

# CRPH News

American University of Beirut

Faculty of Health Sciences  
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## CCCC Disseminates Results of 10 years of Research on Maternal and Newborn Health

The Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth Research Network held a two-day conference to disseminate 10 years of research on maternal and newborn health in Lebanon and the region. The conference took place on May 17 and 18 at the Riviera Hotel and included local, regional and international participants.

Housed at the CRPH, the aims of the CCCC network are to create scientific evidence on childbirth practices in the region and to understand how maternity care can be made safer and more satisfactory. The specific objectives of the network are producing and publishing high-quality research, disseminating research findings through media and various activities with stakeholders, and encouraging evidence-based practice by health care providers. Professor Jocelyn DeJong, CCCC Regional Coordinator, gave a historical overview of the network. She said that it started as "B-WELL" group of researchers addressing maternal health in Lebanon and was subsequently joined by researchers in Egypt, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories interested to document and improve 'normal childbirth' (or pregnancies that are not high-risk). The network's research has resulted in over 40 peer reviewed publications collectively many of which document the lack of full adherence to evidence-based practices for normal birth in hospitals and problems in the quality of care. The region has seen a rapidly increasing rate of cesarean section for example. Moreover, some unnecessary medical procedures



Opening Session (from left to right: Ziad Mansour, Huda Zurayk, Bahij Arbid, Iman Nuwayhid, Faysal El-Kak and Tamar Kabakian)

(such as routine enema or episiotomy or IV infusion during labor which restricts women's mobility) are often routine despite not being warranted by the latest scientific evidence.

Ms. Laura Wick from Birzeit University's Institute of Community and Public Health and coordinator of the Palestinian team summarized research by the network on women's perspectives of childbirth. She noted that women are not empowered to discuss issues related to their obstetric care and that few women's groups address maternal health issues.

Dr. Hyam Bashour of Damascus University and coordinator of the Syrian team reported on research by the network that has tested whether certain types of interventions can improve quality of health care.

Professor Tamar Kabakian of FHS, coordinator of the Lebanese team, talked

about the network's research on postpartum care which has documented the underutilization and deficiencies in the type of postpartum services provided. She also spoke about an initiative in Lebanon to produce the "Salamat Hamlik" (Safe Pregnancy) newsletter to provide much needed information on pregnancy, delivery and postpartum issues to women. Dr. Faysal El Kak of FHS and President of the Lebanese Society for Obstetrics and Gynecology spoke of the critical role of professional organizations in the improvement of maternal health care.

Dr. Metin Gulmezoglu of the World Health Organization in Geneva, described some international efforts to improve the quality of maternal health care. Professor Oona Campbell, Professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, talked about causes of maternal death and the need to improve quality of care, a focus of

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the network's research. She noted that internationally there is a need for more robust tracking of progress, accountability, and greater political commitment to improve the health of mothers and newborns.



Oona Campbell

In the final panel on regional perspectives on maternal health by countries not yet represented in the network, Professor Atf Gherissi, from the Tunis-El Manar University, gave an overview on the maternal health in North Africa (NA).

Professor Hora Soltani, of Sheffield-Hallam University in the UK, described the maternal health situation in Iran and the need to expand women's choices and improve evidence-based care there.



Gathering of women with a newborn in Syria

Participants concluded the meeting with calls for more regional exchange in the field so that research findings can be shared and ultimately have an impact on improving women's and newborns' health.

## Measuring Developmental Assets among Youth in the Developing World

### A workshop conducted in coordination with Save the Children and World Vision

The CRPH in collaboration with World Vision and Save the Children, hosted a workshop on "Measuring Developmental Assets among Youth in the Developing World" on May 19-20, 2011. This regional workshop aimed to: share experiences of using the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) in various developing country settings; critically analyze the use of the tool by various institutions; and identify implications for prevention programs with youth.

About 45 participants who have used, or plan to use the DAP tool attended the event. Participants came from Albania, Armenia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, and the US and gave a total of 10 presentations. In addition to participants from country offices of Save the Children and World Vision, there were also representatives from International and Middle East and Eastern Europe World Vision offices, and Middle East and Eurasia Save the Children offices. The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education was also represented at this workshop.

