

## **2017 Middle East Medical Assembly Discovers Conflict Medicine** **The First Global Congress on Conflict Medicine**

(May 12, 2017) Beirut, Lebanon – The Middle East Medical Assembly (MEMA) 2017, at the American University of Beirut (AUB) comes this year with a new direction holding the first global congress on conflict medicine, focusing on the management of conflict related injuries including but not limited to the pathological, psychological, nursing, nephrological, surgical, oncological, and social manifestations of war wounds.

The congress was launched in an opening ceremony in the presence of Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, H.E Mr. Ghassan Hasbani, Executive Vice President for Medicine and Global Strategy, Raja N. Khuri Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB, Dr. Mohamed H. Sayegh, MEMA Chairperson, Dr. Imad Kaddoura, Co. Chairperson, Dr. Ghassan Abou Sitta, and members of the AUB medical community, faculty and staff.

MEMA 2017 builds on evidence-based knowledge and practice and aims to provide a platform for the exchange of experience and expertise between regional and international health practitioners (from civilian, academic, and military fields). It is held in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other organizations such a “Medecins Sans Frontieres” (MSF), in addition to regional governmental agencies. It also creates the setting to forge partnerships between the different stakeholders in providing solutions that ameliorate the consequences of conflict.

In his welcoming note, Dr. Abu-Sitta stressed on the pivotal role of the first International Conflict Medicine Congress which highlights a topic like conflict medicine. He said: “The ecology of war and the protracted conflicts across the Middle East have led to the degradation of healthcare infrastructure in many of the surrounding countries. MEMA today provides the opportunity to go beyond the crisis to better equip health professionals to respond to the challenges of medical practice within conflict.”

Dr. Kaddoura added: “Global and regional conflicts are affecting all humanity. Medical Institutions should not enjoy the luxury of distancing themselves from it, but they should empower their future students to get involved following the footsteps of the American University of Beirut”

Dr. Mohamed H. Sayegh welcomed the attendees and spoke of the importance of MEMA in serving the goal of supporting the provision of health services while studying the health consequences of conflict in a region of turmoil. He said: “Our purpose as a leading medical center extends beyond providing healthcare to providing it with advancement and compassion. Supporting the health of local and regional patients in need by ensuring their access to care is at the core of our 2020 Vision. The next step is for us to collate all of the efforts to develop and refine the implementation strategies, transparently, deliberately and inclusively.”

In his turn, Minister Hasbani concluded: “In the world of conflict today, the equation remains the same there are people seeking to create conflicts and end lives and people who are risking their lives to save lives. Our institutions and hospitals have been working for long under harsh conditions and limited resources, but they have proven to be extremely resilient; one of these institutions that have stood and faced all those challenges

and conflicts is the American University and its hospital in Beirut. This institution is living proof of how you survive as a country, how you survive as people by being together working together, and caring for each other.”

MEMA’s exhibition and rich program spreads over four days and features various sessions and workshops about recent advances in the field along with experiences from both the military and civilian fields in applying this knowledge to different environments from the field hospital to the teaching hospital. Other topics include reconstructive surgery and the challenges of reconstructing and rehabilitating the war injured patient, infectious diseases and microbiology, which explored the growing threat of multidrug resistant bacteria in war wounds. In addition, women’s health, mental health, the burden of cancer during conflict, the burden of kidney dialysis during conflict, training and educating health professionals to deal with the challenges of war children with disabilities during conflict, Emergency Medicine, war injuries and finally clinical signs of torture were also discussed during the different sessions.

As a pioneer driver and promoter of cutting-edge research, AUBMC’s historical endeavors and efforts in academic teaching, clinical care, and research continue to be of first class quality. AUBMC today maintains its role as a reference center in the region at large.

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