

For Immediate Release



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## **AUBMC launches an annual conference to promote advances and enhance collaborations in neuro-oncology**

The 1st Annual Middle East Neuro-Oncology Conference was held on September 21 and 22, 2018, at the American University of Beirut's (AUB) Bathish Auditorium. Organized by the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI) and the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Office at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) in collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Heidelberg University, the conference was dedicated to promote advances in neuro-oncology through continuous education and training.

One of the conference's objectives was to enhance collaboration between all relevant disciplines in the region, including medical oncology, neuro-oncology, neurosurgery, radiation oncology, pathology, and radiology. It also aimed to bridge science, knowledge, and practice gaps in the management of central nervous system (CNS) malignancies.

### **The opening session**

During the opening session, Dr. Hazem Assi, the conference's director from AUBMC, stressed that the conference's purpose is "to enhance the collaboration between different disciplines in the treatment of neurological tumors and to maintain an international network that allows a state-of-the-art management for patients with brain disease." He also thanked the conference co-directors Dr. Tracy Batchelor from Massachusetts General Hospital in the US and Dr. Wolfgang Wick from Heidelberg University Hospital in Germany, for their contributions and support in making the conference successful.

In his speech, Dr. Ali Taher, director of NKBCI, endorsed the efforts of junior faculty in organizing such conferences and raising the bar of the services offered at the institute. He also noted that this is the first-of-its-kind neuro-oncology conference, not only in Lebanon, but also in the Middle East.

Dr. Samia Khoury, associate dean for research and director of the Nehme and Therese Tohme Multiple Sclerosis Center, also spoke at the opening session, representing Dr. Mohamed Sayegh, dean of the Faculty of Medicine and executive vice president for medicine and global strategy at AUB. She explained that this conference signifies another step forward in the field of neuroscience, as it will encourage the sharing of the latest advancements, research, and results in neuro-oncology. She added that the conference also presents itself as a unique opportunity for new collaborations that will offer attendees a comprehensive overview of the newest developments in molecular diagnostics, state-of-the-art imaging, and classic molecular precision treatments including the aspect of neurological complications in cancer.

“Our discussion today reflects AUBMC’s continuous quest to raise the level of healthcare and serve as a regional hub in Lebanon and the region for research initiatives. This annual conference will also pave the way for the implementation of new techniques into current practices that would best direct targeted therapies in different patient populations and give better insight for in-depth treatment approaches,” said Khoury.

Dr. Nizar Bitar, president of the Lebanese Society of Medical Oncology, and Dr. Dolly Nasr, radiation oncology doctor at Hotel Dieu de France medical center, representing Dr. Raymond Sayegh, president of the Lebanese Order of Physicians, also attended the opening session and delivered their speeches.

### **Conference highlights**

During the conference, experts from different subspecialties worldwide met to discuss in-depth new treatment approaches in neuro-oncology. Participants examined current updates in neuro-oncology, pathology, imaging and treatment methodologies, as well as the implementation of new techniques into current practices. They were also provided with a platform for collaborations with other disciplines to implement more effective multidisciplinary care of neuro-oncology patients in the region. The conference included 32 talks that were delivered by 22 international, regional, and local speakers.

Attending the conference were around 200 experts in radiation oncology, pathology, pediatric oncology, pediatric neurology, neurology, and neurosurgery, including professors, residents, fellows, medical students, nurses, and nurse practitioners. Attendees came from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar as well as from France, Brazil, and Canada. Speakers came from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, US, Canada, Germany, and Turkey.

## **The Second Annual Middle East Neuro-Oncology Conference**

The conference ended with an announcement that this will be an annual event, and that next year's Annual Middle East Neuro-Oncology Conference will be held on September 21 and 22, 2019.

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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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