

## **AUBMC Holds its Second Middle East Lung Cancer Congress on June 19-20, 2020, Virtually**

**Beirut, June 29 2020:** The American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) held its Second Middle East Lung Cancer Congress, the first virtual congress in an annual series. This unique congress focused on lung cancer from all aspects in a holistic approach. The aim of the conference was to empower physicians and healthcare workers with knowledge about lung cancer be it screening, treatment, surgery, pharmacology, pathology, palliative care, and nursing care. The congress bridges the gap between different disciplines and shares all aspects of treating a patient.

It targeted medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, pulmonologists, residents, fellows, nurses, pharmacists, and medical students. This year the congress will be delivered entirely online on June 19 and 20, 2020. The opening ceremony was led by AUB President, Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, Dr. Ghazi Zaatari, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Director of the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI), Dr. Ali Taher, and Director of Research at NKBCI and Activity Director, Dr. Arafat Tfayli.

In his opening speech, Dr. Fadlo Khuri said: “This Lung Cancer Congress is unique in that it brings together multiple specialties involved in the care of lung cancer patients. It is critically important that we all work together, sharing insights and best practices from our specific fields, in order to better understand this illness and treat our patients. This holistic approach is our best hope at combatting the scourge of lung cancer.”

Dr. Ghazi Zaatari said: “Our medical knowledge on the cell biology of lung cancer continues to increase thus offering better opportunity for more effective therapy and improved outcome. For a vicious disease that proved its fatality, it is very gratifying to experience the improved survival in many patients. What makes this topic of much greater importance is the fact that it is a preventable disease in the large majority of patients.”

Dr. Ali Taher said: “NKBCI thrives to offer all its patients a holistic care through its renowned specialized faculty and its established subspecialized multidisciplinary programs that cover patient recovery journey from all ends such as psycho-oncology, cardio-oncology, onco-fertility, as well as palliative and supportive care programs all in the aim to ensure the best quality of life for our patients.”

Patients also took part in the conference and shared testimonials to reflect their experience and recovery journey from lung cancer and to communicate a message on the importance of reducing smoking.

Dr. Tfayli explained: “It is a very exciting time to take care of lung cancer patients. Treatment options are evolving so rapidly. In May 2020 only, there were 7 new FDA approvals for lung cancer only.” Dr. Tfayli also stressed the importance of implementing law 174 that bans indoor smoking. He raised the issue of the ministry of tourism allowing smoking of narjileh in restaurants. He then thanked all contributors who helped organize and conduct this congress.

AUBMC has been known for its highly subspecialized centers and conferences, and this congress comes to confirm the understanding of lung cancer pathophysiology and genetic mechanisms in an area where therapeutic options are growing so rapidly. Moreover, smoking rates remain high and, unfortunately, are on the rise in our region. This includes not only cigarettes but also Narjileh and other tobacco products. Concurrently, tobacco control measures are either absent or not implemented and there is a great need to dedicate such conferences to address the regional needs.

Organizing the Second Middle East Lung Cancer Congress is part of the mission of the NKBCI at AUBMC to reduce the burden of cancer in Lebanon and the region through the application of state-of-the-art medical knowledge and technology and the development of integrated and advanced programs in patient care, research, education, and prevention. It is important to continue to call for action for smoking cessation, screening for lung cancer, and keep up with all updates in terms of innovative treatment modalities that can help increase survivorship of lung cancer patients.

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#### **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.

**For more information, please visit our website [www.aubmc.org](http://www.aubmc.org) or contact:**

**The AUBMC Office of Communications at 0096 1 350000 ext. 4732 –**

Email: [praubmc@aub.edu.lb](mailto:praubmc@aub.edu.lb)

**Memac Ogilvy Public Relations at**

**Papou Rmeily - 01-486065 ext.135 [papou.rmeily@ogilvy.com](mailto:papou.rmeily@ogilvy.com)**

**Rolande El Ghusayni - 01-486065 ext. 261 [rolande.elghusayni@ogilvy.com](mailto:rolande.elghusayni@ogilvy.com)**