

NKBCI

NEWSLETTER

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Our lives are dedicated to yours



THE NAEF K. BASILE CANCER INSTITUTE (NKBCI) HOSTS ITS SECOND ANNUAL DINNER PARTY

The Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI) hosts its second annual dinner party.

For the second year in a row, the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI) hosted its annual dinner party. A total of 206 physicians, nurses, technicians, administrators, assistants, and clerks from all Department Units at AUBMC attended the event at Lancaster Plaza Hotel – Orabel Ballroom.

The event included the humorous traditional nurses' show.

After the dinner, the invitees danced and enjoyed an exceptional evening with the singer Moussa.



MIDDLE EAST MEDICAL ASSEMBLY 2014, MORE SPECIALIZED FOCUSING ON THE LATEST IN HEMATOLOGIC MALIGNANCIES

The Middle East Medical Assembly (MEMA) 2014, held on April 24 to April 26 at the American University of Beirut's (AUB) Issam Fares Lecture Hall, came this year with a new direction and more specialized with updates in medicine, focused on Hematological Malignancies.

The inauguration was held in the presence of Mrs. Lama Salam, wife of Prime Minister Tamam Salam, former ministers, members of the AUB Board of Trustees, AUB President Peter Dorman, AUB Provost Ahmad Dallal, Vice President of Medical Affairs and Raja N. Khuri Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB Mohamed H. Sayegh, and members of the AUB community.

Dr. Ali Taher, professor of medicine, Hematology & Oncology at American University of Beirut Medical Center, and Chairperson MEMA 2014 and 2015, opened the assembly. In his welcoming note, Dr. Taher stressed on the foundation of MEMA, "inspired by the soul core values and the glorious achievements of AUB, MEMA has been answering its noble calling driven by a deep belief in social justice and health as a right. Medical knowledge should be shared and communicated, and quality care should be provided to all."

"AUB and AUBMC have taught us that medicine is science and patients are at the core of the practice," added Dr. Taher. "We learned that pathology in medicine is committed to serve patients, which is the main goal of any research conducted. Since ancient times, alleviating pain has been the main driver for evolving medicine and finding cures. This still holds true to date but with more sophisticated tools. Today and in order to explain a mechanism of a specific disease, we study cells, genetics, receptors and mutations in depth."

World experts, prestigious institutions, more than 1,039 national, regional, and international participants came together to share expertise placing MEMA on the map of global reputable scientific events. MEMA this year comes in collaboration with MD Anderson Cancer Center and in partnership with King Hussein Cancer Center.



Following Dr. Taher, VP/Dean Mohamed H. Sayegh welcomed the attendees and spoke of MEMA's pioneering role and long-standing tradition of providing excellence in medical education with topics that are reflective of the changing needs of health care in our region. Sayegh added, "We have slightly altered this year's format, focusing on a more specialized MEMA dedicated to updates in hematologic malignancies." Dr. Sayegh announced MEMA's 2015 topic, which will come at a large scale dedicated to Oncology. More details will be shared in the future.

"MEMA's role is not limited to advancing medical education through its numerous educational workshops and sessions. The MEMA gala dinner held each year uses its proceeds to support scholarships for medical students at AUB in need of financial support. Over the past years, since instating our AUBMC 2020 Vision MEMA has supported medical and nursing students in need with scholarships. This is a testament to our commitment not only to the spread of medical education but to ensuring that the future leaders of healthcare have a chance to attain their dream and pursue a career in medicine, dedicated to care for the people of Lebanon and the region," added Dr. Sayegh.

The uniqueness of this year's MEMA went beyond specialization to hosting Rita Ragavlas, a cancer survivor diagnosed in 2006 with Hodgkin's disease, nodular sclerosis type, stage IV B, speaking on behalf of cancer patients about her personal experience with cancer, the journey in its lowest lows and her most inspiring highs, the support, treatment and cure. Her words, which touched everyone present at Issam Fares Lecture Hall, held insights of the importance of a unified medical family working hand in hand for the advancement of treatment, research, the availability of the right medication, equipment, and expertise to treat all kinds of cancer, the need of governmental support to give treatment equality to all, of patient care, support groups, as well as the importance of treating the cancer patient or any patient as a human.

