

Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey Results Shared With the Neighborhood

The Beirut district surrounding AUB is one of the city's most iconic neighborhoods. Ras Beirut: the most modern and glamorous in the mid-twentieth century, famous for cultural and intellectual venues, socially diverse businesses and residents, the Arab World's 'breathing space.' Much changed during Lebanon's civil war, as businesses closed, residents fled and newcomers arrived. Since then the process of change has continued apace with gentrification, where luxury towers are replacing older lower and middle rise buildings, and the mixed character of the place is threatened. An apparent, widening gap exists between the rich and poor residents of Ras Beirut.

Ironically, more is known about the health and demographic profile of poorer neighborhoods in Beirut than that of the neighborhood just outside the walls of AUB. The last scholarly study of Ras Beirut was published by Khalaf and Kongstad in 1973. To address this gap, and with support from AUB's Neighborhood Initiative and leadership from the CRPH and a multidisciplinary research team, the Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey was launched in December 2009.

The survey employed a proportional cluster random sampling method, with clusters determined by spatial sampling techniques, in the municipal sectors of Ain Mreisseh, Kantari, Tal'at Jumblat, Hamra, Manarah, Jam`a and Jal el Bahr. The team conducted 674 household interviews and completed 588 adult individual-level questionnaires. Many challenges were faced in accessing gated or high security buildings, and a large number of households who reside in Beirut for short seasonal stays were excluded from the sample.

The Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey was conducted using an adapted participatory approach. Neighbors' concerns, concepts and understanding of the causes of deprivation and ill health were elicited through in depth interviews.

And neighbors were given the opportunity to comment on preliminary findings. On 11, 12, and 13 October 2011, the team presented the research on ten large posters in three public locations on or near Hamra Street, Ras Beirut's main commercial street.

Among the findings presented:

- The survey validated anecdotal information about the gap between rich and poor in the neighborhood: 24% of the neighbors earn less than 1000 USD per month while 34.2% earn more than 2000 USD per month. This information needs further validation given the abstinence of 20% of households to reveal their total monthly income. Only 21% of the residents lived in Ras Beirut before the beginning of the Civil War in 1975.
- Many neighborhood buildings are in poor repair, and 39% of households report damp and 32% report no natural light in their sitting room.
- Only a third of Ras Beirut residents own their own home, as compared with 43% in all of Beirut.
- Nearly 24% of the households are composed of one person, mainly students or people 65 years of age or older.



Afamia Kaddour (right) explains survey results to a member of the public

- There are fewer children in Ras Beiruthouseholds as compared with households in other parts of the city.
 - The population is well-educated, 45% of the respondents have earned a university degree or higher, as compared with 26% in all of Beirut.
 - Around 30% of respondents acknowledged having debts.
 - 2/3 of respondents reported having one or more chronic diseases.
 - 25% of respondents do not have any form of health insurance, and 14% reported needing health care but not being able to access it.
 - 36% of respondents are current smokers, and 6% use illegal drugs.
 - More than 90% of the respondents refused to answer a question about which religious sect they belong to.
- Feedback from the general public during the poster sessions suggested underreporting in the level of household debt and illicit drug use. A monograph summarizing the descriptive results of the Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey will be published by the AUB Press in English and Arabic in 2012.

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Reproductive Health Working Group Returns to Lebanon for Annual Meeting

This year's annual Reproductive Health Working Group (RHWG) meeting brought 32 members of the group back to Lebanon for a three-day meeting at the Tyre Rest House from July 5-7, 2011. The group was joined by 7 guests from Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP UK) including Richard Horton, editor of *The Lancet* and several more from AUB, ESCWA, and MAP UK in Lebanon bringing the total number to about 50 participants. Researchers working on varied themes related to reproductive health in the Arab countries and Turkey made presentations in 10 research panels and participants actively discussed their findings and implications.

The meeting began with a panel on policies, inequalities and health with a focus on the revolution in Egypt. In another panel on 'gendered lives' we heard about the dilemmas of single men in low-income Cairo and the plight of East European hostesses working in bars in Amman. A panel of the childbirth research group combined presentations on the post-partum period, a neglected period of the life-cycle for women in the region. Two presentations in a panel on quality of care addressed deficiencies in HIV/AIDS treatment in Tunisia as well as lack of regulation over the quality of gynecological cancer care in Syria. On the second day of the meeting, we were privileged to have Dr. Richard Horton, editor of *The Lancet* join the meeting. He gave a riveting tour of the current international debates in global health in a presentation entitled: "Rights, reproduction and development: a new social movement?" He then generously offered a writing workshop for researchers, giving them tips on how to navigate the publishing process and encouraging them to convey the passion they feel for their subject.

