



Cleft and Craniofacial Center

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY of BEIRUT MEDICAL CENTER
المركز الطبي في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت

Our lives are dedicated to yours

History

Congenital craniofacial deformities, including cleft and other craniofacial syndromes, are birth defects that arise from several factors and present directly after birth. They are prevalent all over the world and are considered a burden to society if not managed adequately. Lebanon is one of the countries with the highest incidence of cleft cases in the world (1 newborn in every 440 births) including Lebanese and non-Lebanese births. With this high number of babies being born with the deformity and the increasing number of referrals from neighboring countries in the Middle East and Arab world, a need for a multidisciplinary center with specialized personnel to manage this problem arose.

About Us

The program's philosophy of care concentrates on providing patients with craniofacial or cleft condition with a seamless and comprehensive multidisciplinary service that addresses both the functional and psychological aspects of the conditions observed. We streamline care to ensure the child and family receive a gold standard, comprehensive treatment that depends on applying the most advanced practices and ensuring problems are addressed early to attain the best possible outcome functionally, cognitively, and psychologically.

Members of the multidisciplinary cleft team are highly trained, specialized, and recognized experts in their fields who work together to manage the physical and social burdens of the disease.



Our Mission

Our mission is to provide comprehensive multidisciplinary care to patients with craniofacial and cleft deformities as well as sharing comprehensive knowledge and developing culturally appropriate guidelines on how to assess, treat, and care for cleft and craniofacial patients throughout Lebanon and the region. The program will raise awareness on the psychological, social, and physical implications that accompany surgery and treatment.

Our Vision

Our vision is to build a support system for parents and their cleft children by bridging the gap between them and medical professionals. We aim to evolve the cleft and craniofacial service into a fully-fledged unit of a clear brand identity. To attain our vision, we aim to:

- Provide comprehensive and evidence-based cleft and craniofacial care by a multidisciplinary team of medical and surgical experts
- Maintain the strong partnership with Global Smile Foundation MENA to be able to raise funds and provide cleft care to underserved patients across Lebanon and the region. This will also involve efforts with the Ministry of Public Health
- Establish a cleft fellowship in the division of plastic surgery
- Continue to seek affiliations with charitable organizations and in particular Smile Train (USA) and Facing the World (UK)
- Engage with community members to raise social awareness regarding issues affecting patients with facial deformities

Our Services

Our cleft and craniofacial surgeons, otolaryngologists, and orthognathic surgeons perform corrective surgeries to head and face deformities and their sequelae. To support patients and their families during the postoperative recovery, the department also provides physical, social, and psychological support through feeding specialists, child psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers.

Our Team

Our team consists of members of different departments within AUBMC. Our plastic surgeons and cleft specialists are responsible for the preoperative assessment and operative correction of a patient's deformities. Our otolaryngologists follow up on the treatment of the sequelae of cleft deformities including otitis media, hearing loss, and velopharyngeal insufficiency. The department is led by Dr. Ghassan Abu Sitta.

To provide the best treatment options, department members work closely with an Orthodontist to treat craniofacial growth deformities and dental problems resulting from such a deformity. In addition, psychiatrists and psychologists manage psychiatric problems of patients and their family members. On the other hand, pediatricians and feeding therapists provide feeding awareness and education in addition to the management of health issues that might arise in pediatric patients.

Other department members include a clinical assistant who manages the administrative aspect of the whole process and nurses who play a major role in following up closely on a patient's well-being before and after surgery.



Before surgery



After surgery

Who can benefit from this program?

The program treats any patient with cleft lip, cleft palate, and other congenital craniofacial syndromes with a close follow up from birth to adolescence. It manages the deformity itself in addition to any associated medical, social, and psychiatric problem.

Why come to us?

We are amongst the very few medical centers in Lebanon and the region whose approach to the cleft patient depends on a multidisciplinary team of experts. Highly trained and specialized experts continuously interact through multidisciplinary meetings to assess the patient's condition and recommend the most suitable and comprehensive management for the deformity. The patient has access to all the needed specialties in one location.

Location and Appointment Scheduling

The Cleft and Craniofacial Center is located in the AUBMC Specialty Poly-clinics Building, 4th floor. To schedule an appointment, please call 01 - 350 000 ext. 5894.

Email: cleft@aub.edu.lb

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