

ISSUE 20 - WINTER 2021

NKBCI NEWSLETTER



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY of BEIRUT MEDICAL CENTER
المركز الطبي في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت

Our lives are dedicated to yours



INTERNATIONAL STUDY RECOGNIZES HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH OF DR. FADLO KHURI AND DR. ALI TAHER

AUB president, Dr. Fadlo Khuri, and Director of Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute and co-founder of the Cancer Support Fund, Dr. Ali Taher, were selected among the world's top 2% of scholars in their field.

A recent study conducted by a group of experts led by Professor John P.A. Loannides at Stanford University produced a composite citation-based indicator listing the world's top scholars in their fields.

The study analyzed the entire Scopus database from 1996 to 2020 to include the top 2 percent of scholars worldwide, listing 159,683 authors.

This study recognizes the scholastic impact of AUB and its faculty and demonstrates that AUB is a major international research university.



NAGI S. EL SAGHIR, MD, FACP, FASCO, RECEIVES LEBANON'S NATIONAL CEDAR MEDAL AWARD

In recognition of his numerous efforts in medical, academic, and scientific fields, especially those related to fighting breast cancer, President Aoun granted Professor, Naji Al-Saghir, the National Order of the Cedar (Commander Rank) on November 3, 2020. Dr. Al-Saghir stated, "We were able to change the face of breast cancer in Lebanon, from a frightening disease, to a disease which can be cured or coexisted with."

The President praised Prof. Al-Saghir's rich career and the great efforts he had made and still is in the fields of medical treatment, awareness, and scientific and medical studies and research, in addition to the campaign he organized to prevent breast cancer and other diseases.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Breast cancer awareness month is over for another year. However, while taking in consideration the current pandemic, it is not too late to reflect on, one of the most successful breast cancer awareness campaigns in Lebanon and the region for the year 2020.

As the landscape of the deplorable financial situation and the spread of COVID-19 continues to get bigger, the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation (LBCF) collaborated with a McCann, a French communications' agency to raise awareness about the importance of screening and early detection. The collaboration initiative expanded the outreach of the awareness message to a wider target audience through euphemism: baking bread instead of talking about breasts while doing the self-exam.

To do so, LBCF released two videos: The actual bread recipe video which demonstrates similar gestures for bread kneading and breast self-examination and a case study video, which reveals the process behind the idea that was used for PR purposes.



A traditional bread recipe to help save lives

The bread recipe video was first released at the beginning of the Breast Cancer Awareness month, without any mention of the initiative behind it. Doctors, survivors, and influencers shared the recipe, helping them get the gestures out there, while avoiding any taboo. After being trained by a gynecologist, Um Ali performed these three life-saving gestures while respecting our culture and women's intimacy.

The video teaching the self-examination technique is accompanied by maximum mobilization. For its promotion, another video under the slogan, "Did you bake bread this month?" spread widely on social networks.

Online Awareness Sessions during COVID-19

For the 5th year in a row, the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation engages breast cancer patients in a one-day workshop entitled "Patient Empowerment Workshop" which aims to empower and give support to advanced staged patients and their families. This unique workshop model is crucial in the success of self-management of patients with chronic diseases.

This year, and due to the uncertain times Lebanon is passing through, the Lebanese breast Cancer Foundation decided to carry out the workshop online and keep up with the patients' needs.

The workshop was divided into different sessions designed to tackle the COVID-19 virus and its impact on cancer patients.

During these sessions, 10 different specialists participated in around 30 sessions to talk about the arising difficulties and challenges of COVID – 19 and possible guiding tips.

These sessions took place through a live video broadcasted on LBCF social media during the month of July.

NGO' Workshop-2021

On February 10, 2021, the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation, hosted a virtual workshop entitled "Navigating uncertainty during COVID-19" for local NGO`s as part of the BBCC: 9th Annual Beirut Breast Cancer. The workshop, delivered by Mr. Ziad Hamdan, aimed to propel a positive message across the participating NGOs and help them be creative in these unique times.

CHRISTMAS TOUR OF CANCER SUPPORT FUND- DECEMBER 21, 2020

Stemming from the belief that giving gifts to cancer patients and bringing smiles to their faces is a very important factor in their overall healing process, the Cancer Support Fund at the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute established a gift distributing tour during Christmas Eve.