The RHWG is grateful to The Ford Foundation for its generous support and to the British NGO, MAP and its Lebanon office, which co-sponsored this meeting and made possible Richard Horton's participation. Richard Horton combined his trip to the RHWG with visits to some Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon that was subsequently written up in *The Lancet*. MAP also sponsored (and participated in) a panel on Health of Palestinians Inside and Outside the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).



Richard Horton

On the third day of the meeting we heard about the quality of life of women with breast cancer in Egypt, Lebanon, the oPt and Turkey - a continuation of a panel first presented in the RHWG meeting in Egypt in 2010. Participants reported on this comparative five-country research made possible through seed grants from The Ford Foundation grant for the RHWG. A panel on 'Technology in Context' included three thoughtful papers on as varied topics as the need to move away from the search for 'technological quick-fixes'

in childbirth in Palestine, to discourses around in vitro fertilization treatment in Turkey and the increasingly vocal disability activism taking place through the internet in Turkey.

The meeting concluded with a productive discussion both providing feedback on the meeting, ideas for future themes, and airing ideas, plans and hopes about the future of the group. The next annual meeting is likely to take place in Tunisia in July 2012.



RHWG Group Photo

Rethinking Health, War and Conflict

On September 1-2, 2011 members of the War and Global Health Working Group, housed at the CRPH, came together in a workshop to critically explore the significance and effects of global health interventions in the context of global and contemporary wars. Participants of this group are scholars and practitioners from different backgrounds: Ghassan Abu Sitta, Faculty of Medicine - AUB, Omar Dewachi, FHS - AUB (organizer), Ilana Feldman, Department of Anthropology, George Washington University, Rita Giacaman, Institute of Community and Public Health - Birzeit University, Sonya Knox, Independent Researcher, Vinh-Kim Nguyen, Faculty of Medicine, Université de Montréal, Livia Wick, Faculty of Arts and Sciences - AUB, Nasser Yassin, FHS, and Huda Zurayk, FHS.

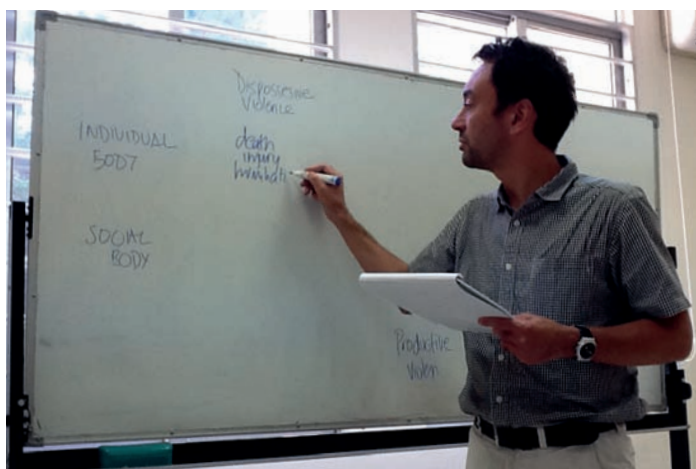
The discussion was based on the following questions: What is new or specific about contemporary wars in our global context? What are the practical public health/global health issues stemming from these wars? Who is intervening to do what? What are the broader political, cultural, economic impacts of these interventions? How can social theories contribute to understanding? And what are the limitations of the social theories we have? The objective was to answer these questions, to identify potential publication outcomes and to identify next steps.

On the first day participants used their experience and expertise to generate a common language and frameworks that would address relevant themes and objectives. Globally, poor health results from both the overt dispossessive and the less visible productive violence that produces insecurity and, crucially, impairs the capacity of populations to ensure health. The group argued that despite awareness that global health should address the social, economic, environmental and political determinants of health, most interventions

remain disease-oriented. Moreover, the priorities of global health interventions appear to better reflect perceived threats to the political, economic and biological security of the North than those of the South, and much of the funding for academic global health in the US focuses on bio-preparedness and other issues stemming directly from perceived threats to American national security in the wake of 9/11. The group emphasized that such attention to security in the North, must be accompanied by attention to the insecurity of populations in the South.

