



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
MEDICAL CENTER

المركز الطبي في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت

OBGYN

Newsletter

ISSUE NO.47/ Summer–Autumn 2024

aubmc.care





They were difficult and uncertain times for all of us, and hence it was the decision to put the summer and fall issues on hold. But we must persevere, move forward and "... accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." – Martin Luther King, Jr. In this summer/autumn issue, we highlight the honoring ceremony in memory of two of our late alumni that was held in December, share wonderful news about the eligibility of graduates from our program to board certification without the hassle to repeat their OBS/ GYN residency in the US, and – as promised – reveal more photos from our graduation dinner held during summer. In addition, you will be able to go over some departmental news that came about during the past few months and enjoy the "Did You Know?" section which provides interesting random facts. We hope that you enjoy reading this issue and wish you a happy new year full of love, health, and prosperity.

*Sincerely,
Anwar Nassar, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief*



Table of contents

HONORING CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF TWO ALUMNI	04
PATHWAY TO BOARD CERTIFICATION	05
OBS/GYN GRADUATION 2024: A MAGICAL NIGHT	06
CELEBRATING A MENTOR WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE	09
RESIDENTS' NEWS	09
PROVIDING FREE HEALTHCARE TO DISPLACED WOMEN	10
WISH PROGRAM ACTIVITIES	11
PUBLICATIONS	12
MEET THE ALUMNI	12
CONGRATULATIONS	12
ACADEMIC NEWS	13
DID YOU KNOW?	13
IN THE SPOTLIGHT	14

HONORING CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF TWO ALUMNI

On December 12, 2024, the Department of OBS/GYN and AUB community at large gathered to celebrate the lives of two esteemed physicians, Drs. Roland Tannous and Ralph Papas, who left us at the peak of their careers and yet will always be remembered for their dedication to medicine and their lasting impact on the lives they touched during their short yet fruitful journey.

In his inaugural speech, AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri stressed on the importance of philanthropy and collective effort in achieving goals and preserving legacies. Drs. Tannous and Papas “were not just physicians; they were compassionate leaders, genuine innovators, and tireless advocates for better patient care,” he stated. Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Vice President for Medical Affairs Raymond Sawaya highlighted the fact that both physicians “embodied the values of excellence in healthcare that AUB strives to instill in its students and trainees,” and thanked Dr. Anwar Nassar for being the engine behind this initiative.

An emotional documentary was then projected that included very touching testimonies from family members and friends, who reflected on the human aspect and fine qualities of Drs. Tannous and Papas. It was even more touching to those in the audience who knew that December 12 was the birthday of Dr. Papas.

The ceremony was concluded by Dr. Anwar Nassar, chairperson of the Department of OBS/GYN, who announced the establishment of two endowed awards in the names of the late physicians. These awards will be distributed annually to stellar OBS/GYN residents who have demonstrated excellence in research or teaching and who exemplify the core values that Drs. Tannous and Papas embodied. Certificates were then distributed to Dr. Lara Nahouli, the recipient of the [Dr. Roland Jamil Tannous Award](#), and Dr. Joanna Khalifeh, the recipient of the [Dr. Ralph Said Papas Award](#). These awards were the result of a concerted effort of Dr. Tannous and Dr. Papas’ friends, families, colleagues, and classmates who joined together independently to establish those two awards to celebrate their lives and ensure that they will always be remembered at their alma mater. A final word of gratitude goes to those who helped make these awards a reality, and a special thank you to Dr. Rani Sarkis, a classmate of Dr. Papas who was the driving force behind establishing the award in his name.

[Honoring the Lives and Legacies of Dr. Roland Tannous and Dr. Ralph Papas](#)



PATHWAY TO BOARD CERTIFICATION



Dr. Marco Mouannes (OBS/GYN '20) shares his story as the first graduate from our program who became eligible to certification by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG) without having to repeat his residency in the US.

Dr. Mouannes admits that “joining an ACGME-I accredited program strongly influenced my decision to pursue my residency at AUBMC.” At the time, there was no certainty about the potential benefits of the ACGME-I accreditation, but the process was underway.