This year, the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic adds even more concern for people already facing cancer.

However, the CSF team was successful to be an integral part in the psychological and spiritual support that the Center's patients need to cope with their different and lengthy treatment stages.



NEW PROGRAMS AT NKBCI

Launching the Cardio-Oncology Program

The Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute and the Division of Cardiology at the Mufid Farra Heart and Vascular Institute, AUBMC have jointly established The Cardio-Oncology Program in Fall 2020. It is the first integrative collaborative cardio-oncology program in Lebanon and the region.

This program aims to provide comprehensive and coordinated care for patients with cancer who are at high risk of developing cardiac disorders bringing together cardiologists with the Hematology-Oncology team and other specialists.

Within this coordinated approach, an evaluation and a treatment plan are developed to address patients' cardiac care needs in order to best tend to and preserve heart health. This program tailored for cancer patients and survivors benefits from the Heart and Vascular institute's range of medical services encompassing those of different cardiology units: starting from preventive efforts to diagnostics and therapeutic interventions.



Launching the Psycho-Oncology Program

The Psycho- Oncology Program was established as a joint initiative between the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute and the Department of Psychiatry at AUBMC, to be the first integrative collaborative care psycho-oncology program in Lebanon and the region.

As about 20-25% of cancer patients face significant emotional distress that affects their functioning: The program aims to support cancer patients and their families, help them better manage their disease, and improve their quality of life and clinical outcomes.

Working closely with NKBCI medical team, the program provides gold-standard, criteria-driven, patient and family-centered multidisciplinary standardized care from diagnosis unto survivorship.



2ND MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IMMUNO-ONCOLOGY FORUM

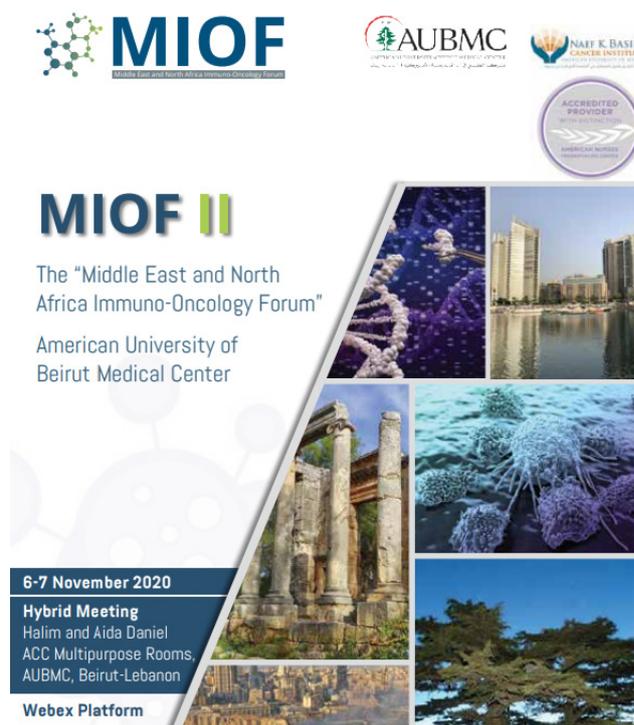
AUBMC and NKBCI held the Second Middle East and North Africa Immuno-Oncology Forum on November 6 and 7, 2020 in hybrid format.

The Second Middle East and North Africa Immuno-Oncology Forum (MIOF) was held on November 6 and 7, 2020 in hybrid format at the Daniel ACC Multipurpose Room, AUBMC. The MIOF is the only conference in the region designed to tackle all aspects of immuno-oncology practices in the different types of cancer, whether solid or liquid. This year's conference was chaired by Dr. Hazem Assi and co-chaired by Dr. Jean El Cheikh and featured leaders in Hematology – Oncology, certified healthcare professionals, pharmacists and nurses providing interactive scientific sessions that covered various diagnostic and therapeutic advancements in immune-oncology.

Dr. Khuri, keynote speaker, emphasized future practices in immune-oncology, highlighting the importance of this "novel combination approaches to be based on patient-specific factors and focusing on individualized immunotherapy".

