

# HEALTH BEAT

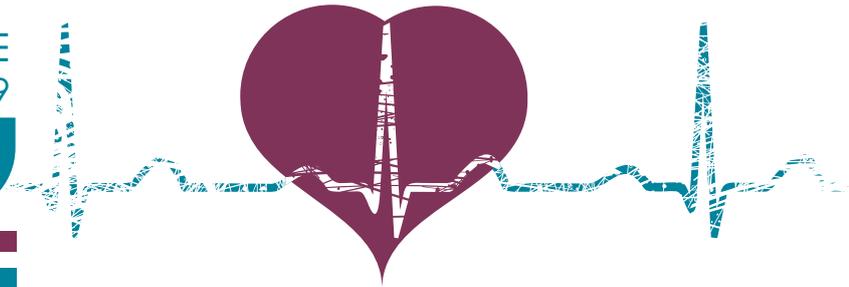
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE  
KEEPING UP WITH YOUR BEAT SINCE 1979

ISSUE 2

FALL 2013



Our lives are dedicated to yours



## EDITORIAL NOTE

The release of the second issue of "Health Beat", the quarterly newsletter of the Department of Family Medicine, coincides with the beginning of a new year. On this special occasion, we hope that 2014 brings good health, peace and success to all. This issue covers the activities conducted by the department during the last few months, as well as some advice on how to stay healthy during the winter season.

2014 will also mark a substantial change for the Department of Family Medicine at AUBMC. We will be moving to the new Wassef and Souad Sawwaf building, which is situated across the road from our current location. With this move, we will continue our efforts to provide our beneficiaries and patients with the high quality service they deserve. In addition, new services will soon be launched in the Family Medicine and Wellness clinics, with the aim of providing comprehensive care to our community ranging from health promotion and prevention, to curative care and rehabilitation. Many of these services will be highlighted in our next issue.

**Seasons' Greetings and Happy New Year to all our readers!**

## POLIO VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

The Department of Family Medicine participated in the national polio campaign launched by the Ministry of Public Health through providing the polio vaccine to the children (up to the age of five years) both in its clinics and in public schools in Beirut. 603 students in five public schools received the polio vaccine during the period extending from December 6 to 10, 2013. Many thanks to the 40 volunteers from the Department of Family Medicine and other departments at AUB, who contributed to this outreach activity.



# DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE AT AUBMC: A 35-YEAR JOURNEY!

35 years have elapsed since the establishment of the Department of Family Medicine at AUBMC. It was the first formal family medicine training program in the Arab World, with the aim of changing the general practice of basic curative care, to a more comprehensive care incorporating the social, preventive and psychological perspectives.

The first class graduated from the department in 1982, and included Drs. Samir Sidani, Juman Hijab, Pierre Ghassibi, Ahmad Saab and Amal Tohme. 31 classes have since graduated, increasing the number of practicing family doctors to a total of 133 by July 2013. Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh, a family doctor by training, has been leading the department since 2005. He is the third chairman after Dr. Caesar Chidiac (an endocrinologist by training and the founder of the department) and Dr. Mustafa Khogali (an epidemiologist and occupational doctor by training).

Since its establishment, the Department of Family Medicine has played an important role in improving the delivery of primary health care both at the national and regional levels. Members of the department participated in the establishment of the Arab Board for Family Practice and assisted in launching another family medicine program in Bahrain. The department was the first to introduce the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) for its residents and students and it was the first training site outside the United States of America to administer the American Board of Family Medicine in-training exam. Moreover, members of the department provided and are still providing expertise to several regional programs in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other countries in the region.

At the national level, the department published the "Primary Care Clinical Guide," one of the few clinical guidelines developed in the country. In addition, members of the department developed a video on "communication skills," the first of its kind in Arabic, and contributed to several capacity-building trainings for primary care physicians working in different local and international organizations. Last but not least, members of the department contributed to the school health, smoking cessation initiatives, and other health promotion and disease prevention activities in the country.

It is worth noting that the Department of Family Medicine was a pioneer in introducing the electronic health records at AUBMC several years ago, and which had a considerable impact on improving the quality of the practice through better documentation, better scheduling of appointments, and better monitoring and follow-ups.