The group concluded that as civilians increasingly bear the brunt of war, conflict and occupation, the boundaries between military and humanitarian action have become blurred, and the outcomes devastating. The global health paradigm must be rethought to ensure greater human security for all. If global health efforts are to succeed they must address the mechanisms by which human insecurity is produced, both deliberately and inadvertently.

On the second day, the group agreed that Nguyen and Dewachi would lead a commentary for submission to *The Lancet*. The work of the group on war and health in the region would also serve as the platform for writing an article for *The Lancet*'s upcoming special issue on the Arab World. Other avenues for publication in the fields of social science and/or public health were discussed and it was agreed that the group would investigate funding opportunities for its activities. The group expressed an interest in expanding its network of knowledge production and capacity building in the region by inviting other scholars to join. There are also plans to organize a more formal meeting with call (and invitations) for papers and presentations.



Vinh-Kim Nguyen

Research Highlights

Published Papers

Does international funding breed mistrust in excluded communities?

Burj el Barajneh camp (BBC), an urban slum on the outskirts of Beirut, is inhabited by more than 16,000 long-term Palestinian refugees. Youth in this community are particularly disadvantaged, as evidenced by their high rates of school dropout and poor mental health. A partnership was formed including members from the Faculty of Health Sciences and 11 community organizations, to design

and implement a community-based participatory youth intervention. The main goals of the intervention were to improve the mental health of youth in BBC and to enhance their school attachment. But the qualitative evaluation revealed that, while all participants expressed a high level of commitment towards achieving the goals of the partnership, community members brought up two significant challenges to this: conflict and mistrust. They explained that whereas conflict subsided over time, mistrust was a main barrier and challenge to effective partnership work.

We have a problem [in BBC]. All our organizations operate on funding from international donors and foundations ... The conflict between [community organizations] is very difficult to get rid of because, while everyone wants what is best for youth, there is strong competition over international funding.

Community members' views on conflict and mistrust are an outcome of long-standing local political and international funding policies. For almost 64 years, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have been denied social and economic rights. Over time, they have become dependent on services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are themselves dependent on international funding. The race to obtain international funding, which focuses on short-term service projects and does not promote long-term collaboration between NGOs, has created stiff competition between community organizations thereby increasing conflict and lowering trust.

Evaluation of this data yielded information that might guide future academic-community partnerships and emphasized the critical imperative of contextualizing mistrust within broader structural conditions. It also highlighted the importance of re-evaluating the policies of international funders, suggesting that some funding should be geared to support collaborative and long-term programs rather than short-term service projects.

This research is based on the paper: Abdulrahim, S., El-Shareef, M., Alameddine, M., Afifi, RA., Hammad, S. (2010). "The Potentials and Challenges of an Academic-Community Partnership in a Low Trust Urban Context" Journal of Urban Health. 87(6): 1017-1020.

Using research to influence policy: the ultimate challenge

During the last few decades the Arab region has witnessed a rapid increase in facility-based births and a drop in maternity mortality trends in some countries. But this has been coupled with the adoption and the unregulated use of obstetric technologies that may put women and their infants at risk especially in resource poor settings that lack necessary infrastructure and professional competence.

The Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth (CCCC) Research Network, established in 2001 and funded by the Wellcome Trust, UK from 2001 to 2011, was established to look into the experiences of the increasing numbers of women experiencing uncomplicated childbirth in the region by researching the perspective of women and providers and conducting interventions to test the effectiveness of different means of improving the quality of maternity services. And yet the CCCC has faced a number of challenges in its efforts to influence childbirth practices and policies in the region, especially concerning the disregard of uncomplicated childbirth in regional and national reproductive health agendas and among professional circles. International Reproductive Health programs mostly concentrate on activities targeting maternal mortality, fertility reduction and

universal uptake of prenatal care. This practice largely hinders the transfer of knowledge for change in practice and policy based on the network's research. Another challenge faced is the diversity of health care systems in Arab countries and sometimes even within the same country which creates a need to adapt different research methodologies to a specific setting and to approach advocacy differently in each country. The increased adoption of technologies in maternity care and the unavailability of information to the public about the application of these technologies, in addition to the marginalization of women's roles within the system, created a supply-demand situation and yet another challenge the CCCC faces.