The program covered the most effective initiatives and best practices across the full spectrum of cancer treatment, from breast, lung, GI, prostate, and ovarian to malignant hematology.

The conference is another attestation to AUBMC's belief in the importance of sharing all updates related to immuno-oncology with the aim to standardize cancer care practice in the MENA region. It fulfills NKBCI's its mission of reducing cancer burden in Lebanon and the region through integrated programs in patient care, research, education, and prevention.



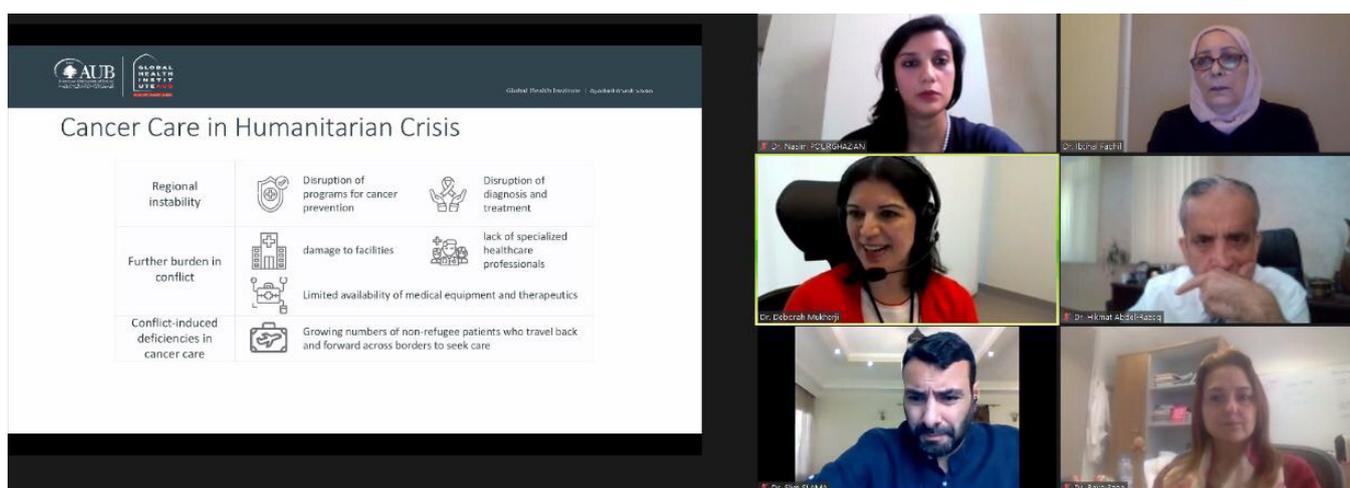
MIOF II
The "Middle East and North Africa Immuno-Oncology Forum"
American University of Beirut Medical Center

6-7 November 2020
Hybrid Meeting
Halim and Aida Daniel
ACC Multipurpose Rooms,
AUBMC, Beirut-Lebanon
Webex Platform

The graphic includes logos for MIOF, AUBMC, and N.K. Basile Cancer Institute, along with an Accredited Provider seal. It features a collage of images: a DNA helix, a modern cityscape, ancient ruins, a microscopic view of cells, and a forest scene.

LONDON WEEK PARTICIPATIONS

On November 15, 2020, Dr. Deborah Mukherji participated as a speaker and panelist in a global webinar titled "Cancer in the Eastern Mediterranean Region", as part of London Global Cancer Week 2020. This webinar is one of series of coordinated international discussions and events being held in Central London during the week 15-20 November 2020 under the umbrella title 'London Global Cancer Week'. The aim of this webinar is to provide a 360° picture of the impact of the rising global incidence of cancer, the challenges the cancer pandemic poses to the implementation of UHC, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on existing cancer treatment and research, and the UK contribution to strengthening capacity in cancer prevention and cancer control in the emerging countries.



The image shows a screenshot of a webinar presentation on the left and a grid of six participants on the right.