Professor Huda Zurayk, Director of the CRPH, launched the event by welcoming the participants and introducing the CRPH and the research activities performed at the center. Then, Rima Nakkash, Assistant Research professor at the CRPH summarized the workshop objectives and agenda, and opened the floor for

participants' introductions and presentations. The keynote speech was given by Mr. Eugene Roehlkepartain, Executive Vice President at Search Institute, in which he briefly introduced Search Institute and DAP to the participants, presented results of DAP use outside the United States, and outlined future directions.

The first day's presentations were on research and practice with DAP in both the Eastern Mediterranean Region and internationally. On the second day, presentations were more about general feedback and a forward look at DAP. Two working groups also addressed, in parallel sessions, these topics: a) Achieving consensus on one Arabic DAP tool; and b) Use of DAP with youth not at school, and with younger age groups.

The workshop ended with a summary of lessons learned, and future plans of participants based on their learning experience during this event. Future directions include networking to continue sharing experiences of using DAP, maintaining collaboration with Search Institute and following up on the tool that is being developed by them for younger age groups (9-12 years old); increasing efforts to adapt the tool for vulnerable populations; expanding the coordination between the Arab countries using DAP; and organizing broader meetings



Workshop participants

## Research Highlights

### Published Papers

#### Article points out the significance of the Community-Based Participatory Research Approach in implementing a randomized trial in Hay el Sellom, a southern suburb of Beirut



Women in Hay el Sellom

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is a relatively new approach in science aiming at including all community members and institutions under study. That is, the community being studied turns from being merely a 'passive subject' to a vital participator whose ideas are taken into account. Furthermore, CBPR exchanges knowledge between researchers and the community and assures ethical conduct by achieving its goals with the active participation and consent of the community itself.

This paper discusses both the successes and the challenges of implementing the CBPR approach in Hay el Sellom, while conducting a community-based randomized trial among currently married women (aged 18-49) complaining of medically unexplained discharge and low to moderate levels of common mental distress. The trial, funded by the Wellcome Trust, was led by a multi-disciplinary research team from both the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine at AUB. After the termination of the research project, an evaluation of the CBPR experience was carried out using various qualitative methods: interviews, focus groups, and field notes.

In general, the evaluations showed that the CBPR adopted in Hay el Sellom was perceived to be successful. Understanding the community, ownership of the project, giving the women voices, establishing trust, and challenges encountered were the main five themes brought up by the community in this evaluation. In fact, the community was pleased and surprised that such a diverse set of community members (political parties, stakeholders, women from different backgrounds) had been able to come together. They praised this "research by consensus" approach and felt no imposition of ideas and courses of action. Women felt a sense of ownership towards the project; they also felt that this project served to take them away from their routines, and helped increase their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Both the Local Women's Committee (LWC) as well as the Community Advisory Boards ensured the holistic outreach and appropriateness of this project for the women.

Some of the challenges with the CBPR approach included: difficulties in understanding certain scientific and methodological complexities;

heavy workload with delayed results and outcomes. Other concerns included the annoyance by some stakeholders that the research team was continuously changing their plans and significant concern over sustainability beyond the research project. In response to this, CRPH is currently assisting the established LWC to set up an NGO, whose focus will be health promotion and awareness in the community.

All in all, the CBPR experience was a fruitful one, as it allowed women with limited educational backgrounds to learn about scientific methods of research and it improved their leadership skills. It also helped them gain insights about mental and reproductive health issues of concern to them. The research team gained experience in knowledge extrapolation and practice.

L. Kobeissi, R. Nakkash, Z. Ghantous, M. Abu Saad, B. Khoury, N. Yassine. 2011. "Evaluating a Community Based Participatory Approach to Research with Disadvantaged Women in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut." *Journal of Community Health*. DOI 10.1007/s10900-011-9368-4

#### Policy-Makers need to consider Bedouin Health Provision

Bedouins in Lebanon are estimated to represent 2-3% of the population, where most of them benefited from the 1994 normalization law and are domiciled. Living in rural areas and underprivileged neighborhoods, Bedouins continue to suffer from issues like social exclusion and poor health care provision. The aim of this research was to assess the awareness and knowledge of policy-makers regarding the health policies and health status of the Bedouin community in the context of Lebanon. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine health policy makers from the government, private, non-governmental organization sectors, and UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF) on topics related to Bedouin status and livelihood, health policies and current health provision and utilization in relation to reproductive and child health, and interventions towards improving access to and quality of reproductive and child health and well-being. Results showed that most of the policy-makers interviewed had little to no knowledge of Bedouin population estimates, identity status and normalization, geographical distribution within the rural peripheral areas of Lebanon, range of mobility, common health problems, and health service provision and utilization. Furthermore, policy-makers stated that none of their plans and programs considered health policies or procedures regarding the Bedouin community, though they did express a willingness to contribute to any interventions aimed to improve Bedouin health and well-being.