Under the leadership of Dr. Hamadeh, the department will continue its mission of providing and achieving excellent community-oriented primary health care at the local, national and regional levels through education, research and services.



# OUR PRACTICE

## Appointments at Family Medicine Clinics

*Suzan Seifeddine, BSN*

Dial extension 3000 for  
all your needs in the  
Family Medicine Clinics.

To ensure our patients' satisfaction, different kinds of appointments are made available:

- Regular appointments: these are allocated for routine check-ups, the follow-up of chronic medical conditions, and for non-urgent doctor consultations. They are usually scheduled with your personal doctor.
- Same-day Appointments: these are allocated for urgent conditions such as fever, sore throat, abdominal pain, and joint pain among others. These appointments are usually taken on the same day by calling extension 3000. The triage nurse will answer your call and give you the appropriate advice depending on your symptoms. Based on your condition, the triage nurse will schedule an appointment for you with the available doctor, give you an appointment with your personal doctor if possible, or simply give you the necessary health advice.

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## FAMILY MEDICINE CLINICS: YOUR MEDICAL HOME

*Joumana Antoun MD, MS*

The Family Medicine Clinics recently adopted the Medical Home model of care with a gradual implementation of its components within the clinics' services. This model consists of providing comprehensive care to individuals of all age groups and building a partnership between the patient and his/her medical team. The team is led by the personal doctor, and includes nurses and other specialists who will work together to provide the best care possible for the patient.

What kind of care should you expect from the Medical Home model?

- A care that addresses your entire physical and mental wellbeing including the management of acute illnesses, chronic disease management, wellness and prevention, and health advice and counseling.
- A care where you will be involved in deciding every step of your treatment plan.
- A care coordinated among the different team members including other specialists.
- A care based on medical guidelines recommended by international authorities.
- A care delivered through a team led by your personal doctor. This will ensure continuity, better communication and more time allocated to health education delivered by your personal nurse.
- A care that is more accessible, with clinics opening after-hours in the evening and on Saturdays in order to respond better to your urgent needs.

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## OUTREACH TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Dr. Bassem Saab conducted two training programs on "Train the Trainer" to Iraqi academic physicians in Kurdistan-Iraq.
- Dr. Mona Osman conducted a training for doctors and health care workers in primary health care centers in Lebanon enrolled in the network of the Ministry of Public Health. This training tackled the integration of the non-communicable diseases care within the services of the primary health care centers. This is an initiative supported by the World Health Organization and aims at improving the screening and management of non-communicable diseases namely diabetes mellitus, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases in primary care.

# AUB WELLNESS PROGRAM

*Rita Doudakian MPH, Ghina El Jammal BS Nutrition*

## **FIT-A-THON**

The AUB Wellness Program conducted the annual Fit-A-Thon activity on Friday October 11, 2013. Participants learned about healthy nutrition and the benefits of exercise through participating in a scavenger hunt, and joining a walk that began at AUB Greenfield and ended in West Hall. Valuable prizes were distributed to winners. Big thanks are extended to the students of the Nutrition Coordinated Program, who organized the nutrition booths and provided healthy nutritional tips to all.



## **First Aid Certificate Distribution Ceremony**

78 participants from the University for Seniors and the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine at AUBMC received training in "Basic First Aid" by the Lebanese Red Cross. Certificates were distributed during a ceremony held on August 28th, 2013.



If you are interested in receiving First Aid training, please contact us at [wellness@aub.edu.lb](mailto:wellness@aub.edu.lb)

## **Smoking Cessation Certificate Distribution Ceremony**

The AUB Wellness Program continues its efforts in helping members of the AUB community stop smoking. On September 13, 2013 four new participants in the smoking cessation program received a certificate after succeeding in quitting smoking.



For more information about the smoking cessation program at AUB, please contact the AUB Wellness Program at [wellness@aub.edu.lb](mailto:wellness@aub.edu.lb) or extension 3002.

## **Breast feeding is beautiful!**

In collaboration with the AUB breastfeeding task force, the AUB Wellness Program organized a breastfeeding sit-in at the Saab Medical Library Plaza on Friday October 25, 2013. This was followed by a panel discussion with experts, where mothers had the chance to know more about breastfeeding as well as share their personal experiences.