Cancer Care in Humanitarian Crisis

Regional instability	Disruption of programs for cancer prevention	Disruption of diagnosis and treatment
Further burden in conflict	damage to facilities	lack of specialized healthcare professionals
Conflict-induced deficiencies in cancer care	Limited availability of medical equipment and therapeutics	Growing numbers of non-refugee patients who travel back and forward across borders to seek care

The participant grid includes: Dr. Nasim POLURHAZAN, Dr. Bipha Rashid, Dr. Deborah Mukherji, Dr. Hikmat Abadi-Rasbiq, Dr. Rami Al-AMA, and Dr. Rana Saba.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Palliative care admission privileges:

In an effort to improve end-of-life care at AUMBC and building on best practices, the palliative care specialists at NKBCI were finally granted their admission privileges.

Congratulations to Ms. Nisreen Abbani, NKBCI in-patient nurse, who has been named to assume an additional responsibility of overseeing the daily nursing practice in the NKBCI Ambulatory Infusion Unit.

Dr. Ali Shamseddine and the clinical trial team at NKBCI **celebrated the completion of Averectal study enrollment milestone.**

Employee Milestones

Births:

Congratulations to Mrs. Wafaa Skaff Chadarevian and her husband who welcomed home a new baby girl, Zosia Roni Chadarevian, on October 5, 2020.

Congratulations to Mrs. Sana Murad Slim and her husband who welcomed home a new baby girl, Tamara Ragheb Slim, on November 11, 2020.

Farewells:

In a very notable and convivial gathering, physicians, nurses and staff bid a farewell to one of shining nurses of Basile Out-patient, Ms. Kristel Dagher, who was in charge of all nursing operations of NKBCI Ambulatory Infusion Unit in the last two years.



Averectal Study Enrollment Milestone



Farewell: Ms. Kristel Dagher



Zosia Roni Chadarevian



Tamara Ragheb Slim

APCCC PROSTATE CONFERENCE

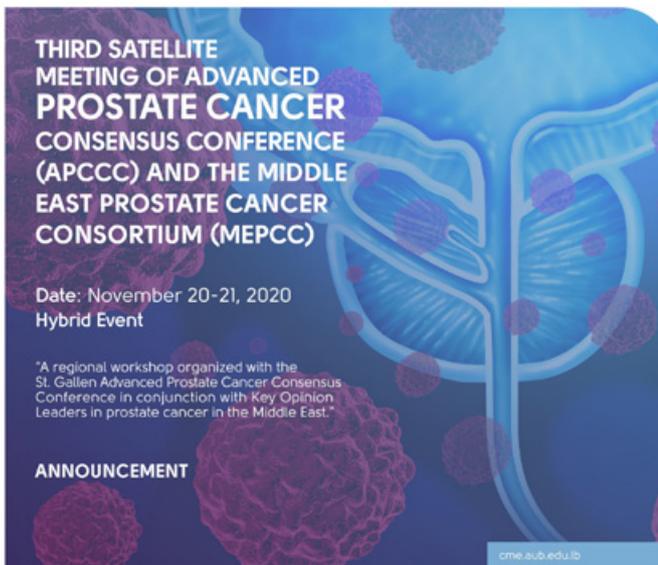
The Third Satellite meeting of the Advanced Prostate Cancer Consensus Conference (APCCC), in conjunction with the Middle East Prostate Cancer Consortium (MEPCC) was held on 20-21 November.

The meeting, a regional workshop organized with the Saint Gallen Advanced Prostate Cancer Conference, in conjunction with key opinion leaders in the Middle East, is an initiative by Dr. Raja Khauli and Dr. Deborah Mukherji of NKBCI to bring APCCC topics to the Middle East and discuss strategies to improve prostate cancer care. It represented in depth review of 2019 APCCC-Basel meeting on prostate cancer, with primary focus on the Middle East region, and the development of the regional guidelines on advanced prostate cancer.

Organised with Dr. Silke Gillessen, Medical Scientific Director of the Istituto Oncologico della Svizzera Italiana, Switzerland, and Dr. Aurelius Omlin, St. Gallen Cantonal Hospital, Switzerland.

Drs. Khauli and Mukherjee co-chaired the successful hybrid/virtual conference. The Continuing Medical Education office organized it in collaboration with the Division of Urology at the Surgery Department and the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute at AUBMC.

