

# NKBCI NEWSLETTER



## ON WORLD CANCER DAY, EMERGING EXPERIENCE OF ADAPTATION AND INNOVATION IN THE NEW TIMES OF COVID-19

Beirut, February 04, 2021: On the occasion of World Cancer Day, the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center, in collaboration and provider-ship with King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Center (KHCC), held an awareness virtual meeting under the title of "Cancer Prevention and Control Redefined Amid COVID-19" in Lebanon and the region.

Dr. Rihab Nasr, Director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at NKBCI, said: "The pandemic created huge challenges affecting every single aspect of cancer care, patients, and healthcare providers. It has severely impacted cancer prevention and control, leading to a dramatic decrease in cancer screening and a delay in early diagnosis and delayed cancer care. Thus, we should adapt to meet the new challenges we are facing as cancer is not preventable."

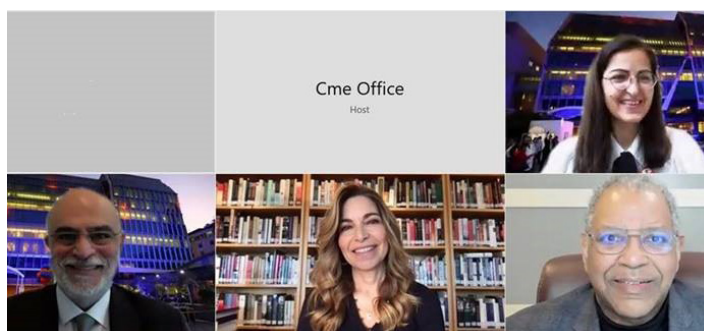
Expressing his gratitude and appreciation for the efforts exerted by KHCC foundation, Dr. Ali Taher, NKBCI Director, said: "These challenges forced us as experts to come together in an attempt to win the fight. Our collaboration today with King Hussein Cancer Center is a great step towards enhancing knowledge exchange and promoting cancer awareness in the era of COVID-19". He also added: "We, at the NKBCI, have strived to make the whole community, especially cancer patients, recognize and advocate the importance of their health and wellbeing during these difficult days. We are grateful for Princess Ghida Talal and the King Hussein Cancer Foundation for supporting us through several donations, including medications to the Basile Cancer Institute and the Cancer Support Fund."

In the opening speech, Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB President, said: "On this occasion, we bring together our efforts with treasured partners to carry out a crucial task that is saving, protecting, and enhancing humanity's most precious asset; life itself. In the face of the pandemic, we need to join hands more than ever to better understand the changing dynamic it plays and find new ways to evolve and create practical measures ensuring continued cancer prevention and control to provide care to all the needy."

Her Royal Highness, Princess Ghida Talal, said: "No one can ignore this pandemic which had invaded cancer centers worldwide and introduced a new set of challenges to cancer institutions across the globe. Fighting cancer has always been a challenge but fighting cancer during a pandemic demands huge efforts and resources and requires a close partnership between institutions to increase cooperation and re-direct the world's attention to fight against cancer."

During the meeting, Dr. Otis Brawley, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Oncology and Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University stated that COVID-19 is displacing many non-COVID patients and depriving them of healthcare. Many victims of the COVID pandemic died of non-COVID disease due to overcrowded healthcare centers. To prevent cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and help survive COVID, Dr. Brawley focused on the importance of maintaining a good diet, taking care of one's well-being, exercising, and most importantly, quitting smoking.