In Lebanon, where the public health sector remains feeble and inequitable, mostly affecting marginalized and underprivileged communities including the Bedouins, policy-makers continue to hold false stereotypes about Bedouins and Bedouin health issues, and comprehensive health policies that integrate Bedouins remain nonexistent. Policy-makers should be more sensitive to and aware of the status of Bedouins in Lebanon, and advocacy and lobbying needs to be initiated to include Bedouin health within government health and social policies.

El-Kak, F.H. (2010) "Policy Makers and Bedouin Health Provision" *Journal of Migration*, 6(3):31-35

# Research Project Updates at CRPH

## Women's Reproductive Health Working Group conducts research with overarching sustainability

Sustaining the The Relaxation Exercise and Social Support Trial (RESST) project in Hay el Sellom was the main concern raised by the community after the completion of this community-based randomized trial in Hay el Sellom, which was coordinated by the CRPH and funded by the Wellcome Trust.

In response to this concern, the CRPH assisted the community women, particularly the established Local Women's Committee (LWC), in setting up an NGO in Hay El Sellom to cater to some of the community's health and social issues and continue the implementation of the psycho-social intervention package (combined relaxation exercise and semi-structured support groups) delivered in RESST.

Women approached by this NGO would include any women in the community between 18-50 years, irrespective of social or educational background.

The objectives of the NGO are as follows:

1) Integrating the women of Hay el Sellom in the local community and giving them a

forum for expression

2) Enhancing women's mental health by implementing the semi-structured support groups and relaxation exercises delivered in RESST

3) Raising health awareness at large

For the NGO to be set up, the LWC first needed assistance in legal, administrative, and financial matters. Beyond Reform & Development - Irada Group (BRD-I Group), a social enterprise working on governance and political reform in Lebanon and the Arab World, contributed its time and expertise and conducted capacity building workshops for the women. The workshops focused on setting the NGO's mission and vision, developing the internal structure as well as distributing roles and responsibilities. The women were also coached for designing yearly action plans and setting measurable indicators to evaluate desired outcomes, as well as writing up proposals to solicit funding, and developing communication strategies to increase the NGO outreach.

The LWC consists of nine local women members, who will serve as the temporary administrative board for the NGO for two years, after which the board will be elected on a bi-annual basis. The LWC planned the following set of workshop activities for the community: handicraft, hairdressing, computer literacy, English literacy, as well as health awareness sessions, recreational trips, and implementing the psychosocial intervention package of RESST. To date, the women have implemented a series of health awareness sessions for the community. These awareness sessions were well attended and were used as a means to promote the NGO. Slowly but surely, the NGO will be able to bring the women of Hay el Sellom together.

Special thanks to the BRDI Group and Ms. Maya Abou Saad at CRPH for making this possible. This work is supervised by Loulou Kobeissi, RESST Trial Manager and Assistant Research Professor at CRPH-AUB.

## Youth Working Group holds Writers' Retreat

The Youth Working Group made up of 6 faculty members (Sawsan Abdulrahim, Rima Afifi, Mayada Kanj, Jihad Makhoul, Rima Nakkash, and Ziyad Mahfoud, and 4 research assistants (Hala Alaoui, Dima Bteddini, Taghreed El-Hajj and Pascale Haddad) gathered for a 3-day writing retreat from the 22nd to the 24th of February, 2011. The purpose of the retreat was to focus on writing three papers related to the 'Qaderoon' or 'We are capable' project. The retreat took place in the old REP conference room from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. The group was joined by Dr. Trudy Harpham, the scientific advisor of the Youth Working Group. Harpham is an Emeritus Professor at London South Bank University and Honorary Professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK

'Qaderoon' is a project that focused on a priority health problem (mental health) in a group of low income urban refugee youth that used an innovative conceptual framework (positive youth development) with evidence of effectiveness to guide the intervention design. More specifically, it assessed the impact of a social skills and social support intervention on the mental health of Palestinian refugee children aged 11 to 13 years living in Beirut using an experimental pre post control group design. The intervention was informed by evidence-based literature on mental health interventions for youth and was evaluated for process and impact. The results of the evaluation will extend the evidence base of mental health promotion interventions to a developing world context, to a refugee camp setting, and from the school into the community as a setting.