Speakers and panelists from Lebanon, USA, UK, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman participated online to develop consensus recommendations to improve the management of prostate cancer in the region.

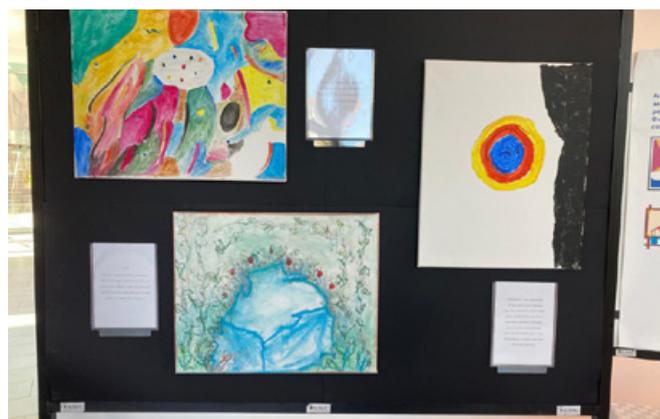


ART THERAPY WEBINAR: NEW APPROACH

Ms. Hiba Salem, psycho-oncology specialist, licensed expressive therapist, and clinical & palliative psychologist at the Department of Psychiatry at AUBMC, lead a webinar on the "Impact & Experience of Art Therapy in Various Psychiatric Settings" on October 27, 2020.

An essential highlight regarding cancer patients: through relatively short-term interventions in art therapy (individual therapy), it is possible to significantly improve the emotional state and perceived patients' symptoms. The therapeutic effect lies not in the art itself but in the process of self-expression. Patients with depression displayed less symptoms after art therapy and after few months of follow-up.

The webinar was accompanied by an art exhibit in the Daniel ACC lobby displaying works by patients within a one-on-one art therapy session under the guidance of Ms. Salem.



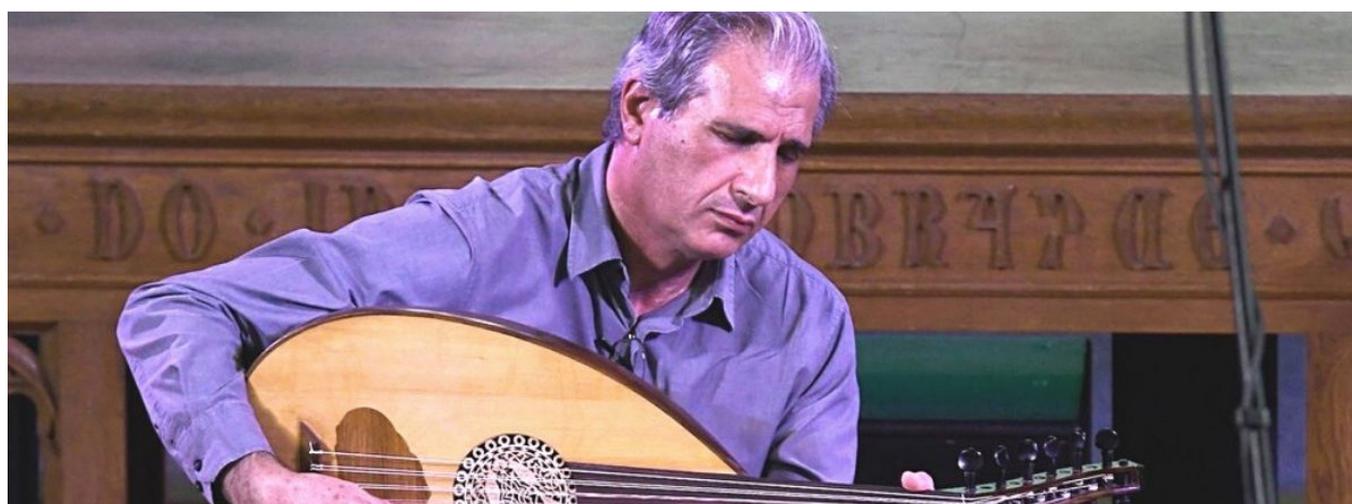
LEBANON'S MUSICAL PRODIGIES: REST IN PEACE MR. BASSAM SABA

NKBCI and the Cancer Support Fund lost a mutual friend and one of Lebanon's finest symbol of culture and music, Mr. Bassam Saba.

