

## **AUBMC Cardiac Electrophysiology Team Performs a Novel Procedure using a Cryoballoon for Pulmonary Vein Isolation to Treat a Condition Causing Irregular Heart Rhythm**

**(March 22, 2017) Beirut, Lebanon** – The cardiac electrophysiology team at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), Department of Internal Medicine, performed a novel technique of cryoballoon ablation of atrial fibrillation, a practical approach that ensures long-term safety and efficacy. The recent advent is completely curative in 80-85 percent of patients with paroxysmal atrial fibrillation.

Developed to create a circular lesions set around each pulmonary vein in a relatively simple manner, the novel technique is considered as first-line therapy in symptomatic patients with recurring paroxysmal atrial fibrillation on anti-arrhythmic medication.

The novel procedure performed by Dr. Marwan Refaat, cardiologist and cardiac electrophysiologist at AUBMC and Keserwan Medical Center, Associate Professor of Medicine at AUB Faculty of Medicine; and Dr. Bernard Harbieh, cardiologist and cardiac electrophysiologist at AUBMC, Keserwan Medical Center, and CHN- Zgharta, and Instructor of Medicine at AUB, Faculty of Medicine has been increasingly used in the US and Europe for the treatment of atrial fibrillation, a common condition that causes irregular heart rhythm and that may lead to stroke and heart failure.

Atrial fibrillation afflicts six percent of people over 60 years old. During the pulmonary vein isolation, doctors insert catheters (long, flexible tubes) into the veins of the leg and guide the catheters into the left atrium under Intracardiac Echocardiographic guidance. The cryotherapy is delivered through the tip of a balloon to a tissue targeted for ablation, and it presents an alternative to antiarrhythmic drug therapy, considering patient choice, benefit, and risk.

Established by Dr. Maurice Khoury in 1996, the cardiac electrophysiology section at AUBMC has always been the leader in performing catheter ablation and in implementing new device therapies for the treatment of patients with heart failure and heart rhythm disease in Lebanon and the region.

“This procedure is another proof of AUBMC being on track of achieving its 2020 Vision, being the leading medical center in Lebanon and the region in using techniques and skills that help in saving lives,” commented Dr. Refaat.

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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 four international accreditations of JCI, Magnet, CAP, and ACGME-I 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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