The goal of the participants, who worked both in groups and individually, was to develop the three papers throughout the retreat and submit shortly thereafter.

The three papers are: "Community based participatory interventions in complex settings: clean minds, dirty hands" "Determinants of mental health among Palestinian refugee youth in Beirut" and "Mental health of youth in a Palestinian refugee camp: Evaluation of a social skills intervention in Beirut, Lebanon"

The benefits of a writing retreat are that it provides the team a venue to concentrate on moving manuscripts forward, on discussing results and writing without the interruption of daily schedules. Writing together in a collegial, supportive atmosphere fueled with a variety of refreshments made it a productive and enjoyable experience.



From left to right: Jihad Makhoul, Sawsan Abdulrahim, Dima Bteddini, Rima Afifi, Trudy Harpham, Pascale Haddad, Rima Nakkash

## Bedouin Health Working Group

Following-up on the Bedouin Health Project that was part of the CRPH community-based research projects (2007 – 2010), the FHS Outreach and Practice Unit (OPU) has produced the Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) Manual, a hands-on manual to help CHVs in their community health work. The CHV Manual was developed and designed by external resource persons and as collaboration between FHS, Oxford Refugees Studies Centre and Inmaa wa Tajdod Community-Based Organization (CBO). A ceremony to launch the Manual was held on May 12, 2011 at the Park Hotel, Chtaura in the presence of the mayors and members of 9 municipalities in Bekaa, the directors and staff of 5 primary health care centers, local CBOs, the CHVs and AUB team. After speeches from the main stakeholders, the manuals were distributed to the attendees and a reception followed.

## Tobacco Control Working Group

Research The AUB Tobacco Control Research Group AUB-TCRG held a second research regional meeting from January 31 to February 2, 2011 with the aim of bringing together researchers from the Jordan (King Hussein Cancer Center- KHCC, the Jordanian University for Science and Technology- JUST), Lebanon (the American University of Beirut - AUB), Syria (Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies) and the US (Virginia Commonwealth University -VCOMU), to form an "International Consortium for Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking Research".

The group discussed the need to conduct studies to answer core questions to advance the evidence-based on waterpipe tobacco smoking (WTS) through: investigating the health effects of WTS including lung cancer and cardiopulmonary disease; advancing the understanding of WTS dependence; evaluating current policy influence on WTS; and outlining WTS-specific policy needs in countries where WTS is highly prevalent.

During the meeting, five potential projects were presented in detail and each project received feedback on specific aims, methods, feasibility and other critical issues from the whole team. The team also discussed guidelines to applying to an NIH/ NCI grant as a potential source of funding. By the end of the meeting, the team was able to set up strict deadlines to start applying for a trans-disciplinary program project to address a critical public health need.

Advocacy AUB-TCRG continues to follow up on the progress of the Tobacco Control Law discussions in the Lebanese Parliament's Committee of Administration and Justice. As part of its advocacy strategy, the team along with local NGOs is pressuring the Committee to draft a strong law without loopholes. A strong position statement developed by AUB-TCRG, TFI and IndyACT, which assertively called for no exemptions or exceptions, nor equivocation on the tobacco control law in Lebanon has been disseminated to all Parliamentarians involved and to the media. An article on the importance of including a provision in the law that enforces the execution of health pictorial warnings on tobacco products the covers at least 40% on two larger surfaces of the pack with rotating messages was sent to the Parliamentary Committee of Administration and Justice members one day before they were due to meet. This same article was then sent out to the media and was published in some local newspapers.