"Cancer is hard; chemo is painful but I decided to stay focused on how precious life is; each day was a gift and I was a warrior," with these words Rita concluded her speech.

Following the speeches, MEMA exhibition was inaugurated and a rich program spread over two days was lined up featuring state-of-the-art educational sessions focused on hematological malignancies, nursing and clinical research workshops, general practitioners and family medicine sessions, symposia and special memorial lectures.

The importance and interest in MEMA went beyond the event and its attendees; several media platforms covered it with an approach to share and show the added value such events would bring to the Lebanese medical scene and to the benefit of the patients.



HUMAN PINK RIBBON

Under the patronage and in the presence of the First Lady of Lebanon, Mrs. Wafaa Sleiman, the Ministry of Public Health launched the 2013 National Breast Cancer Awareness campaign through a live 'Human Pink Ribbon' to visually remind women of the importance of early detection of breast cancer through screening. The event was organized in coordination with the Breast Center of Excellence at the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute of the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation, and the collaboration of Roche Lebanon.

The ribbon was formed with the participation of the First Lady of Lebanon, the Minister of Public Health, Mrs. Lama Salam, wife of prime minister Tamam Salam, a number of current and former ministers and deputies, and the Dean of Medical Faculty at the American University of Beirut, along with the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation, breast cancer survivors, universities and school teams. All participants dressed up in pink to pay tribute to the international symbol of breast cancer awareness.

Speeches highlighted the relevance of early detection in enhancing the effectiveness of treatment and saving lives. Speakers also stressed the importance of the collective efforts to educate the community on the importance of prevention and early detection and addressing the fear of the treatment.

The continuous efforts over the past 15 years resulted in a significant downward change in the stages of breast cancer in Lebanon with relatively less advanced cases and higher survival rates.



AUBMC BCC2: 2ND AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT MEDICAL CENTER BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE ADVANCES IN BREAST CANCER MANAGEMENT AND UPDATES

On February 14-15, 2014, The Breast Center of Excellence of the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) organized its Second Annual Breast Cancer Conference, AUBMC BCC2 which brought together the Lebanese Order of Physicians, Lebanese Order of Nurses, various Lebanese and Arab medical associations and non-governmental organizations to collaborate together in the fight against breast cancer. During the 2nd AUBMC BCC, experts from Lebanon and the region shared knowledge and lessons learnt, discussed novel advances in screening, reviewed chemoprevention methods and loco-regional assessment, gave an overview of the patient advocacy and support groups, and highlighted the latest findings in breast cancer in Lebanon and the region.

Participants discussed early screening for early diagnosis, breast surgery, and palliative care. In part, the discussion tackled the significance of developing tailored treatment plans for breast cancer patients in a multidisciplinary fashion. AUBMC BCC2 included an oncology nursing symposium and special joint interactive panel sessions with physicians, nurses, NGOs, and patient advocates. The event was organized in an effort to forge better collaboration and publish recommendations which would increase attention to patients' rights and improve patient support and care in Lebanon.

Professor Nagi El-Saghir, director of the Breast Center of Excellence at AUBMC's NKBCI, President of the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation (LBCF) and chair of the conference asserted at the AUBMC BCC2 opening ceremony that "AUBMC will persevere on its medical and humanitarian mission to care for its community, heal its people, and help prolong their well-being with love, respect, and dedication." He also added, "In the midst of all the political turmoil in the Middle East and the whole world, we proved that physicians at AUBMC in particular and in Lebanon in general continue to carry their responsibilities to ensure they provide their patients with the most up-to-date diagnostic and treatment modalities and guarantee the best ongoing medical education for medical students, doctors in training and graduate physicians who also conduct medical research related to local and international needs."