In response to these challenges, the CCCC network has incorporated a number of strategies into its research and translational activities:

- a) Insuring high quality research within the network by organizing research workshops and establishing internal and external peer-review systems. This allows for capacity-building within the network, the development of research agendas that respond to priority maternity health issues in each country and the consideration of practice and policy implications in the prioritization of research;
- b) Involving different stakeholders, especially clinicians, in the network to facilitate the transfer of research findings to practice changes where possible;
- c) Initiating dialogue with different stakeholders by actively disseminating research in important national and regional meetings as well as landmark international conferences;
- d) Advocating evidence-based practice through information leaflets and targeted collaboration with the media in Lebanon;
- e) Establishing the Initiative on Standards of Practice in Childbirth (ISOPIC), a network of obstetricians aiming at instituting national standards of care and promoting best-practices in maternal health in Lebanon.

The experience of the CCCC network points to the importance of using a variety of context specific strategies in order to bring about change. Indeed, the network has succeeded in bringing the international language on evidence-based obstetrics and woman-friendliness into local discussions of maternal health; the dissemination and networking activities in the region have also provided opportunities to influence other national endeavors; and the involvement of clinicians and hospital management in intervention studies has been instrumental in changing practice in specific health care facilities. An important lesson learnt is the need to broaden the dialogue and strengthen collaborative and participatory research with all stakeholders with a view to translating research knowledge into practice and policy.

Kabakian-Khasholian, T., El-Kak, F., and Shayboub, R. "Birthing in the Arab Region: Translating research into practice" Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal (in press)

Research Project Updates at CRPH

Prevalence of Dementia in Lebanon

The NIH has just awarded a 2-year grant (2011-2013) in the amount of 246,255 USD for a study project entitled "Prevalence of dementia in Lebanon, a pilot study in Beirut and Nabatieh: Validation of the 10/66 Dementia Research Group diagnostic instrument for dementia in Arabic".

Validated screening and assessment instruments for dementia in Arabic are totally lacking, hampering the development of

epidemiological, behavioral, social, and clinical research in Arabic speaking populations. The 10/66 Dementia Research Group (www.alz.co.uk/1066) has developed and validated a culture- and education-fair diagnostic instrument well suited to the older population in Lebanon that has a high rate of illiteracy. The aim of the study is to validate the 10/66 diagnostic instrument in Arabic.

To achieve this aim, 150 participants older than 65 years with mild to moderate dementia are being recruited from outpatient clinics at AUB and 150 age-, gender-, and education-matched controls are being recruited through community groups. Two trained interviewers blinded to the cognitive status of the participants, administer the 10/66 diagnostic test to the 300 participants and interview their caregivers.



Publications from CRPH

Sponsored Research 2011

Abdelrahim S., and Khawaja M. "The cost of being a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon" Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 2011; 37(1): 151-166

Abdelrahim S, El Shareef M, Alameddine M, Afifi, RA., Hammad S. "The potential and challenges of an academic-community partner-ship in a low-income neighborhood" Journal of Urban Health 2010;87(6): 1017-1020

Habib, RR, El Zein, K, Hojeij S "Hard work at home: Musculoskeletal pain among female homemakers" TERG Ergonomics PMID:21846278

Kabakian-Kholashian, T., El-Kak, F. and Shayboub, R. "Birthing in the Arab region: Translating research into practice" Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal (in press)

Kobeissi L, Araya R, El Kak F, Ghantous Z, Khawaja M, Khoury B, Mahfoud Z, Nakkash R, Peters T, Ramia S and Zurayk Z "The Relaxation Exercise and Social Support Trial-RESST: Study protocol for a ran-domized community based trial" BMC Psychiatry, 2011;11:142

Mahfoud Z., Abdelrahim, S. (corresponding author), Badaro-Taha M, Harpham, T, El Hajj, T, Makhoul, J, Nakkash, R, Kanj, M, & Afifi, R. "Construct and clinical validation of the Arab Youth Mental Health Scale" Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health 2011; 5:9

Makhoul, J, Alameddine, M, Afifi, RA (corresponding author). "I felt that I was benefiting someone: Youth as agents of change in a refugee community project." Health Education Research 2011; PMID:21464150

Nakkash RT, Alaouie H, Haddad P, El Hajj T, Salem H, Mahfoud Z, Afifi RA "Process evaluation of a community based mental health promotion intervention for refugee youth" Health Education Research 2011; PMID:21908850