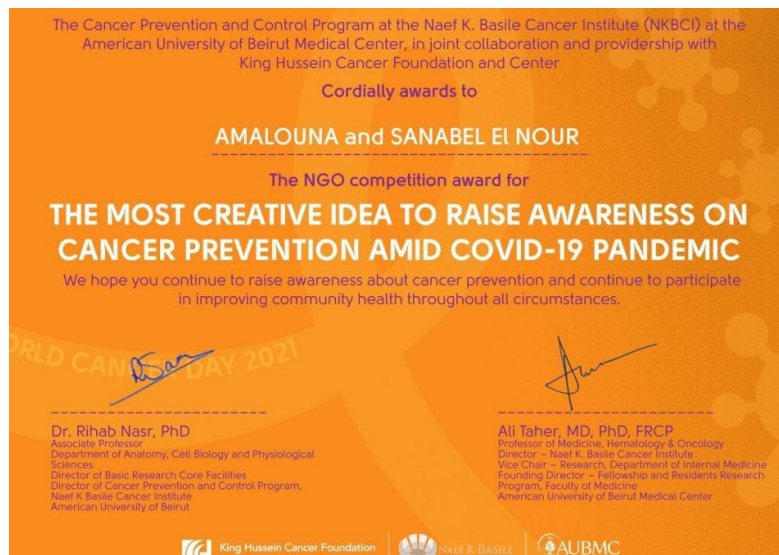
In conclusion, the webinar aimed to motivate all healthcare workers to spread awareness about cancer prevention and control even during the COVID pandemic in an attempt to prevent the imminent increase in cancer incidence in the near future. It pledges the strong commitment of both AUBMC and NKBCI to continually assist and support cancer patients especially through the pandemic leading to better health and well-being.



## WORLD CANCER DAY NGO COMPETITION

In the framework of the World Cancer Day: Cancer Prevention and Control Redefined amid COVID-19 virtual conference, evolving strategies from cancer institutions and NGOs were shared and the conference also encompassed a competition for the most creative idea to raise cancer awareness during this critical period.

On February 8, AMALOUNA and Sanabel El Nour NGOs were announced to be the winners of the best creative idea to raise awareness about cancer amid COVID. Their project was a cancer patient navigator to help cancer patients and survivors in their clinical care.



**The Most Creative Idea – NGO Competition Themes for Proposal Submission were:**

- To encourage healthy behaviors (smoking cessation, healthy diet, physical activities...) amid COVID-19 crisis
- To promote cancer screening and early detection amid COVID-19 crisis
- To raise awareness about cancer and its prevention amid COVID-19 crisis

## CPCP, NKBCI SELECTED AS COUNTRY CHAMPION BY UICC

In their efforts to voice the needs of cancer patients and address challenges that stand in the way of equitable access to healthcare services, UICC announced the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at NKBCI among the selection of a new cohort of 20 "Country Champions". UICC Country Champion's main goal is to bring change in communities and countries by putting in action the provisions contained in the World Health Assembly cancer resolution approved in 2017.



The newly selected Country Champions will be advancing the cause of different types of cancer, including women's cancers, with some focusing on the implementation of the global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer by promoting HPV vaccination and early detection. Others plan to focus on how to finance and strengthen national health policies, and advocate for developing national cancer control plans and cancer registries.



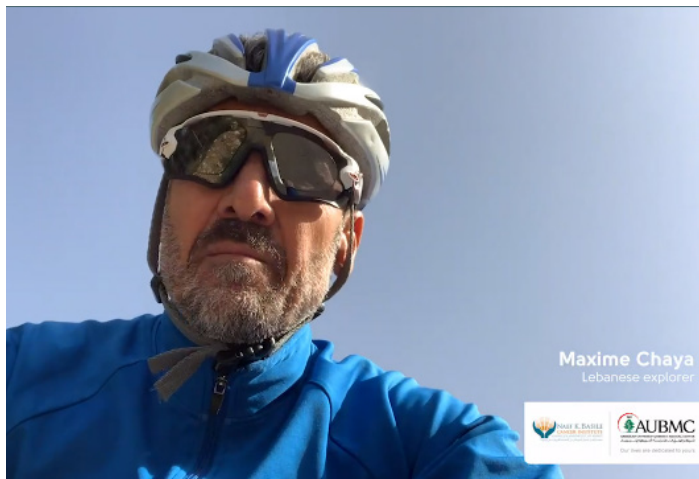
# NATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD CANCER DAY: I AM & I WILL

On the Occasion of the World Cancer Day, the Institute and the Cancer Prevention and Control Program at AUBMC mobilized a global uniting initiative and movement led by the UICC. This "I am I will" Campaign aimed to deliver a powerful reminder to the public about the role each person plays in reducing the global impact of cancer.