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## PUBLICATIONS

- Saab B. When we justify apathy and homicide in Syria. *British Journal of General Practice* 2013;63:486. This article was also published in the Washington report on Middle East affairs, October-November 2013.
- Usta J, Farver, JA, Hamieh CS. Effects of Socialization on Gender Discrimination and Violence Against Women in Lebanon. Accepted for publication in *Violence Against Women* 3 Oct 2013.
- Usta J, Abu Farhat H, Hleis S, Roumani M, Abdo L, Bzeih H Lebanese Medical students' attitudes towards helping victims of Domestic Violence Accepted for publication in *Fam Med* 28 June 2013.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

As part of the current efforts of the Department of Family Medicine to improve the education of residents and medical students, 38 doctors involved in teaching activities were registered in the Residency Faculty Boot Camp. This is an online interactive course provided by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, and it includes three main modules on dealing with difficult residents, and the pearls of precepting and providing feedback to learners.

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

### A Small Gift

*Nisrine Makarem, MD*

During the holy month of Ramadan, the residents in the Department of Family Medicine in collaboration with the Resident Staff Organization (RSO), launched an initiative to provide support to the vulnerable families living in Hay Al Gharbe, an underprivileged area where people live in very harsh conditions with minimal access to basic needs such as water, electricity and even food. The initiative succeeded in raising funds for purchasing basic food items (such as rice, sugar, milk, oil among others) to 50 families in this area for a period of one month. Many thanks for all who supported this initiative. We're looking forward for further social engagements.

### What you feel when you visit Hay Al Gharbe for the first time!

Below are a few quotes from Family Medicine residents when they first visited Hay Al Gharbe, where the Family Medicine Department provides health services in the clinic run by Tahaddi organization:

- "It was the first time I visit such an area, which I thought it could only exist in movies."
- "The things you take for granted, someone else is praying for... This is the main lesson learned."
- "When we first took a turn to the left after the Sports City, I was really amazed by the fact that I had been using that main road for more than a million times over the past decade, but I had never thought that some people actually live there! It is as if they are people outside the country's realm of consciousness; so soundly hidden out of sight."
- "The best I can do now is treat their diseases not only with scientific and medical approaches, but also with compassion and a smile from the heart."

## A SERVICE IN FOCUS

### Preventive Cardiology Clinic

*Maya Romani, MD*

Do you know that 50% of men and 65% of women, who die suddenly of heart attack, were not aware that they had a heart disease? Now, it's possible for you to discover your cardiac risk early!

If you are a smoker, or suffer from obesity, hypertension or diabetes mellitus, or if you are under a lot of stress or have a family member suffering from heart disease, do not hesitate to contact the new Preventive Cardiology Clinic at extension 3000 to schedule an appointment.

The Preventive Cardiology Clinic offers you a comprehensive clinical examination by a cardiologist and a family doctor, blood testing, and high resolution imaging of your arteries to identify heart disease many years before the symptoms appear.

Accordingly, we will evaluate your cardiac risk and help you manage your risk factors.

## NEW MEMBERS TO OUR FAMILY

### Newborns

Congratulations to:

- Dr. Rim Taleb & Dr. Issam Shaarani on the birth of their first baby Ahmad.
- Dr. Alexandra Ghadieh on the birth of her first baby Anthony.

Welcome baby Ahmad & baby Anthony to the big "Family Medicine" family!

## RECOGNIZING DIABETES DAY IN TAHADDI

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, the second year residents in the Department of Family Medicine recognized this day on November 12, 2013 in Tahaddi clinic as part of their community medicine rotation. Under the umbrella of the Wellness program, the residents conducted screenings for diabetes mellitus, obesity and hypertension for the beneficiaries of Tahaddi clinic. This was followed up by a discussion session with a group of diabetic patients about the disease and the best ways to prevent complications.



## IN THE EYES OF OTHERS

*A note of appreciation from Ms. Najat Nazzal*

"The doctors and staff in the family medicine department are helpful; they make every effort to help me in everything; they are like my family. Their support makes me feel good. I really appreciate their work and good spirit."

### Waiting time in Family Medicine Clinics

The waiting time is defined as "the time between the scheduled appointment time and the time the patient actually enters the doctor's office". We selected the average waiting time as a quality indicator to be measured on a quarterly basis in order to monitor its progress and ensure the satisfaction of our patients. We set our target at 30 minutes, and for the last two years, we succeeded in maintaining the average waiting time at 25 minutes (hence fulfilling our target).