In addition to Lebanese and Arab speakers, AUBMC BCC2 included faculty from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center – Cornell (Mahmoud El-Tamer, MD, Clifford Hudis, MD), Massachusetts General Hospital -Harvard (Alphonse Taghian, MD), Johns Hopkins University – Baltimore (Nagi Khouri, MD) and University of Padova, Italy (PierFranco Conte, MD).

Reference: <http://www.aubmc.org/Pages/World-Renowned-Oncologists-Congregate-at-AUBMC's-Breast-Cancer-Conference.aspx#sthash.WbQuMtTA.dpbs>

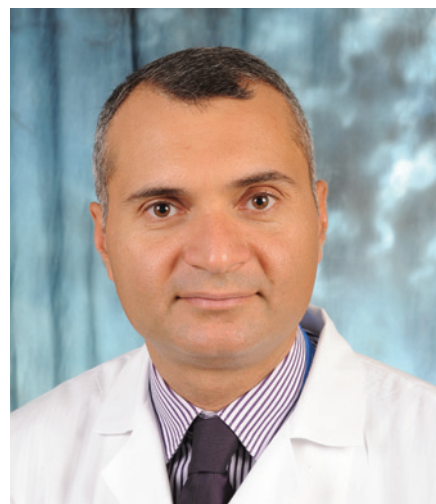
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NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Dr. Hazem Assi

Dr. Assi joined AUBMC as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, subspecialty Hematology-Oncology, in the Department of Internal Medicine in June 2014. He received his Doctor of Medicine degree from the Lebanese University in 1998 and completed his medical and Hematology-Oncology training in 2004 at the Institut Gustave Roussy in France, the leading European cancer treatment center, and Paris Nord University. His clinical fellowship training included advanced courses in Clinical Oncology, Clinical Hematology, and Clinical Research in Breast Diseases as well as Masters in Medical and Biological Sciences. He also successfully completed the European Examination in Medical Oncology (ESMO Exam). Since 2005, he has worked as Hematology-Oncology Consultant at the Moncton Hospital, New Brunswick, Canada and was Assistant Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Dalhousie University where he became Medical Director of the Hematology-Oncology Clinical Trials Program.



Dr. Assi's clinical and research interests include solid tumors (mostly genitourinary, gastrointestinal, breast), brain, sarcoma, and melanoma. For the past 10 years, he participated in over 50 clinical trials (Phase II and III) as local principal investigator and in many trials as sub-investigator with many cooperative groups (NCI and NCIC) and industry-sponsored trials. He has many publications as original articles and reviews in peer-reviewed journals.

In addition to clinical practice and research, he was extensively involved in medical education at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, and previously served as program director of Internal Medicine at Horizon Health Network in Moncton, Canada.

Dr. Nicolas Zouain

Dr. Zouain joined AUBMC as an Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology, in the Department of Radiation Oncology in August 2014.

Dr. Zouain graduated with a MD degree in 1998 from Saint Joseph University Faculty of Medicine in Beirut, and continued his post graduate studies at Staten Island University Hospital, New York where he completed a residency in internal medicine between 1998 and 2001. He then completed a full residency in radiation oncology at the University of Montreal, Canada, between 2002 and 2005. From Canada, he moved to the USA where he first worked at the Roger Maris Cancer Center, Sanford Health System, in Fargo, North Dakota between 2006 and 2009 before he relocated to Naples Florida in December of 2009 to join the Physicians Regional Healthcare System where he continued to work until he joined our department. He also held a position of Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology at the University of Central Florida, College of Medicine, Orlando, Florida.



Dr. Zouain is a diplomat of the American Board of Radiology in Radiation Oncology since 2006 and has an 8-year experience in clinical radiation oncology. He has also received certification by the American Board of internal medicine in 2001. His research covers several areas of radiation oncology, and he was closely involved in the exciting field of applied nanotechnology and the clinical implementation of advanced brachytherapy applicators. Besides his general expertise in Radiation oncology, Nicholas will take a leading role in our residency and teaching program and will develop specific areas of interest particularly in genitourinary and gastrointestinal radiation oncology.