For that reason, Maxime Chaaya, the Lebanese

sportsman, mountaineer, and explorer featured a video speaking about the importance of healthy lifestyle during the pandemic in the prevention against cancer.

This video achieved a very high reachability rate on different AUBMC social media platform with 6.3K viewers.



## JCI ACCREDITATION

The American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) announced its 5th reaccreditation by the Joint Commission International (JCI) on February 2, 2021. This distinction has been achieved without a single unmet measurable element for the first time. The accreditation was an attestation to AUB's robust commitment to resist and persist despite all challenges.

NKBCI, as part of AUBMC, completed the audit and received the accreditation despite the difficult times of COVID-19 -in addition to the current political and economic crisis- to bring the healthcare of international standards within the reach of every individual. This achievement by the team is a matter of great pride not only to AUB, but also to the nation.





## NKBCI and CSF: MAKING MOTHER'S DAY MEMORIES

Mother's Day is always an emotional occasion, but there was more room for drama this year as the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way it was celebrated. For that reason, the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute, toured on all mothers (patients, doctors, and staff) reflecting on the appreciation to all their efforts and presented special gifts to each mother.





# THE 9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BEIRUT BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE: SUPPORTING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT COVID-19 FRONTLINERS



Despite Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis in Lebanon, the Division of Hematology and Oncology, and the Breast Cancer Center of Excellence at Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute at the American University of Beirut Medical Center, organized the ninth annual Beirut Breast Cancer Conference BBCC-9, in collaboration with the Lebanese Society of Medical Oncology and the Arab Medical Association Against Cancer, with expert international physicians and researchers from the United States, Europe, Arab countries, and Lebanon. The conference was held with a special participation from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center of New York and King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman.

Lecturers and participants presented and discussed the major new advances in accurate diagnosis, conservative surgery of the breast and axillary lymph nodes, radiation therapy, new chemotherapy, targeted, hormonal, and immune therapies. Participants also focused on new treatment recommendations. Conference included multiple educational sessions, multidisciplinary tumor boards sessions where physicians discussed actual cases of their patients and make treatment recommendations, in addition to special research sessions by doctors in training. It also included full sessions for nurses, pharmacists and non-governmental organizations NGOs.

On the final day of the meeting at a closing ceremony, BBCC-9 president, Professor Nagi El Saghir, Head of the Division of Hematology and Oncology and Director of the Breast Center of Excellence at NKBCI at AUBMC said, "It is with great satisfaction and pride that we close the ninth Beirut breast cancer conference where we reviewed all the new advances in breast cancer research and management that allow us now to cure more than 80 to 90% of early breast cancer cases and improve survival of patients with metastatic breast cancer for years in cases of spread."

Dr. El Saghir also said new advances are targeted against cancer cell protein products and cancer cells DNA mutations. Those new treatments have now all become available in Lebanon and there is fear many of them are going to become difficult to obtain because of the higher expenses and the economic collapse in the country. There is a real risk that the percentage of patients whom we can cure from cancer will decrease and that would be a very unfortunate step backward. He also requested that insurance bodies issue speedy approvals for patients who are being forced to pay out-of-pocket expenses for their medications. He said that many medications are now missing from pharmacy shelves and interruption of treatment can cause the cancers to recur.

Director of NKBCI, Dr. Ali Taher, emphasized the importance of this conference and the efforts that AUBMC is exerting to continue to take care of cancer patients throughout COVID-19 pandemic. The President of the Lebanese Society of Medical Oncology, Dr. Nizar Bitar, sent a message of support and appreciation for the efforts and Continuing Medical Education that BBCC-9 offers for physicians in Lebanon and Worldwide.