In the year 2012, around 80% of our patients saw their doctors within 30 minutes of the scheduled appointment time, and around 54% saw their doctors within 15 minutes of the scheduled appointment time. This improvement was achieved thanks to the implementation of many initiatives such as ensuring doctors' arrival on time, avoiding clinic interruptions by staff, and adapting the duration of the appointment slot to the doctors' patterns.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CORNER

*Mirna Kazan, MPH*

# HEALTH TIPS

## How to stay fit and healthy during the winter season?

Below are few tips that will help you enjoy a healthy winter and stay fit and safe during this season:

- **Take the flu vaccine:** it helps prevent Influenza.
- **Take the pneumococcal vaccine:** this prevents pneumonia for vulnerable groups (all adults aged 65 years and older; and individuals between 19 and 65 years if they are smokers, alcohol drinkers, suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, asthma, lung diseases, heart diseases or have decreased immunity).
- **Prevent common cold:** by washing your hands frequently (or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer), eating healthy food, exercising and getting enough sleep, and of course avoiding sick people.
- **Do not smoke:** smoking will damage your lungs and make it more difficult for your body to defend itself from germs.
- **Eat smart when invited to a party:** never skip meals before a party, avoid drinking beverages rich in sugar and calories, enjoy activities with other guests instead of eating, limit the variety of food that you take during a party and try to increase the portion of fruits and vegetables instead of high calorie food.
- **Practice safely winter sports (skiing, sledding, and snowboarding):** use protective gears that fit properly, put a helmet while practicing, stay warm and drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.



## Flu Vaccine

*Manar Shalak, MD*

Influenza or flu is an infectious disease caused by the influenza virus. It is transmitted from person to person through droplets disseminated while sneezing, coughing, and talking or by direct contact with the infected person. Influenza activity typically peaks between late December and early March. Complications can be severe and may lead to death in certain conditions. The risk of hospitalization is highest in persons 65 years or older, in very young children, and in those with chronic medical conditions.

Influenza can be prevented by getting annual influenza vaccine. It is ideally given in October but it can be offered until January. The vaccine is given as an injection in the muscles of the upper arms or buttocks. It can cause redness and soreness at the site of injection, fever, rash, headaches and body aches. The vaccine should be taken annually because the viruses are constantly changing from season to another. Everyone who is at least six months of age is eligible to take the vaccine (including pregnant women). However, the influenza vaccine is not approved for children younger than six months of age or people who have had a severe allergic reaction to the influenza vaccine. Many people who get sick after getting the vaccine do not actually have the flu; they have a common cold caused by other viruses. The vaccine does not cause the flu.

# ONE SHOT TODAY KEEPS THE FLU AWAY!

The AUB Wellness program, in collaboration with the Infection Control and Prevention Program, launched a Flu Vaccine Campaign on October 30, 2013 that extended until early December 2013. The aim of the campaign was to raise awareness for health care workers (being a highly vulnerable group) regarding the importance of receiving the flu vaccine. Advice to AUB employees was given by Family Medicine residents and the vaccine was administered by our nurses to those interested.



## TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

*Nisrine Makarem, MD*

In an effort to maintain and enhance the team spirit among members of the Department of Family Medicine, a team-building activity was held on the weekend of September 21-22, 2013 in Barouk, Shouf. The Saturday morning was allocated for team-building activities led by a group of licensed trainers. These activities took place in the beautiful area of the Shouf cedars, the largest of Lebanon nature reserves, which stretches from Dahr Al-Baidar in the north to Niha Mountain in the south. Doctors, nurses and administrative staff participated in group activities which aimed at enhancing trust, team spirit, and getting to know each other at a personal level. Despite the chilly weather and the occasional rain, the enthusiasm of the groups kept the activities heated!

Spouses and children joined for the remainder of the weekend which was allocated for relaxation and fun activities. A bonfire, musical entertainment and other sightseeing activities took place.

This weekend marked another yet successful team-building activity that further strengthened the bond among the department members and brought us all together as one big family.



# ADVICE FROM YOUR NURSE

For a healthy & successful school year!