Students perform Tobacco Control songs and plays at the Issam Fares Hall, AUB

AUB-TCRG hosted a meeting with the Coalition on Tobacco Control (CTC-Lebanon) on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 aimed at developing the coalition's strategy and action plan to address the AUB-TCRG agenda

On the occasion of the World No Tobacco Day (WHO-WNTD-2011), the AUB-TCRG organized an event on May 28, 2011 with the coordination and collaboration of local NGO, Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) for school students (aged between 12-15 years) from different schools who had already prepared an art project related to the "tobacco control" theme. These projects varied from artistic drawings, songs, and short plays. The AUB-TCRG is set up an experimental activity related to second hand smoking with the objective of raising awareness about SHS exposure.

On May 31, 2011, The AUB-TCRG also organized a training



A student art project

workshop for lawyers on "Tobacco Control Litigation and Legal issues", with the collaboration of "Human Rights Institute" part of the Lawyers Syndicate. The training aimed at informing and training a group of recruited Lebanese lawyers about current tobacco control policy, how litigation is used to advocate for tobacco control, and to review the most recent draft law.

## The Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Project

The Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Project (YSRHP) aims to tackle a timely yet poorly addressed public health issue, using a multi-faceted inter-disciplinary approach. YSRHP uses: teaching and research, trainings and workshops, and advocacy to achieve its ultimate goal to Promote Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health, and Sexuality Education in the Region.

The project team - made up of Professor Lilian Ghandour (PI), Dr. Faysal El-Kak and Professor Loulou Kobeissi (co-PI's) and Rola Yasmine (Research Assistant) - has been working to develop a survey that seeks to investigate patterns of sexual behavior, and perceptions as well as attitudes, of youth in Lebanon attending universities and vocational schools. The survey tool (questionnaire) has been constructed in both Arabic and English. The research proposal is currently in the process of being submitted to AUB's Institutional Review Board for ethical clearance.

In February 2011, the team coordinated and led a three-day workshop in AUB on youth reproductive and sexual health knowledge and teaching skills. Participants included public school counselors selected by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Upcoming training activities include a series of one-day knowledge workshops targeting health educators in all public schools. Besides sexuality education, YSRHP is also involved in improving the integration of sexuality and sexual health in healthcare services. A training workshop will be offered to health-care providers (physicians, nurses, counselors, and social-workers) working at AUB and AUBMC.

Two regional discussion forums are being planned for summers 2011 and 2012. The first will focus on Youth Sexual Health within the Lebanese Healthcare System, and the second will address Sexuality Education in the MENA region. An elective course on "Human Sexuality" is also being developed and will be offered in the Spring of 2012, as a part of FHS undergraduate/graduate courses.

The expected outcomes of this project, coupled with the continued efforts and ongoing work of its members, will hopefully contribute to the growing global and regional interests in sexuality and sexual health. In turn, this endeavor will enrich academic literature, empower community resources, and consequently potentially overcome the existent cultural silence and denial pertaining to youth sexual and reproductive health in Lebanon and the region at large. This research is made possible by a generous 2-year grant (May 2010- May 2012) from the Ford Foundation.

## CRPH Affiliates News

**Jocelyn DeJong**  
(Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, [jd16@aub.edu.lb](mailto:jd16@aub.edu.lb))

Jocelyn DeJong gave a presentation on "Facility-Based Research in Maternal Health" at the Wellcome Trust/Children's Investment Fund Foundation meeting on Maternal and Early Childhood health in March 2010 in London. She presented on "Facilitating Factors and Barriers to HIV

Testing and Reproductive Health Services among Women in Lebanon" at U.S. National Institutes of Health- sponsored Workshop on Stigma and HIV Infection in the MENA region, International AIDS Conference, Vienna, Austria in July, 2010. In October 2010, she attended a WHO proposal development workshop in Geneva to present a short-listed proposal on improving quality of care in Egypt, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories that was

subsequently awarded funding.