The sensitivity and specificity of the 10/66 dementia diagnostic algorithm will be calculated. Once the 10/66 diagnostic instrument is shown to have good discriminating power in diagnosing dementia in an Arabic speaking population, a population-based study will be carried out to estimate the prevalence of dementia among those older than 65 in Lebanon. The sample size is 2500 persons older than 65, randomly selected from all governorates of Lebanon. The targeted number of study participants in each governorate is proportional to the percentage of people older than 65 living in the governorate. For the pilot study in the governorates of Beirut and Nabatieh, the targeted number is 492 persons.

In every village and city, systematic sampling of households will be done, where every fourth household from a randomly chosen starting point will be selected. The interviewers will administer the 10/66 diagnostic test to the participants and interview their caregivers. In addition, using questionnaires, the interviewers will inquire about risk and protective factors for dementia as well as barriers to diagnosis and care for people with dementia, and the burden on their caregivers.

The research team is composed of FHS Professor Monique Chaaya (Principal Investigator and CRPH affiliate), Gunhild Waldemar (Danish Dementia Research Center, Denmark and Co-Principal Investigator), Samir Atweh, MD (co-investigator, AUBMC), Professor Lilian Ghandour (co-investigator and CRPH affiliate), Kieu Phung (project coordinator) and Martin Prince (collaborator and leader of 10/66 Dementia Research Group, Kings' College London, UK).

War and Global Health

A new network called 'War and Global Health Working Group' has been formed at the CRPH. This network of social scientists, public health and medical practitioners studies issues that lie at the intersection of war and global health. The research team is made up of principal coordinators, Omar Dewachi and Vinh-Kim Nguyen and Rita Giacaman, Ilana Feldman, Sonya Knox, Nasser Yassin, Livia Wick, Ghassan Abu Sitta, and Laurel Harig.

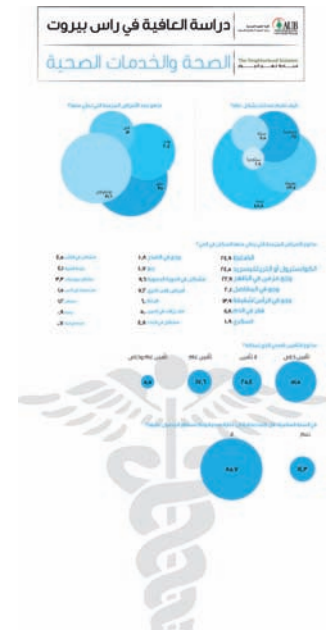
Building on the experiences and expertise of participants in the region and beyond, the group examines the multifaceted forms of violence associated with contemporary wars. It held its first meeting in September to critically explore the significance and effects of global health interventions in the context of global wars. (See article on page 1 and visit www.aub.edu.lb/fhs/crph for more information).



Beirut during the 2006 Israeli War

Social Inequalities in Health: The Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey

The Social Inequalities in Health: Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey was established as a multidisciplinary research group whose overall objective is to enrich analyses of poverty and inequality issues as applied to public health, in a socially and economically diverse neighborhood of Beirut, Lebanon. The research team is composed of principal investigator, Afamia Kaddour, co-principal investigators at AUB: Sawwan Abdulrahim, Cynthia Myntti, Nisreen Salti, Livia Wick, Huda Zurayk and collaborators: Nancy Krieger (Harvard School of Public Health), France Lert (Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale - INSERM), Maria Melchior (INSERM).



This research project examines the social determinants of health in Ras Beirut, a socially and economically heterogeneous neighborhood of the capital of Lebanon, where it is possible to find deprivation and affluence juxtaposed. The Ras Beirut Well-Being Survey will therefore produce quantitative and qualitative evidence to document and explain social inequalities in health. (See article on page 1 and visit www.aub.edu.lb/fhs/crph for more information).

