

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 18-2-2020

AUB and Order of Nurses study trends **of Lebanese nurses' migration and how to bring them back**

The nursing workforce is the linchpin in the provision of quality healthcare and positive patient outcomes. There is a global trend of migration of nurses from developing towards developed countries. Lebanon is no exception, since the country is witnessing a shortage in the nursing workforce precipitated by the ongoing brain drain of nurses.

With the aim to better understand this phenomenon, a team from the American University of Beirut (AUB) led by Dr. Mohamad Alameddine, Associate Professor at the Health Management and Policy Department in the Faculty of Health Sciences, in partnership with the Lebanese Order of Nurses, conducted a unique study surveying for the first time 153 Lebanese nurses living abroad, all of them employed and working on full-time basis.

The study investigated the causes for the migration of Lebanese nurses and incentives that would attract them back to their home country. Looking at nurses working in the Gulf region (57%) and their peers who work in other areas around the globe, the study revealed that the top three reasons for leaving Lebanon were unsatisfactory salary/benefits (72.8%), better work opportunities in other countries (60.3%), and lack of professional development/career advancement (55.9%). Survey respondents are highly educated with an experience average exceeding 14 years. Most importantly, the study found that more than half of the study sample (58.8%) indicated they are likely to return to Lebanon to practice nursing.

“The findings of the study pave the way for setting evidence based and targeted policies and intervention that will help policy makers both retain qualified Lebanese nurses and attract those living abroad to their homeland”, commented Dr. Alameddine.

The president of the Order of Nurses, Dr. Myrna Doumit, considered “this study as a major contributor to raising the public awareness on such an important issue, especially that the World

Health Organization (WHO) declared that by 2030 the world would be in need of 9 million additional nurses and midwives. Additionally, WHO declared year 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse”, added Dr. Doumit. “The study findings are timely and important and will guide efforts to attract Lebanese nurses living abroad and retain currently practicing ones. This will enhance the quality of the health care and improve patient outcomes and satisfaction” concluded the president of the Lebanese Order of Nurses.

“We have an opportunity for a brain drain reversal. The majority of experienced Lebanese nurses would like to return to practice in Lebanon. The onus is on the policy and decision makers to build them the golden bridge that would meet their minimum requirements and will attract them back to Lebanon. Offering incentives that would attract emigrant nurses back to Lebanon will allow a swift reintegration into the nursing workforce and will need a fraction of the cost of training new nurses,” stated Dr. Alameddine, who added that “despite Lebanon's political instability, only 35% of nurses indicated that this was the major reason for their emigration.”

“The study gave hopes of regaining back our experienced nurses if the right actions are taken by the healthcare authorities to encourage them to return,” commented the co-author of this study, Associate Professor of nursing at AUB and and the previous President of the Lebanese Order of Nurses Dr. Nuhad Dumit. “Lebanon is currently passing through a financial crisis and an ongoing public uprising demanding fundamental changes to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, joint governance and transparency in the various sectors of the economy. This uprising presents an opportunity for nursing stakeholders to ensure that their demands are integrated to any future changes in the care sector. The results of this study help provide the evidence base to guide future improvements to nursing policy and practice,” she concluded.

The study was published in the International Journal of Nursing Studies, and was co-authored by Mrs. Richa, in addition to Dr. Samer A. Kharroubi from AUB’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Dr. Nuhad Dumit from AUB’s Hariri School of Nursing, Sara Kassas (Health Management and Policy Department - FHS) and Marwa Diab-El-Harake (Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences - FAFS).

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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