**Tamar Kabakian**  
(Associate Professor, Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, [tk00@aub.edu.lb](mailto:tk00@aub.edu.lb))

Tamar Kabakian presented the findings of her study entitled "Mobilizing Women to Change Maternity Services: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Study" at the 5th Normal Labor and Birth Research

## Publications from CRPH Sponsored Research 2010 – 2011

Abdulahim S, El Shareef M, Alameddine M, Hammad S, Afifi RA. (2011). "The potential and challenges of an academic-community partnership in a low-income neighborhood." *Journal of Urban Health* 87 (6): 1017-1020

Afifi R, Nakkash R, Khawaja M. (2010) "Social capital, women's autonomy and smoking among married women in low-income urban neighborhoods of Beirut, Lebanon" *Women's Health Issues* 20 (2): 156-167

Afifi RA, Yeretziyan JS, Rouhana A, Nehlawi MT, Mack A. (2010) "Neighborhood effects on narghile smoking among youth in Beirut." *European Journal of Public Health* 20(4): 456-462

Afifi RA, Nakkash R, El Hajj T, Mahfoud Z, Hammad S, Makhoul J, Abdulrahim S, Kanj M, Haddad P. (2010) "Qaderoon youth mental health promotion programme in the Burj El Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp," *The Lancet* July 2, 2010

Barbir, F. (2010) "Challenges in Planning and Implementing Community-based Health Interventions: Training female community health volunteers with the Bedouin communities in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon" *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6(3):36-41

Chatty, D. (2010) **Introduction: Bedouin in Lebanon: Migration, settlement, health care and policy** *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6(3):19-20

Chatty, D. (2010) **Bedouin in Lebanon : The transformation of a way of life or an attitude?** *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6(3):21-30

El-Kak, F.H. (2010) **Policy Makers and Bedouin Health Provision** *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6(3):31-35

Mansour, N. (2010) **Gender at the Margins: Bedouin women's perceptions of Lebanese health provision** *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6(3):45-52

Kobeissi, L, Nakkash, R, Ghantous, Z, Abou Saad, M, Yassin, Y. (2011) "Evaluating a Community Based Participatory Approach to Research with Disadvantaged Women in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut" *Journal of Community Health DOI 10.1007/s10900-011-9368-4*

Linos, Natalie, Marwan Khawaja, Mohannad Al-Nsour (2010) "Women's autonomy and support for wife beating: Findings from a population-based survey in Jordan" *Violence and Victims* 2010;25(3):409-19

## CRPH Research Seminars

June 16, 2011  
**Afamia Kaddour, Doctoral student, Social Epidemiology, Paris Sud XI**  
"The Ras Beirut Well Being Survey: Preliminary results"

May 5, 2011  
**Professor Thomas Eissenberg, Virginia Commonwealth University**  
"Electronic Cigarettes: Dangerous Drug Delivery Device or Life-saving Treatment?"

April 28, 2011  
**Professor Jen'nan Read, Duke University**  
"Gender and Health among U.S. Middle Eastern Immigrants"

March 24, 2011  
**Professor Michel Guillot, University of Pennsylvania**  
"Hindu-Muslim Differentials in Child Mortality in India"

January 20, 2011  
**Professor Marwan Khawaja, ESCWA**  
"Conflict and the recent rise in Palestinian infant mortality: Evidence from recent surveys"

Conference, Vancouver, Canada, in July, 2010. She was invited to speak on "Overmedicalization of the childbirth experience: public health implications" at the 1st national symposium on transforming maternity care in Lebanon at the American University of Beirut - Medical Center, in October, 2010. She is currently undertaking an exploratory study on female labor companionship in public hospitals in three Arab countries with her colleagues from the CCCC network, Hyam Bashour in Syria and Amina El-Nemer in Egypt. This study will be followed by a multi-site randomized controlled trial for which the team has submitted a proposal to USAID.

**Loulou Kobeissi**  
(Assistant Research Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, [lk00@aub.edu.lb](mailto:lk00@aub.edu.lb))

Loulou Kobeissi has been awarded the Union of International Cancer Consortium (UICC) - Fellowship Award for the two consecutive years 2010 and 2011 - funded by the American Cancer Society. She is currently on research leave and hosted as a Visiting Scholar at the Division of Cancer Control and Prevention Research at the School of Public Health at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where she conducts breast cancer research focusing on immigrant population residing in southern

California. Since 2007, she has served as Advisor on the Lebanese National Task Force Committee for Breast Cancer- Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, where she coordinates the annual mammography campaign led yearly under the patronage of the Minister of Public Health.