Please join us in welcoming Drs. Assi and Zouain to the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

Dr. Nagi Saghir:

- In June 2014, Dr. Nagi El Saghir, received one of Lebanon's most highly regarded honors, the National Cedar Medal, rank Officer. The award recognized Dr. El Saghir's work in breast cancer research, patient management, and community health awareness and outreach. The honor was presented to Dr. El Saghir by HE Deputy Atef Majdalani on behalf of HE President General Michel Suleiman.
- Was selected as chair of the International Affairs Committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) for the 2013-2014 term. At the ASCO event earlier this year when the announcement was made, Dr. El Saghir spoke of his passion for research and knowledge which would "build bridges to conquer cancer and reduce disparities in patient treatment outcome worldwide."



Dr. Ali Taher

- In February 2014, Dr. Taher was appointed as an Adjunct Professor at the Emory University. He was also appointed as Editor on both Non Transfusion Dependent Thalassemia (NTDT) guidelines book, as well as, the Transfusion Dependent Thalassemia (TDT) Guidelines book, the official books by the Thalassemia International Federation (TIF). He has been selected as a scientific member of the advisory board for the upcoming European Hematology Association (EHA) 19th meeting in Milan. He has also been invited to be the speaker in educational session at the European Hematology Association-European School of Hematology in Rome.



- Emirates Award: In 2013, Professor Ali Taher received the Sultan bin Khalifa International Award for Leadership in Thalassemia. The Sultan Bin Khalifa International Thalassemia Awards is a noble initiative to value substantive efforts and contributions that have been made towards improving quality of life of patients with thalassemia & other severe blood disorders. In the recent past, the quality of life of many thalassemia patients has improved and not only because of scientific advances, but also because of the enormous self-less efforts of many individuals. H.H. Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, the Advisor for the United Arab Emirates President, has set out to recognize these individuals for their contributions by establishing Sultan Bin Khalifa International Thalassemia Award in partnership with Thalassemia International Federation.



Dr. Deborah Mukherji, Dr. Ali Shamseddine, Dr. Sally Temraz (GI/GU Team)

- Best Poster Award at ESMO 2014.

Dr. Sally Temraz:

In October 2014, Dr. Temraz, Instructor of Clinical Medicine in the Division of Hematology Oncology was promoted to the position of Assistant Professor. Dr. Temraz joined AUBMC in 2012.

EXPANSION OF THE NAEF K. BASILE CANCER INSTITUTE WAITING AREA

Since patients often form their first impression of a medical center when they step into the waiting area, the Naef K. Basile Institute expanded its waiting area to make more room for a homier atmosphere. The waiting area will allow patients to enjoy their visit and anticipate the high quality of patient care they expect to receive the minute they reach the center.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DATA MANAGEMENT AND CLINICAL RESEARCH UNIT

A new state-of-the-art facility, the Data Management and Clinical Research Unit, was recently established and is now located on the 1st floor of Bldg. 56.

The unit accommodates the Data Manager, Tumor Registry Assistant, Clinical Trials Coordinators, and all research fellows.



RELOCATION OF NKBCI FACULTY TO AUBMC PREMISES

We proudly announce the relocation of the NKBCI Faculty to the Hematology Oncology Division open area on the 5th floor of Bldg. 56. Faculty members who previously had their offices in two different locations: the Gefinor Bldg. and the 2nd floor of Bldg. 56 are now in one location.



THANK YOU

The NKBCI Faculty and Staff would like to thank Mr. Ali Saadeh and his team for the hard work and dedication they demonstrated as they diligently completed the expansion plan of the waiting area and the first and fifth floors at the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute. Your efforts and commitment are greatly appreciated.



PALLIATIVE CARE

Joelle Bassila, Palliative Care Nurse

Living with a serious illness can be challenging in so many ways.

The goal of palliative care is to help patients with serious illnesses feel better. It is a type of care that helps improve the patients' quality of life. Palliative care prevents or treats symptoms and side effects of chronic diseases, provides guidance in making decisions regarding patient care, and helps the patient and his loved ones find the emotional or spiritual support they need.

