

## SHBPP's 5<sup>th</sup> National Conference: “Ethics and Medical Reliability”

Scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements in the field of medicine are continually contributing to the improvement of the quality of health care available to the public. However, even with the application of “state-of-the art” technologies and procedures, whether in diagnosis or treatment, errors are yet to be eliminated from the equation (of medical care). According to Dr. Thalia Arawi, Clinical Bioethicist and Founding Director of the SHBPP, the reality is that “errors are inevitable in the practice of medicine”, whether they “ensue from medicine's inherent uncertainty” or “are the result of mistakes or oversights on the part of the particular provider”. The case lies in how such errors are perceived, how they are addressed, and what are the measures taken to prevent them from recurring.

In an attempt to shed light on this critical issue, the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program (SHBPP) at the American University Faculty of Medicine in collaboration with the Lebanese Order of Physicians organized a conference under the title of “Ethics and Medical Reliability” on Saturday October 6, 2012 at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Beirut. The conference brought together health workers, lawyers and policy makers from Lebanon to discuss the various facets of medical errors.

In his opening remarks, guest speaker Dr. Charaf Abou Charaf, President of the Lebanese Order of Physicians, spoke of the need for physicians and health care workers to claim responsibility for medical errors and to report them, and then to take the proper actions to compensate for them in order to fulfill their duty towards patients. These concepts were then elaborated in the series of presentations given by Dr. Thalia Arawi, guest speakers Dr. Kenneth Brummel Smith, Maitre Charles Ghafari, Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh and Ms. Nada Nassar.

A number of discussions took place on topics ranging from the applicability of “the apology approach” for reducing claims in the Lebanese context to the issue of accountability of the Order of Physicians, the health care institutions and the workers themselves, and several recommendations ensued.

