

**For the first time in the Middle East**  
**AUBMC uses Proximie augmented reality technology with robotic surgery**  
The new technology allows real-time remote collaboration between doctors,  
facilitating medical students' observation and interaction

**Beirut, Lebanon, December 6, 2017:** For the first time in Lebanon and the region, the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) succeeded in the first-of-its-kind robotic surgery supported by augmented reality technology that helped a surgeon extract a tumor from the kidney while preserving it. The operation, which will change the delivery of healthcare around the world, was led by Dr. Albert El Hajj, MD, Assistant Professor of Urology, robotic surgeon at AUBMC via an online interactive platform known as Proximie.

With the increasing need to facilitate collaboration between doctors in different regions of the world, this augmented reality surgery platform came to assist doctors through availing the required guidance and support remotely. During the kidney operation, Dr. El Hajj collaborated remotely with Dr. Fadi Merhi, Assistant Professor, Interventional Radiology at AUBMC, who could observe the surgical procedure and share his expertise accordingly.

“Proximie proved to be an efficient tool for collaboration between physicians in different locations. The state-of-the-art technology will enable them to perform more complex robotic surgeries in the future,” said Dr. El Hajj. “Proximie facilitates intraoperative consultation through remote ‘hands-on’ virtual assistance and video annotation. It helps get real time remote guidance and support needed from other surgeons and medical teams,” Dr. El Hajj added.

Dr. El Hajj concluded: “Operating rooms are becoming more crowded with less ability to host students and trainees. Proximie’s augmented reality capabilities provide an interactive approach that enables both robotic surgery teaching and real-time training with an enhanced reach to a wider audience of surgical teams and medical students”.

Dr. Nadine Hachach Haram, Co-Founder of Proximie said: “Proximie platform is device-agnostic and therefore can be implemented to any medical device, into any hardware. We are able to use technology now to connect doctors around the world, to train doctors, upscale them, to help the sharing of expertise no matter what device, what surgical discipline and what technique they are using.”

Robotic surgery is a technology that allows performance of major procedures through keyhole incisions without the need for a large incision like open surgery. It is associated with faster recovery, less blood loss and fewer complications compared to traditional approaches. In urology, robotic surgery is used for treating cancers of the prostate, kidney and bladder, and it is also applied for the reconstruction of the urinary tract.

It is worth mentioning that last year, AUBMC Head of Division of Plastic Surgery, Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah, led the first-of-its-kind augmented reality operation helping a surgeon in Gaza to reconstruct the hand of a child suffering from a congenital birth defect. Held for the first time in Lebanon and the Middle East, the operation was facilitated by Proximie.

As a teaching institution, AUBMC continues to progress towards becoming a regional hub for academic innovation and research. By equipping the Medical Center with the latest and most advanced tools, AUBMC constantly facilitates the delivery of best patient- centered care and widening the scope of training and teaching opportunities to a bigger number of medical students who can now observe and interact during a surgical procedure without physically being in the operating room.

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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.

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