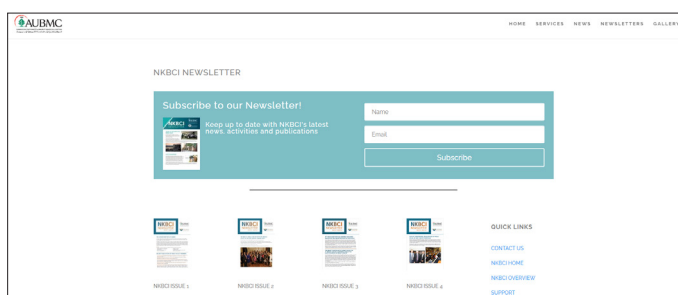
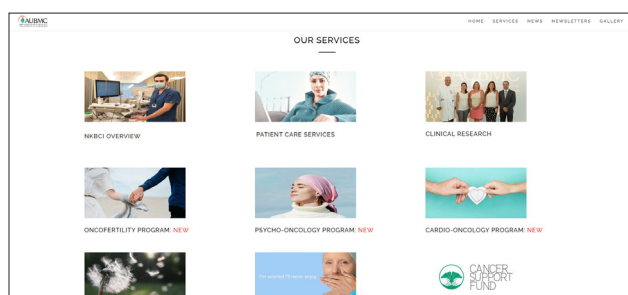
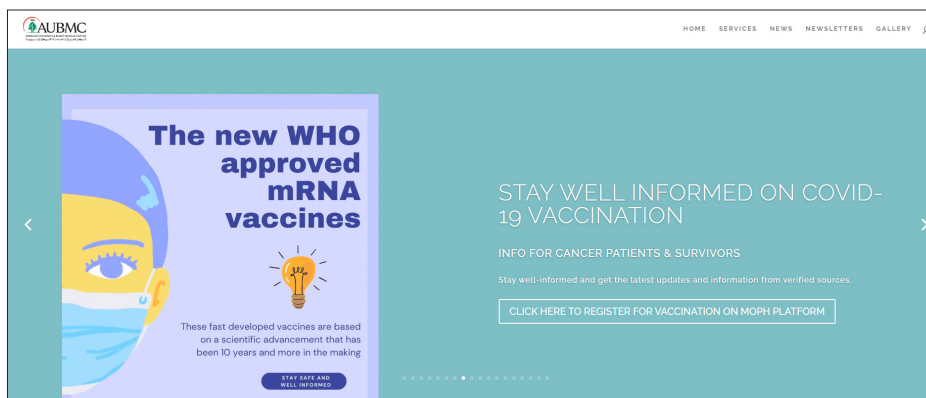
In his turn, Dr. Sami Khatib, president of the Arab Medical Association against Cancer, praised the great efforts of organizing this conference and the Arab participation online virtually to improve diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients.

The president of the Order of Nurses of Lebanon, Dr. Myrna Doumit, stressed on the role of nurses in taking care of cancer patients during the coronavirus pandemic and the need to support them. The Lebanese Order of Physicians in Tripoli, Dr Salim Abi Saleh, emphasized the combined efforts of doctors all over Lebanon to take care of cancer patients and education during Covid19 pandemic. The President of the Lebanese Order of Physicians in Beirut, Dr. Charaf Abou Charaf, praised the great scientific efforts of BBCC9 organizers to continue to educate, research, and improve the care of cancer patients despite of Covid-19 pandemic and financial crisis in Lebanon.

The closing ceremony was concluded with a musical online performance by Aziza. The conference was broadcasted from the Assembly Hall of the American University of Beirut, which was transmitted live for the conference participants in the United States, Europe, Arab countries, and Lebanon.

## NKBCI NEW WEBSITE

We are very excited to announce the launch of our newly designed website. Visit us at <https://sites.aub.edu.lb/aubmcacc/nkbc/>. After 9 months of hard work and dedication, we are delighted to officially announce the launch of the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute website. The newly designed website is faster and easier to navigate in addition to being more user-friendly. The new interactive features of the website offer a platform for all users to foster improved communication. The website content is constantly updated with helpful information, news, and announcements.



## WEBINARS

Multiple educational webinars were conducted during the first trimester of 2021.

- **Advances in Research and Treatment of Hematological Malignancies – Part II: (March 2-26, 2021)**

This course provided a comprehensive overview of recent research advances in hematological malignancies.

