

AUBMC performs the first-of-its-kind Pulmonary Endarterectomy surgery in Lebanon and the region The new procedure gives hope to patients with severe Pulmonary Hypertension

Beirut, 2 July 2018:-In line with its commitment to providing cutting-edge medical treatment and technologies, the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) became the first center in Lebanon and the region to perform on July 2, 2018 a Pulmonary Thromboendarterectomy surgery known as PTE.

Dr. Jamil Borgi, Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, assisted by Dr. Pierre Sfeir, Head of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, performed the procedure which required more than six hours to be completed.

The patient, who started experiencing fatigue, shortness of breath, and heart failure symptoms over a period of few months, was diagnosed with this condition after a right heart catheterization done by Dr. Abdullah Rebeiz, Interventional cardiologist. The catheterization showed severe pulmonary hypertension of non-cardiac origin, and a CT angiography confirmed the cause of his pulmonary hypertension.

This procedure is an established curative surgical therapy designed to treat patients with a chronic and critical condition called Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension (CTEPH). The condition is a progressive and debilitating disease caused by chronic blood clots within the lungs. The new milestone provides advanced treatment options to patients who cannot be treated with medication and marks the opening of a new program in the area for the surgical treatment of pulmonary hypertension. It also aligns with the vision of AUBMC to be the cornerstone that provides the latest advanced therapies and procedures available globally for the most complex of cases.

Commenting on this, Dr. Jamil Borgi said: “It is our goal and ambition at AUBMC to provide all the surgical therapies and procedures for the most complex of conditions and CTEPH is one of these. Patients with this condition, who had to travel abroad or die from their disease, have now the option to be treated locally with excellent results.”

Dr. Imad Bou Akl, Pulmonary Medicine and Pulmonary Hypertension specialist at AUBMC, said: “Our ability to perform this procedure at AUBMC completes the full range of medical and surgical therapeutic options required to take care of patients with pulmonary hypertension.”

Prior to this, patients in Lebanon who developed this disease had to travel abroad to receive treatment if their situation was stable enough, but the majority died with the disease from lack of availability of proper treatment. Chronic Thromboembolic Pulmonary Hypertension (CTEPH) is a life-threatening condition and can lead to heart failure and death. PTE promptly reduces pulmonary hypertension and restores cardiac output, producing an excellent symptomatic improvement in almost all patients, even those with advanced cases. It is generally a curative intervention for a large proportion of patients who undergo this operation, thus significantly improving their level of activity, quality of life, and life expectancy.

Dr. Pierre Sfeir, Cardiothoracic surgeon, said “This is a highly technical procedure that requires special expertise. With the success of this operation we are happy to see our set up at AUBMC ready to take on the most challenging surgical conditions of the heart and lungs.”

Dr. Abdallah Rebeiz said, “This is a condition which severely impacts a patient’s quality of life as well as longevity, and there are no other definitive treatments than to solve this problem with surgery. The team approach pre and post operatively as well as the tremendous job done by the surgical team intra-operatively are what ensured the positive outcome for our patient.”

Initially developed at the UC San Diego Health and performed in very few selected centers over the world with multidisciplinary approach, the PTE is a delicate and technically challenging procedure that removes clots that can block off blood flow to the lungs causing damaging vascular complications and pulmonary hypertension. Many people with CTEPH may be unaware that these clots are forming. When severe, this situation leads to pulmonary hypertension and heart failure with symptoms like increasing breathlessness, exercise limitation, and reduced life expectancy. 4% of people who suffer a blood clot in the lungs go on to develop such a condition.

By offering PTE, AUBMC remains dedicated to providing the most advanced surgical and medical treatments for many patients with this condition. This unique surgery improves the quality of life as well as life expectancy to Pulmonary Hypertension patients who can now have local access to the most specialized heart and lung care.

- ENDS -

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.

For more information, please visit our website www.aubmc.org or contact:

The AUBMC Office of Communications at 0096 1 350000 ext. 4732 –
Email: praubmc@aub.edu.lb

Memac Ogilvy Public Relations at 01-486065 ext.132

American University of Beirut Medical Center

PO Box 11-0236 T.: +961-1-350000/374374
Riad El-Solh 1107 2020 Info Line 1242
Beirut, Lebanon (from within Lebanon)

F.: +961-1-345325
praubmc@aub.edu.lb
www.aubmc.org

New York Office

3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10017-2303 - USA
T.: +1-212-583-7680 F.: +1-212-583-7650

Carmen El Hajj/ Charbel Ghsoub- charbel.ghsoub@ogilvy.com

References:

- (1) <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cleft-palate/symptoms-causes/syc-20370985>

American University of Beirut Medical Center

PO Box 11-0236
Riad El-Solh 1107 2020
Beirut, Lebanon

T.: +961-1-350000/374374
Info Line 1242
(from within Lebanon)

F.: +961-1-345325
praubmc@aub.edu.lb
www.aubmc.org

New York Office

3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8th Floor
New York, New York 10017-2303 - USA
T.: +1-212-583-7680 F.: +1-212-583-7650