*Nadine Chaaya, BSN*

Keep your child healthy and productive during this school year by following the below advice:

**Healthy eating:** Eating a healthy breakfast helps your child concentrate better on complex tasks, remembering information quicker and making fewer problem-solving errors. A healthy diet includes balanced meals of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, proteins and low-fat dairy products.

**Regular exercise:** Getting daily physical exercise benefits your child's mental health, increases his/her activity during the day, improves his/her sleep during the night and keeps him/her happy. Children need at least 60 minutes of exercise a day (jumping rope, push-ups and running).

**Updated immunization:** Make sure your child is up-to-date on his or her vaccines.

**Back Health:** A heavy weight in backpacks and a bad posture may cause strain injuries, aches in the back, arms, neck and wrists. Select backpacks made of lightweight material, with wide padded shoulder straps and a padded back. A child should not carry more than 10% to 15% of his body weight. While studying on a desk or using the computer, try to adjust the chair height, use a foot-rest and keep the forearm and arm of your child at the right angle.

**Personal hygiene:** advise your child to wash his/her hands frequently especially before and after eating, and after using the bathroom. Make sure your child washes his/her body every day if possible and wash his/her hair at least once weekly. This will prevent him/her from catching contagious diseases such as diarrhea and lice.



## DIVERSE ACTIVITIES

### Introducing Family Medicine Clinics Services to the AUB community

On October 11, 2013, the Department of Family Medicine organized a session to highlight the services its clinics provide to AUB faculty, staff and students. Similar sessions will be done on a periodic basis with the aim of raising awareness regarding the services that the AUB community can benefit from in the Family Medicine clinics.

### The 12th Annual Conference of the Lebanese Society of Family Medicine

Faculty members and residents in the Department of Family Medicine contributed to the 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Lebanese Society of Family Medicine that was held from October 25 through 27, 2013. A panel discussion was held as part of this conference regarding the main challenges faced by family doctors in Lebanon and the existing opportunities. This discussion was led by Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh, and attended by representatives from the Ministry of Public Health, Lebanese Order of Physicians, other third party payers and members of the society.

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## QUOTE OF THE SEASON

### An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

*Noura Kaadi, MD*

This well known expression is derived from the proverb "Eat an apple on going to bed, and you'll keep the doctor from earning his bread," which was published in 1866 in the English journal "Notes and Queries."

Apples have many natural benefits that can protect your health:

- Apples are rich in fibers, antioxidants, vitamin C, vitamin B complex, and minerals like calcium; they contain zero fat and cholesterol, and almost zero sodium.
- Apples decrease the risk of different types of cancer, heart diseases, stroke, asthma and diabetes.
- Apples prevent dementia and Alzheimer's disease.
- Apples decrease the level of bad cholesterol (LDL) and increase the level of good cholesterol (HDL).
- Apples improve bone and brain health.
- Apples boost the immune system of the body.
- Apples reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Make sure to eat an apple a day without peeling it, since most of its nutrients are in the peel (skin) or just below it.



## NEW SERVICES

### AUBMC launches the first palliative care inpatient consultation service in Lebanon

*Hibah Osman MD, MPH*

On August 1, 2013 AUBMC launched a palliative care consultation service, which covers patients admitted to the hospital and those treated in the emergency room. Plans to expand the service to the outpatient setting are under way. This service is covered by a multidisciplinary team that includes physicians, nurses, a mental health expert, a social worker and a pharmacist. The team focuses on the management of symptoms associated with serious illnesses such as pain and agitation. They also help patients and their families in setting goals of care and discharge planning when needed.

Palliative care is not restricted to end of life care only! Patients suffering from serious illnesses, whether curable or not, will benefit from palliative care. Providers of palliative care can help patients adjust to their new diagnosis on both the practical and emotional levels and can help control the distressing symptoms associated with the disease itself or its treatment.

The team can be reached on pager #1554.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay tuned for our announcements! Do not miss the below events:

### February 2014

- Healthy Cooking Contest
- Recognition of the World Cancer Day

### March 2014

- Celebrating the International Women's Day

### April 2014

- Wellness Fair

# FLOWER OF THE SEASON

## The Tulip

*Fadila Naji, MD*

Tulips are members of the same family of lilies; they differ in their colors, shapes and number of petals. More than 200 subtypes of tulips exist worldwide. The most popular tulips are the red ones, while the most famous tulip is called the "Queen of the Night." Almost black in color (very deep purple), this particular tulip symbolizes strength and power. Yet, the tulip remains a symbol of perfect love or a declaration of love.

