

AUB lecture addresses medical malpractice

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Medical mistakes are the third leading cause of death in the United States. In Lebanon, medical malpractice lawsuits are increasing and patients feel that physicians are not always honest with them when it comes to admitting mistakes.

In an attempt to address this important, sensitive and timely issue, the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program (SHBPP) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) Faculty of Medicine (FM), invited clinical instructor of emergency medicine, Dr. Afif Mufarrij, to its Ethics Matters lecture series on April 7, 2011 at 5:00 pm in the AUB Medical Center.



Dr. Mufarrij: There are mechanisms that can be followed to minimize medical errors.

In his talk entitled “When the Hand that Heals, Kills. What is the Remedy?” Dr. Mufarrij spoke about several causes that lead to medical mistakes. Arguing that “to err is human,” he noted that “there are also mechanisms that can be followed to minimize medical errors” at the levels of the individual practitioners, the health-care team and the institution in general.

Dr. Mufarrij stated that “patient safety” is a new health-care discipline that emphasizes the reporting, analysis, and prevention of medical errors that often lead to adverse events. The lecture emphasized the Hippocratic dictum to “do no harm” and stressed that physicians should admit mistakes and treat patients as if they were family members.

Dr. Thalia Arawi, founding director of SHBPP commented that “failing to disclose medical errors to patients damages public trust in medicine, since it involves some form of deception and denotes that the medical professional does not have the well being of patients as a priority.”