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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American University of Beirut Medical Center Performs the First AngioVac Right Atrial Clot Removal in Lebanon

The Structural Heart Program (SHP) team at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) performed the first AngioVac procedure in Lebanon to remove a large blood clot from a female patient's right atrium. This inaugural procedure was led by Dr. Fadi Sawaya, director of SHP, with interventional cardiology support from Dr. Ziyad Ghazzal, anesthesia support from Dr. Amro Khalili, transesophageal echocardiography (TEE) guidance from Dr. Walid Gharzeddine, and real-time virtual support from Dr. Mohammad Hijji, an interventional cardiologist experienced in AngioVac procedures from Hamad Medical Corporation in Doha, Qatar.

High risks patients in Lebanon and the region who are not suitable candidates for invasive, chest-opening surgeries, like open heart, or long courses of clot-dissolving drugs can now benefit from AngioVac's innovative technology available at AUBMC to treat life-threatening right atrial clots. That was the case of the 77-year-old patient who underwent this first-of-its-kind surgery at AUBMC. The patient suffered from a life-threatening large clot in her right atrium, but could neither undergo surgery nor take high-dose medications due to her age and cardiac history. Consequently, the SHP team chose AngioVac's minimally-invasive system to save her life.

During an AngioVac procedure, a 22 French cannula (a 7.3 mm wide tube) with a funnel-shaped tip is inserted into a large vein, either in the neck or groin, and guided into the heart with X-ray and ultrasound. The funnel-shaped tip opens at the clot, and a suction circuit, similar to a bypass pump, pulls the clot into the cannula. Blood passes through a filter that traps the clot and is returned to the patient through a second tube in another vein to minimize blood loss.

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The director of SHP at AUBMC, Dr. Fadi Sawaya, thanked everyone who made the procedure possible, whether in Beirut or Doha. “This is the first time this procedure has been performed in Lebanon. It gives our high-risk patients a new option: we can now remove a large, dangerous clot from the heart through a vein, without open-heart surgery. It shows what our team can do when experience, technology, and international collaboration come together,” he said.

The head of the Division of Cardiology, Dr. Habib Dakik, also commended the team’s effort, saying, “This first-of-its-kind procedure in Lebanon reflects AUBMC’s commitment to bring the most advanced treatments to our patients, here at home. I congratulate the Structural Heart team and all the departments who made it possible.”

The AngioVac powerful mechanical aspiration system is yet another valuable addition to AUBMC’s structural heart and interventional cardiology procedures, which continues to offer advanced transcatheter and other life-saving treatments for patients in Lebanon and the region.

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Note to Editors

About AUBMC

Since 1902, AUBMC has been providing the highest standards of care to patients across Lebanon and the region. It is also the teaching hospital for the Faculty of Medicine at AUB (established in 1867), which has trained generations of medical students and physicians, and whose graduates can be found at leading institutions around the world. AUBMC is the only medical institution in the Middle East to have earned the five international accreditations of JCI, Magnet, CAP, ACGME-I and JACIE attesting to its superior standards in patient-centered care, nursing, pathology/laboratory services and graduate medical education.

The Faculty of Medicine has graduated over 4,000 medical students and physicians; the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing provides excellent education for the nursing staff, and the Medical Center meets the healthcare needs of over 360,000 patient visits annually.