Do you know that the name "tulip" is the result of a vocabulary/ language mistake? Due to an error by a translator for a Flemish ambassador, the Turkish "tülbent" (turban, like the hat) word was given to the tulip. It was then introduced in Europe as tulipam, which, later, led to the Latin "tulipa."

Tulip cultivation started in Central Asia a thousand years ago during the era of the Ottoman Empire. It was then introduced to Europe in the mid-16th century, and the Netherlands later adopted the tulip as its symbolic flower. Several North American cities, often with Dutch influences, as well as Turkey and Holland, have annual tulip festivals.



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# OUR HEALING NATURE

## Honey

*Samia Badr, MD*

An old-age remedy, natural honey (an all natural sweetener) is considered to have nutritional and health benefits. Its therapeutic properties have been ascribed to its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant potential. Honey is used as an alternative treatment in children older than six years to soothe coughs (especially nighttime coughs), to help manage diarrhea when added to the oral rehydration solution, and to heal wounds. Aside from clinical trials that have demonstrated some efficacy in suppressing coughs, claims for honey's healthfulness are unproven. However, it is advisable not to give raw honey to infants less than one year old in order to avoid botulism.

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# STRANGE BUT TRUE!

## Can Men Feel Pregnant?

*Rim Taleb, MD*

Men can experience symptoms similar to those of their pregnant wives. This is known as Couvade syndrome, sympathetic pregnancy or "pregnant dad syndrome." The husband of a pregnant woman might suffer from more than 30 symptoms that his wife can have such as back pain, heartburn, bloating, weight gain, diarrhea, constipation, headache, irritability, mood swings, cravings, nausea, breast enlargement, leg cramps, and disturbed sleep pattern. In extreme cases, symptoms can even include labor pains and depression after delivery.

## WHAT IF?

Ms. Suad Jawhar is a clinical assistant in the Department of Family Medicine. She joined AUB in 1974 and has been working in the Family Medicine department since its establishment in 1979. Get to know Ms. Suad better through this brief interview.

**Q: If you were to be a kid again for one day, what would you spend it doing?**

**A:** If I were to be a kid again for a day, I would spend it with my friends in school. These are the moments full of innocence and joy.

**Q: If you could choose to stay at a certain age forever, what age would it be?**

**A:** I would stay at the age of 30. At this age, one is active, full of energy and able to enjoy life while being mature enough to make the right decisions.

**Q: If you could witness any event past, present or future, what would it be?**

**A:** I would like to live again in pre-1975 Lebanon. These were the times of peace.

**Q: If you had to work on only one project for the next year, what would it be?**

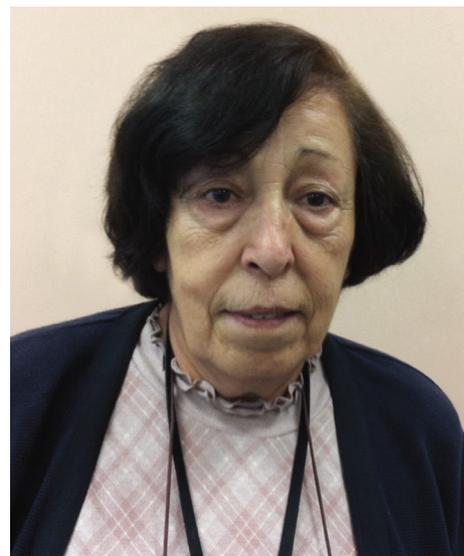
**A:** I will be retiring this coming September, so my plan is to open a small library in my lovely village Kayfoun in Aley.

**Q: If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would you meet?**

**A:** I wish I could meet my parents just to tell them how much I love and miss them.

**Q: If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?**

**A:** I would give all the money to orphans because I believe they deserve all the best.



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**Chairman:**

Ghassan Hamadeh, MD, CPE

For any queries or comments,  
please contact us on:

Email: [famed@aub.edu.lb](mailto:famed@aub.edu.lb)

Telephone: 01-374374

ext. 3020 or 01-749210