Mr. Saba lost his battle against a COVID-19 infection after being under intensive care at the American University of Beirut Medical Center.

Recognized as one of the 10 most outstanding artists for making a significant difference in conveying the rich Middle Eastern cultural history to American audiences through music, he was considered one of the most outstanding nay's and oud's players in the United States.

Saba performed and recorded music with several top Lebanese and international composers and musicians like Fairouz, Ziad Rahbani, Marcel Khalife, Simon Shaheen, Toufic Farroukh, Wadiah al-Safi, Kazem Al Sahir, Yo Yo Ma, Wu Man, Alicia Keys, Quincy Jones, Khaled, Santana, and Souad Massi among others; he also performed as a soloist for several philharmonic orchestras worldwide. The art of healing Bassam represented will be greatly missed.





DR. FARAH NASSAR, RECIPIENT OF L'OREAL- UNESCO WOMEN IN SCIENCE LEVANT YOUNG TALENT FELLOWSHIP 2020

Q: When did you join the Naef K. Basil Cancer Institute?

A: I joined NKBCI in June 2018.

Q: What is your job title?

A: I am a postdoctoral fellow (research associate) in the Department of Internal Medicine.

Q: What are your main responsibilities?

A: I am coordinating and working on multiple oncology research projects that are both clinical and basic science. My journey starts from identifying eligible patients (mainly colorectal cancer patients), recruiting them, collecting biological samples to identify specific biomarkers and then analyzing them in the lab.

Q: Prior to joining this department, where were you working?

A: I was previously a PhD student. I have been a cofounder and active member of AMALOUNA, volunteering arm of NKBCI involved in awareness about cancer, its prevention and research.

Q: Where did you pursue your college studies?

A: I am an AUBite. I earned my Bachelor degree in Biology, my masters in Microbiology and Immunology, Faculty of Medicine and my PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology from the Department of Biology, Faculty of Arts and Science at AUB.

Q: What do you like most about your job?

A: My job was an eye opener to translational oncology research. It was also my first interaction with cancer patients, a fact that makes your research more meaningful.

Q: What would you like to improve in your current job?

A: I hope we have better opportunities for research funding and have more collaborations with other departments and research facilities.

Q: Tell us about your ambition; in what terms would you like to develop your career?

A: I dream of being a prominent researcher and educator in the field of oncology and cancer prevention. I am seeking now postdoctoral fellowships outside Lebanon.

Q: Where is your best trip destination and why?

A: Granada and Cordoba in Spain were my favorite destinations. You can marvel the Andalusian Islamic architecture and admire the place where it was the peak of scientific discoveries and inventions in different fields.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I love to travel and learn about new cultures. I also love to learn new languages and watch period dramas. I love also volunteering in AMALOUNA as a cancer awareness advocate.

: What would be your best food choice?

A: My mom's food. Whatever she cooks is yummy especially spicy food or rich with lemon/ pomegranate molasses.

Q: Tell us more about your character.

A: I am an ambitious sincere person. I have a curious mind always seeking to learn something new. I am family oriented and love to help anyone in need.

Q: What is your advice to your peers?

A: Be patient in this career. Hard work pays off. Always try to develop yourself. Try to learn something new everyday and make use of it.

Q: What is your message to cancer patients?

A: Never give up. Your optimism and patience are part of your healing process. "For every disease, there is a cure," and may God help us work hard together to find it.



Research Publication for Hem/Onc Physicians

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- Allogeneic stem cell transplant in patients with acute myeloid leukemia and karnofsky performance status score less than or equal to 80%: A study from the acute leukemia working party of the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT). Saraceni F, Labopin M, Forcade E, Kröger N, Socié G, Niittyvuopio R, Cornelissen JJ, Labussière-Wallet H, Blaise D, Choi G, Byrne JL, Guillerme G, Marchand T, Esteve J, Bazarbachi A, Savani B, Olivieri A, Nagler A, Mohty M. Cancer medicine. Nov 2020
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