This research is funded by the Ford Foundation, LNCSR (The Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research), the RHWG (The Reproductive Health Working Group), and the CCECS (the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service at AUB). The research timeline is 2009-12. For more information on the Ras Beirut Neighborhood Initiative, visit the website at www.aub.edu.lb/ni/

Tobacco Control

A number of regional research network meetings were held in 2010 and 2011 between the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group (AUB-TCRG) and colleagues from Jordan (King Hussein Cancer Center- KHCC, the Jordanian University for Science and Technology- JUST), Lebanon (American University of Beirut - AUB), Syria (Syrian Center for Tobacco Studies) and the US (Virginia Commonwealth University -VCOMU) that culminated in a PO1 NCI application (a Program Project (P01) grant is for support of an integrated, multi-project research program involving a number of independent investigators who share knowledge and common resources. Program Projects have a well-defined central research focus involving several disciplines or several aspects of one discipline). The application is for a program with five projects and three cores to conduct studies that will generate knowledge about waterpipe health effects; develop a measure of waterpipe dependence; and examine policy influence on waterpipe tobacco smoke (WTS). The overall goal is to provide knowledge of health effects, evaluate policy influence, and understand dependence on WTS. More specifically, the aims of each of the five projects are: (P1) Examine the effects of waterpipe tobacco smoke on animals, including carcinogenicity, expression of biomarkers of harm, and dependence development; (P2) Develop and validate a theory-based waterpipe dependence scale; (P3) Identify how waterpipe tobacco smoking influences cardiopulmonary function in young adults;

(P4) Determine the extent to which waterpipe tobacco smoking influences smokers' cancer risk; (P5) Measure the impact of current and future tobacco control policies on waterpipe tobacco smoking in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, three countries where waterpipe tobacco smoking is common.

Advocacy

A historic moment was celebrated in August 2011 when Lebanon adopted the first comprehensive tobacco control law. This was made possible following months of advocacy spearheaded by committed civil society organizations and the AUB-TCRG. The law requires total comprehensive bans in all indoor public places as of September 2011, including restaurants and cafés as of September 2013. It bans advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products, and requires a larger health warning on tobacco products.

On December 2, 2011, members from the AUB-TCRG met with Lebanese president Michel Suleiman at the presidential palace. The main objective was to get the president's support and help for enforcement of and compliance with the new tobacco law. The President promised to assign someone to follow up on issuing the necessary decrees as soon as possible and to help ensure strict implementation of the law.

The Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Project

The Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Project (YSRHP) is using a multi-faceted inter-disciplinary approach including teaching and research, training workshops, and advocacy to achieve its ultimate goal of Promoting Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health, and Sexuality Education in the region. The project team includes Professor Lilian Ghandour (PI), Dr. Faysal El-Kak and Professor Loulou Kobeissi (co-PI's) and Rola Yasmine (Research Assistant).

In September 2011, a one day discussion forum was held with the assistance of the Outreach and Practice Unit (OPU) at FHS to discuss Youth Friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (YFSRHS) and their adaptability within the Lebanese healthcare system. Four regional experts in the field of YFSRHS from Tunisia, Iraq, and Egypt were invited to attend and share their experiences and lessons learned. There were fruitful debates with local policy makers, healthcare providers, academicians, and NGOs and the sessions which were filmed and archived have been made available to the AUB academicians for educational purposes. The second regional discussion forum is planned for the academic Spring Term of 2012 and will address Sexuality Education in the Middle East and North Africa region. An elective 2-credit course on "Human Sexuality" has also been developed and approved and will be offered in the Spring of 2012 for FHS and AUB undergraduate/graduate students. More recently, the team proposed an idea to the school health division of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, to help deliver sexuality education to students in a consistent, sustainable and more impactful way. The team will be creating 4 DVDs for Sexuality Education tailored specifically to students of elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school levels with their age-appropriate themes and information.

The research study is in its final stages of IRB review/approval. The survey seeks to investigate patterns of sexual behavior, and perceptions as well as attitudes, of youth attending public and private universities across Lebanon. The study will be conducted using a secured online survey, in both Arabic and English.

This project, coupled with the continued efforts and ongoing work of its members, will hopefully contribute to a growing global and regional interest in sexuality and sexual health and by extension, enrich academic literature, empower community resources, and perhaps even overcome the existent cultural silence and denial pertaining to youth sexual and reproductive health in Lebanon and the region at large. The activities of this project have been made possible by a generous grant from The Ford Foundation.



YSRHP invite policy makers, healthcare providers, academicians, and NGOs from Lebanon and the region to a discussion forum entitled Youth Sexual Health Within the Healthcare System: The Case of Lebanon.

Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth (CCCC)

The four-country research team on maternal and neonatal near-miss cases has begun fieldwork in Egypt, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Syria. In the first formative stage of the study, researchers are measuring the incidence of maternal and neonatal near-miss cases, interviewing healthcare providers in the four public hospital study sites to understand the health system context, and conducting home interviews with women who were themselves maternal near-miss cases in those hospitals or who are the mothers of neonatal near miss cases. The formative research will inform the future intervention stage of the research to test a clinical audit and feedback strategy in these contexts. The research is funded by the Implementation Research Platform for 2011 at the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research at WHO and is managed by the Department for Reproductive Health and Research at WHO.

Egypt, Lebanon and Syria

CCCC network members have completed data collection using qualitative methods, investigating the needs of women and potential labor companions regarding labor companionship in three public hospitals in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. Data were also collected on the perspectives of health care providers, obstetrician, midwives and nurses, on the same aspect. The findings of this study will help the design of a multi-site intervention on the introduction of labor companionship in public hospitals.

Palestine

Midwives in the UNRWA clinics in the oPt are in a unique position to provide continuity of care to Palestinian refugee women for antenatal, postnatal and reproductive health care. In order to strengthen and support this midwifery model of care, Sahar Hassan from the ICPH carried out training sessions to update the midwives' practice and respond to their needs. This training was followed up by 56 visits to 14 camps in the West Bank, observing midwives' practices and exploring the challenges they face during their work. Recommendations were submitted to UNRWA for further support of midwifery care.

CRPH Affiliate News

Omar Dewachi

(Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, omar.dewachi@aub.edu.lb)

Omar Dewachi's work explores the ethnography of contemporary wars on Iraq through the lens of health and medicine and he is interested in how US-led warfare (First Gulf War, economic sanctions, American occupation and its aftermath) have led to the 'undoing' of the state and welfare institutions, and to transformations of the social fabric. His new research project on war and disability attempts to further interrogate the effects of the collapse of Iraq's health system and the changing role of the state. Dewachi is currently conducting ethnographic research on medical migration to Lebanon of Iraqi patients suffering from war-related injuries and disabilities. Omar Dewachi delivered his paper, "Terra Incognita: Steamboats, Oriental Sores, and the Medical Imaginative Geography of Mesopotamia during the First World War" at the 12th Mediterranean Programme Research Meeting in Florence, Italy from April 6-9, 2011. He also submitted a desk-review report entitled "'Safe' Reformatories: Desk review on psychosocial, rehabilitation and health services in Iraqi Reformatories" to the UNFPA, and published "Insecurity, Displacement and Health Impacts of the American Invasion of Iraq" for the Cost of War Project website, Eisenhower Study Group in the United States. Dewachi co-authored the chapter 'Towards a Regional Perspective on Health and Human Security' in Jabbour et. al.'s forthcoming book, *Public Health in the Arab World*.

Lilian Ghandour

(Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, lg01@aub.edu.lb)

Lilian Ghandour has been appointed as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Department of Epidemiology, College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University, where she is currently spending her junior research leave. She is taking part in three epidemiological surveys that aim at investigating sexual health practices of university students in Lebanon, child mental health disorders in Greater Beirut, and dementia in the elderly population of Lebanon. Since October 2010, she has been leading the work on options for the establishment of an Arab Research, Resource and Training Center for Drug

Use Prevention, in collaboration with OPU and Mentor Arabia. In June 2011, she was invited to present the idea in Dubai as part of the 7th International Symposium on Drug Issues and presented her work on the use of prescription drugs among AUB students at the annual College of Problems on Drug Dependence (CPDD) meeting (Florida, USA). In July 2011, she helped organize a two-day workshop at AUB to further discuss the initiative with international and regional stakeholders. As a member of the Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Project team, she organized a 3-day workshop in February 2011 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to provide knowledge and skills to Lebanese public school counselors on "Promoting Youth Reproductive and Sexual Health" and a regional discussion forum in September 2011 to address "Regional Youth-Friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health Services".

Monique Chaaya

(Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, mchaaya@aub.edu.lb)

Chaaya is the Principal Investigator on the NIH project on the prevalence of dementia in Lebanon. She has published three papers from the national study on rheumatic diseases undertaken with the Faculty of Medicine 2008-10. She presented a poster at the World Congress of Epidemiology from August 7-10, 2011 in Edinburgh, Scotland on "Effectiveness of a Low-Impact Exercise Program in Lebanese Marginalized Postmenopausal Women with Psychological Distress: a Randomized Controlled Trial". Chaaya is also involved in coordinating and delivering the research methods training courses offered to medical doctors as part of a training program to build capacity in research, a collaborative agreement with King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC), King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences (KSAU-HS).

