning from China or if you have contact with confirmed case

What measures should you take if you suspect or confirmed to have the disease?
• Stay and sleep in a separate well ventilated room
• Do not share items such as towels with others
• Use tissues to cover mouth and nose when coughing and discard immediately
• Wear a surgical mask to avoid transmitting infection to others
• Frequently clean and disinfect your surrounding environment
• Report to your doctor if your symptoms are worsening

What is the mode of transmission?
The virus can be transmitted from person to person usually after close contact with an infected patient or his respiratory secretions.

Follow us: VISIT OUR WEBSITE: http://www.aubmc.org.lb/education/Pages/aahci.aspx


• Epidemiology of common resistant bacterial pathogens in the countries of the Arab League. Moghnieh RA, Kanafani ZA, Tabaja HZ, Sharara SL, Awada LS, Kanj SS.