Palliative care is provided for people of all ages, at any stage in their illness, whether that illness is curable, chronic, or life-threatening. It can be received alongside other treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

The palliative care team helps the patient and his loved ones meet the challenges of the illness and live each day as fully as possible, with a focus on hope, comfort, dignity, compassion and presence. They coordinate care and treatment with the medical team, and they also ensure the patient maintains the most comfortable, independent, and active life possible. Their jobs extend beyond treatment since they dedicate themselves to give answers, provide assistance and emotional support when making difficult medical decisions, and treat pain and other symptoms such as nausea, fatigue, constipation, depression and anxiety.

The palliative care team members believe in providing the best quality of life for as long as life lasts. They respect patients and family wishes, values and beliefs and advocate on behalf of the expressed wishes of patients, caregivers and families.

Palliative care can start as soon as the disease is diagnosed or at any stage during the illness. In fact, the earlier you start Palliative Care, the better.

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CARING FOR MY MOUTH DURING MY CANCER TREATMENT

Rebecca El-Asmar, RN, MSN, AOCNS Adult Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist

Oral mucositis is a common side effect of chemotherapy which kills the cells in your mouth causing inflammation and mouth sores. You might experience redness, heat, or infection within four to five days after chemotherapy. Mouth sores may involve the lips, tongue, inner cheeks, gums, and throat. **Signs and symptoms of mouth sores are:**

- dry mouth with little, no saliva, or thick saliva
- changes in taste: foods may become tasteless, or they might taste like metal or chalk
- pain or difficulty when eating, swallowing, or talking
- hoarseness or decreased voice strength
- edema of the oral mucosa and tongue
- changes in the color of the oral mucosa: pallor, redness, or white patches
- ulcerations in the oral mucosa (infections in gums, tongue, inner cheeks, or throat)

Inform your doctor and nurse if you notice any of the below or above mentioned symptoms:

- pain
- swelling
- dryness
- redness
- white patches

You should take good care of your mouth to prevent inflammation and infection.

- Follow up with your dentist regularly. Visit your dentist at least 2 weeks before you start treatment. If you cannot go before you start, ask your doctor and nurse when it is safe for you to do so. Remember to inform your dentist about your condition and your chemotherapy treatment. Probably, you will not be able to have any dental work done while you are on chemotherapy since it may cause infection or bleeding.
- Check your mouth and tongue daily. This helps you notice any changes early on.
- Brush your teeth after each meal. Make sure to use a soft brush. Rinse your toothbrush after use. Let it dry well.
- Use oral gargle that is free of alcohol.

If you have mouth sores, follow the below instructions.

- Eat food that is soft and easy to chew and swallow. Make sure your food is cold or at room temperature.
- Keep your mouth moist. Sip water during the day. Suck on ice chips or sugar-free hard candy. Chew sugar-free gum.
- Perform regular mouth care (approximately 3 – 4 times a day). Use a 0.9% saline solution, sodium bicarbonate, or a combination of saline and sodium bicarbonate. At home, mix ¼ teaspoon baking soda and 1/8 teaspoon salt in 1 cup of warm water. Rinse with plain water.
- Use a soft toothbrush to brush your teeth, gums, and tongue after each meal and at bedtime.
- Avoid materials that irritate your mouth.
 - mouth washes containing alcohol
 - highly abrasive toothpastes
 - hot or spicy foods and beverages
 - acidic food and beverages (like lemon juice)
 - alcohol
 - tobacco
 - braces
 - poorly fitting dentures
- You can still floss your teeth if your doctor allows you. In case your gums bleed or hurt, avoid those areas. Avoid flossing if your platelets are low.
- Your doctor may prescribe a local anesthetic called Lidocaine for you if your mouth sores are painful.
- Your doctor may prescribe a special mouth gargle prepared at the pharmacy. Your nurse will instruct you on how to administer it.

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