While doing his fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility in New York, he was informed by Dr. Labib Ghulmiyyah, the former residency program director, that the ABOG had approved an alternative board certification pathway for graduates of ACGME-I accredited programs. This pathway includes the following requirements:

- Graduation from a four-year ACGME-I accredited residency program
- Full ECFMG certification
- Obtaining unrestricted admission privileges in both OBS/GYN at a US-based hospital (not a private center) for at least two years (excluding fellowship training)
- Active medical license in the US for at least two years (any state)
- Three letters of recommendation from board-certified OBS/GYNs who have worked closely with the candidate
- Achieving OBS/GYN accreditation in the candidate’s country of training (i.e. registered as an active OBS/GYN member of the Lebanese Order of Physicians)

Once these criteria are met, the candidate submits an online application, which is reviewed in a monthly board meeting. Upon approval, the candidate becomes eligible to take the written qualifying exam (QE) of the ABOG. After passing the QE, candidates have up to eight years to sit for the certifying exam (CE), which involves submitting cases (OBS, GYN, and office-based) for oral evaluation. While the pathway itself is straightforward, meeting the criteria can be challenging. The biggest hurdles are obtaining a license to practice medicine in the US and securing hospital admission privileges. “In my case, I was fortunate enough to obtain active medical licenses in both New York and Connecticut, as well as secure an attending position in Connecticut by June 2021, just a 45-minute commute from New York, all while completing my fellowship,” Dr. Mouannes states. He submitted his application in September 2023, passed the QE in July 2024, and is expected to sit for the CE in October 2025. “Without a doubt, graduating from an ACGME-I accredited OBS/GYN program at AUBMC has been a transformative opportunity that has set me on the path to ABOG. The training I received at AUBMC, as well as the mentorship and leadership of our faculty, are on par with, if not superior to, many programs I have encountered here in the US,” Dr. Mouannes concluded.

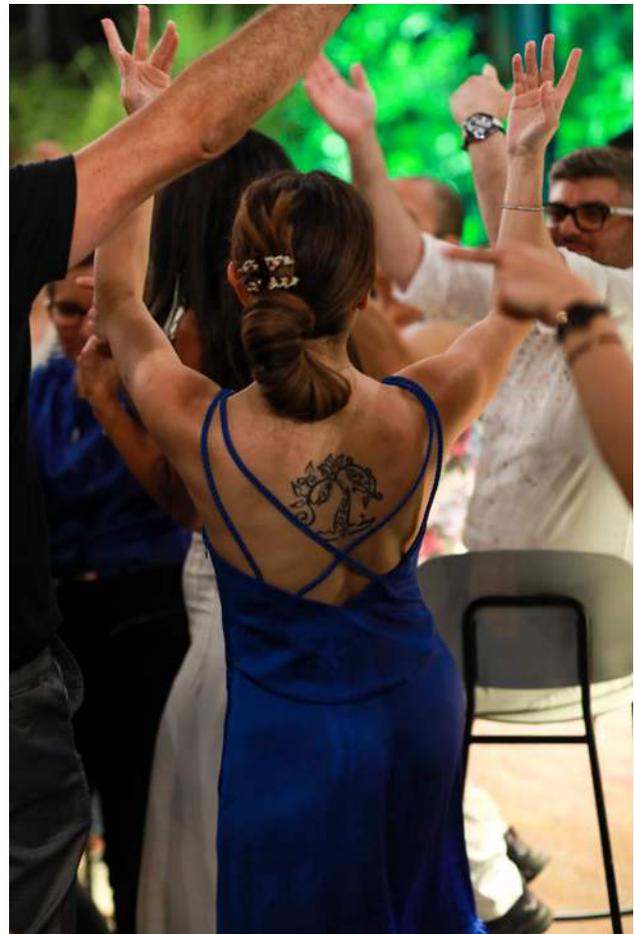


OBS/GYN GRADUATION 2024: A MAGICAL NIGHT

We promised in the last issue to share more images from that exquisite night. Here you go.







CELEBRATING A MENTOR WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The residents recently gathered on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, to celebrate their program director, Dr. Dina Chamsy, a leader whose dedication, compassion, and mentorship have profoundly shaped their journey. With a unique ability to inspire and support, Dr. Chamsy has created an environment where residents feel valued, motivated, and empowered to thrive. This heartfelt celebration was a true reflection of the deep respect and gratitude the residents have for their exceptional leader.



RESIDENTS' NEWS

Dr. Alaa Daher (PGY 4) participated in the 53rd Annual Global Congress on Minimally Invasive Gynecological Surgery (MIGS) that was held on November 16–19, 2024 in New Orleans, US, accompanied by Dr. Nabil El Khoury. This renowned event provided an invaluable opportunity to explore the latest innovations and groundbreaking research in the field. It also fostered connections with global experts, offering a dynamic environment for professional growth.