**Hibah Osman**  
(Assistant Professor, Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, [ho02@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ho02@aub.edu.lb))

Hibah Osman has been working on developing palliative care in Lebanon. Together with Professor Huda Zurayk and other colleagues, she has started the Lebanese Center for Palliative Care - Balsam, an NGO that is working to relieve suffering and improve quality of life in patients with life-limiting illness through patient care, advocacy, capacity building and research. Osman has been actively involved in the establishment of a National Committee on Pain and Palliative Care which will be working to set a national strategy for the development of palliative care in Lebanon. She has also been investigating opportunities to set up a palliative care research network. On May 18th she presented at the International Primary Palliative Care Research Group in Lisbon, Portugal on the development of palliative care in Lebanon and the potential for developing research networks in the MENA region.

**Abla Sibai**  
(Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, [ansibai@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ansibai@aub.edu.lb))

Abla Sibai has recently been appointed Eastern Mediterranean Regional Representative of the International Network for Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA). She also developed and launched the Center for Studies on Aging (CSA) website (<http://www.csa.org.lb>), providing up-to-date information on the activities of the Center and the other associations and parties involved in the well-being of the seniors, in Lebanon and the Region. She presented with colleagues from the US (Kristine Ajrouch and Kathryn Yount) on gender, age, and well-being in later life: Perspectives from Algeria, Lebanon, and Palestine at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, March 31- April 2, 2011. Together with colleagues from the FHS, Eastern Michigan University and the CSA she also participated in the organization of a conference Linking Research to Policy in the Middle East Region: Family Ties and Aging, in Beirut Oct 19-21, 2010.

**Huda Zurayk**  
(Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, [hzurayk@aub.edu.lb](mailto:hzurayk@aub.edu.lb))

Huda Zurayk presented a summary of the report of an international independent commission entitled "Health Professionals for a New Century: Transforming Education to Strengthen Health Systems in an Interdependent World" at the launch meeting of the Report on May 20, 2011, held at the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing Auditorium, AUB. The launch meeting was jointly hosted by the Faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences and the School of Nursing and held under the patronage of the Ministers of Public Health and Education and Higher Education. Huda Zurayk is a member of the Commission that authored the report.

## CRPH Seminar Hindu-Muslim Differentials in Child Mortality in India,

Presented by Professor Michel Guillot, School of Arts & Sciences, University of Pennsylvania

In India, Muslim children exhibit lower child mortality than Hindu children, in spite of the fact that, on average, their mothers are poorer and less educated –characteristics typically associated with higher child mortality. Using data from the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-1, -2 and -3), Guillot and Allendorf\* sought explanations for this paradox. They tested the hypothesis that this paradox may be explained by lower son preference among Muslims. Indeed, lower son preference could produce a more typical pattern of sex differentials in mortality among Muslims and generate lower child mortality among them at the national level, compensating for their lower socio-economic status. However, they found no evidence for this hypothesis in the NFHS data. They did however find that Muslims are subject to a number of advantages, in addition to the better known disadvantages, which appear to contribute to their lower child mortality. That said, part of the Muslim mortality advantage remains unexplained.

This seminar was based on the following article: Michel Guillot, Keera Allendorf "Hindu-Muslim differentials in child mortality in India" *Genus* Vol 66, No 2 (2010)

# Announcements

→ Visit us here: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/fhs/crph/> for more news and information on research projects, events and publications

# Upcoming Events

→ July 5-7, 2011 **The Reproductive Health Working Group** will be meeting in Tyre, Lebanon, for its 23rd Annual Conference

## About CRPH

### The MS in Population Health

The graduate program is designed to provide training in Population Sciences, focusing on the impact of population change on health. It offers basic training in population theory and analysis as well as in quantitative research methods. Students will participate in collaborative research activities with FHS faculty through the Center to gain practical experience. Students will also have access to the Center's data generated by the Urban Health Study and other studies for thesis research. The university catalogue and graduate admission application form can be requested from the AUB admissions office via e-mail at [admissions@aub.edu.lb](mailto:admissions@aub.edu.lb), or downloaded from <http://www.aub.edu.lb>

Opportunities for qualified students to receive financial aid are available in the form of Graduate Assistantships, Graduate Scholarships, and other sources of funding, such as FHS administered research grants (when available). Information regarding financial assistance for FHS graduate programs can be obtained from Ms. Mitra Taouk at [mt12@aub.edu.lb](mailto:mt12@aub.edu.lb)

### Contact Us

To learn more about CRPH research activities, to subscribe to CRPHNews, or to request an application for the Visiting Fellows Program, contact us at:

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