Attendees were able to develop an in-depth knowledge and acquired skills in conducting clinical, translational and basic research related to the field of hematological malignancies.

Course Directors:

Hiba El Hajj, PhD (Animal models and targeted therapy)

Marwan El Sabban, PhD (Cell biology and imaging techniques)

Ali Bazarbachi, MD, PhD (Clinical management)

- **Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) Online Program: (January 14, 2021 and January 21, 2021)**

This webinar is a joint collaboration between the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute. The program of this webinar allowed attendees to attain both theoretical and practical knowledge on sickle cell disease, by reviewing state-of-the-art evidence and illustrating best practice in diagnosis and management.

Course Directors:

Miguel Abboud, MD

Ali Taher, MD, PhD, FRCP

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: EMPOWER WOMEN4ONCOLOGY

Celebrated annually on March 8th International Women's Day is a celebration of unity, advocacy, action, and empowerment. This year the female oncologists at NKBCI shared challenges and opportunities as part of a global initiative called women4oncology that unites professionals, providing a forum to share challenges and opportunities, collaborate on new projects, and advance careers.





# ROLA MASHMOUSHI

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

A: I joined the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute in September 2011.

**Q: What is your Job title?**

A: I am a palliative care nurse.

**Q: What are your main responsibilities?**

A: As a palliative care nurse, my main responsibility is to do comprehensive assessment for my patients' physical and psychological symptoms, and coming up with a plan of action after discussing it with the interdisciplinary team. My aim is to provide holistic care to patients and their families with chronic progressive illnesses. I do also discuss patients and their families wishes related to the goals of care.



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

A: My journey at AUBMC started as an adult oncology nurse at Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute.

**Q: Where did you pursue your college studies?**

A: I graduated from the American University of Beirut- Hariri School of Nursing.

**Q: What do you like most about your job?**

A: I like the humanitarian touch with the patients and their families during the most stressful period of their lives. Our duty is to be next to our patients, ensuring a better quality of life including the physical as well as the psychological aspect and helping them take major decisions related to their healthcare.

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

A: My vision regarding my job is related to logistics, as I am looking forward for having a possible palliative care floor for our palliative patients. In this floor, our palliative team will have the needed environment for the patients, along with the help of trained house staff.

**Q: Tell us more about your ambition; how would you like to develop your career?**

A: I am looking forward to pursue higher education and planning to have my master's as well as to get enrolled in a nurse practitioner program.

**Q: Where is the best trip destination and why?**

A: My best trip destination is Paris in which I enjoy the romantic ambience, Eiffel Tower, and the historical muse. I also enjoy the fantastic food and dessert.

**Q: What are your hobbies?**

A: My hobbies are jogging and painting as well as cooking.

**Q: What would be your best food choice?**

A: I like both, the Lebanese and Italian cuisines.

**Q: Tell us more about your character.**

A: In general, I am a calm, confident, and balanced person. In addition, I enjoy having good company and going through new adventures.

**Q: What is your advice to your peers?**

A: Although we are all currently passing through difficult times/circumstances, we have to stay strong enough to continue building our educational and career development.

**Q: What is your message to cancer patients?**

A: You are all heroes. We are always by your side throughout your journey and will always be available to make it as smooth as possible with the best outcome.





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### **The Impact of Age On Prognosis in Patients with Gastric Cancer: Experience in A Tertiary Care Center.**

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### **Memoriam For Renaud Mahieux.**

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### **Development And Validation Of A Disease Risk Stratification System For Patients With Haematological Malignancies: A Retrospective Cohort Study Of The European Society For Blood And Marrow Transplantation Registry.**

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### **Risk Adapted Therapeutic Strategy In Newly Diagnosed Acute Myeloid Leukemia: Refining The Outcomes Of Eln 2017 Intermediate-Risk Patients.**

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### **Efficacy And Safety-In Analysis Of Short-Course Radiation Followed By Mfolfox-6 Plus Avelumab For Locally Advanced Rectal Adenocarcinoma.**

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### **The Crosstalk Between Microbiome And Immune Response In Gastric Cancer.**

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