

For Immediate Release



From Research to Policymaking – Center at AUB sheds light on medical errors in Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon- 8/2/2016- The Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut produced a policy brief showcasing the size of the problem of medical error in Lebanon and shedding light on issues of cause and accountability.

The center organized on Friday a policy dialogue entitled “Addressing Medical Errors in the Lebanese Healthcare System,” in collaboration with the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health to reach a comprehensive, evidence-based mutual understanding leading to real improvement in patient safety practices. The dialogue was facilitated by head of the K2P Center, Dr. Fadi El Jardali, who pre-circulated the K2P Policy Brief to all attendees to enable a more scientific and systematic participation.

Medical error is a health issue that is a subject of constant worry for the Lebanese public opinion in all matters related to health services, especially since the extensive media coverage of the case of the child Ella Tannous. While concerned stakeholders are leading initiatives to resolve this crisis, the associated debates about causes, responsibilities, and accountabilities remain ill-informed. Between 1996 and 2013, more than a thousand complaints related to medical malpractice were filed to the Order of Physicians. Investigations conducted by the Order of Physicians focused primarily on physicians as the main actors in preventable medical error while the majority of errors occur as a result of failures of complex healthcare systems rather than individual negligence.

The dialogue convened key policymakers and stakeholders including representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, the Lebanese Order of Physicians, the Syndicate of Hospitals, the Order of Nurses, the Order of Pharmacists, the National Social Security Fund, the World Health Organization, and the Red Cross. Also participating were directors of hospitals, primary healthcare centers, NGOs (legal affairs), academics, and physician.

Based on success stories of international healthcare systems, the dialogue addressed four elements of approach in tackling the medical error problem. The first element consisted of enhancing clinical governance through the integration of evidence-based clinical guidelines, education and training of healthcare providers, and conducting audits and performance appraisals. The second element focused on developing and implementing policies that promote anonymous and non-punitive incident reporting. Third was revising and updating current accreditation systems to ensure that patient safety goals, indicators, and the training requirement are explicit in the standards. The fourth element deliberated by the speakers was the empowerment of patients to be aware of the role they play to enhance the quality of care and patient safety through shared decision-making.

“To inform the debate on the case of the child Ella Tannous, to reduce medical error in Lebanon, and to improve patient safety practices in Lebanon, we pulled together a K2P policy brief and convened a stakeholders’ dialogue that informed policymakers and stakeholders not just of what the evidence says about medical error and related solutions but also about all of the factors that will influence implementation,” K2P Center’s Director, Dr. Fadi El Jardali told us. “The K2P dialogue provided a roadmap for improving patient safety and reducing medical error in Lebanon. We are pleased to see more significant attention given to research evidence as key in the policy making process.”

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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 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 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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