Mayada Kanj

(Instructor, Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, mkanj@aub.edu.lb)

As Peer Education Training Research International (PETRI) Unit Coordinator Kanj coordinated the Theatre Based Training of Trainer Workshop in September 2011; the training was attended by Y-PEERS from the Arab region. In November 2011, Kanj was invited by WHO-EMRO to participate as a WHO Temporary Advisor, at the "Regional Consultation on a Training Course on Health

Education and Promotion for the EMR" in Kuwait. She recently participated in the New Trends in Global Education Conference which took place in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus where she presented a paper on "Perspectives on Blended Learning: A Case Study of Undergraduate Students in a Communication Course".

Judy Makhoul

(Associate Professor, Department of Health Promotion and Community Health, jm04@aub.edu.lb)

In May 2011, Judy Makhoul organized a two-day meeting for researchers, NGO representatives, state officials, UNHCR and WHO staff and Iraqi refugees to discuss the hardships that Iraqi refugees face in Lebanon and practical solutions. As a follow-up a small committee of participants worked on implementing the recommendations, such as advocacy efforts, a communication training workshop and developing and distributing a practical informational booklet to the refugees. Makhoul presented a paper "Untangling the effects of the sociopolitical and the physical influences of urban settings on the well-being of the war affected populations: the case of Beirut" at the International Conference on Global Health and Public Health Education, Hong Kong, October 2011. She also trained a group of medical doctors in Saudi Arabia in a three-day workshop on Research Thinking and Qualitative Research as part of a series of research capacity building modules at the KAIMRC in November 2011.

CRPH Research Seminars

November 24, 2011

Carla Makhoul Obermeyer, Visiting Research Professor, EPHD, FHS
Testing for HIV: Global debates and new evidence from a multi-site study

October 27, 2011

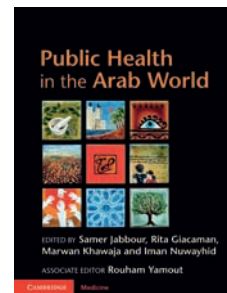
Fadi El Jardali, Assistant Professor, HMPD, FHS
Developing knowledge translation platforms for better public health policies in the region: progress, challenges and midway lessons

Announcements

- Professor Huda Zurayk, Director of the CRPH and former Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), AUB was honored on November 17th by the Lebanese Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (LSOG) at the opening ceremony of its annual international conference held under the patronage of Prime Minister Najib Mikati. Professor Zurayk received the LSOG honorary shield for her contributions to women's health in research and advocacy.
- Visit the new FHS website at aub.edu.lb/fhs
- Visit the new CCCC website at aub.edu.lb/fhs/cccc
- The Youth Working Group and the Women's Reproductive Health Working Group grants from the Wellcome Trust have come to an end but more publications from their research are expected soon.

Upcoming Events

- The CRPH, in collaboration with the Institute of Community and Public Health of Birzeit University is organizing the second Lancet Palestine Health Alliance conference on Health of Palestinians inside and outside the occupied Palestinian territory scheduled for March 5-6, 2012 and funded by The Welfare Association.
- The next **RHWG annual meeting** is scheduled for July 2012
- *Public Health in the Arab World* published by Cambridge University Press is set to be launched in Beirut in March 2012 and will be in print as of that time. Copies can be pre-ordered through major booksellers online.



About CRPH

Join Us as a Visiting Fellow

CRPH has been sponsoring a Visiting Fellows Program since January 2003. Selected fellows from the Arab region may visit CRPH for one to three months to use the Center's facilities and data resources to undertake their own research and to exchange ideas and experiences with CRPH faculty affiliates. Candidates need to be affiliated with an academic university or research institution, to hold a postgraduate degree and to have good working knowledge of English. A fellowship application may be requested from Mrs. Ruba Ismail, Program Administrator, at crph@aub.edu.lb and should be submitted at least three months prior to the proposed starting date.

The MS in Population Health

This 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, 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 Tauk at 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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CRPHNews is published bi-annually by the Center for Research on Population and Health (CRPH).

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