Dr. Ali Safadi (PGY 3) gave a lecture on November 15, 2024, to displaced pregnant women about key pregnancy milestones and warning signs to watch for. This was part of an initiative by the WISH Program aimed to empower patients with essential knowledge to ensure a safer pregnancy and timely access to care.



PROVIDING FREE HEALTHCARE TO DISPLACED WOMEN

In response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis caused by the Israeli War on Lebanon, the Department of OBS/GYN, with support from HER Fund and as part of the initiative launched by the Primary Health Care Center at the Department of Family Medicine, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, started offering free healthcare services to displaced women. Starting on October 26, 2024, and running through December 14, 2024, weekly Saturday clinics were held. These clinics, staffed by AUBMC OBS/GYN attendings with support from residents, nursing students, and members of the OBS/GYN Interest Group (OGIG), offered free services that included prenatal checkups, well-woman screenings (Pap smears and mammograms), and care for a variety of gynecological conditions.

The clinics also addressed broader challenges, such as period poverty, by distributing sanitary pads to displaced women to help manage menstrual hygiene. Several patients are also benefiting from the significantly reduced cost of delivery (less than 50 percent of the original cost). This initiative was made possible through HER Fund, a charitable organization supporting women with critical healthcare needs, and through the unwavering backing of AUBMC's leadership. Their commitment ensured the success of this program and underscored the institution's dedication to serving vulnerable populations.

The overwhelming turnout, which doubled from the first to the second session, reflected the significant need for these services and the community's appreciation for this effort. This program highlights the collective efforts of all involved to provide much-needed care and support for displaced women in Lebanon.



WISH PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

During the past few months, the WISH Program team was very active and conducted several activities:

- A total of 15 sessions for 402 healthcare providers on sexual rights, inclusivity, gender equity, and sexual health. The team also conducted 42 training sessions in shelters, reaching to 596 individuals, addressing displaced people on issues on self-care, personal hygiene, menstrual health, community support, and infections.
- Under the crisis, and as director of WISH Program, Dr. Faysal El Kak conducted eight training sessions on sexual reproductive issues at times of conflict reaching out to around 2,500 healthcare providers.
- Training 10 young people as “champions” to act as community support workers among the displaced community in 12 shelters, in collaboration with OXFAM.
- Collaborated with the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at AUB on WISH Asfari Talk Series (WAITS) and hosted two international speakers.
- As part of the cervical cancer elimination and HPV vaccination project, the WISH team has reached out to more than 700 students and AUB staff through participatory sessions and outdoor activities.



PUBLICATIONS

Singh S, Tandon S, Esiet UU, Kågesten AE, Gruskin S, Shaikat SM, Bain LE, El Kak F, *et al.* Advancing sexual health and well-being for all. *Bull World Health Organ* 2024 Dec 1;102(12):843–843A.

Obeid PJ, Yammine P, El-Nakat H, Kassab R, Tannous T, Nasr Z, Maarawi T, Dahdah, N, El Safadi A, *et al.* Organ-On-a-Chip devices: Technology progress and challenges. *Chembiochem* 2024 Dec 2;25(23):e202400580.

Chamseddine N, Aghar HI, Haidar Z, Aoud G, Ibrahim A, Ghazeeri G. Polymicrobial necrotizing fasciitis after a primary cesarean section in a low-risk patient: A case report and literature review. *Case Reports Int J Surg Case Rep* 2024 Nov;124:110326.

MEET THE ALUMNI

Dr. Nabil Daou received his MD from *Faculté de Médecine Xavier-Bichat, Paris VII*, in 1991. He then completed a four-year residency in OBS/GYN at AUB in 1997 followed by a one-year fellowship at Kings College under the mentorship of Prof. Kypros Nicolaides in 1998, where he trained in antenatal diagnosis and maternal-fetal medicine. He worked till the end of 2021 at Geitaoui Hospital and Central Military Hospital and then left for France during the economic crisis and is working to this date in the private sector as an obstetrician and gynecologist. On a personal note, he is married to Natacha Petit, and they have three children, Chloé, Celine, and Carl. They are all working in France after they graduated from universities.

Dr. Hassan Hamze completed his residency training in OBS/GYN in 2022 at AUB. He then pursued advanced training through a fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) at the University of Montreal in Canada. Currently, Dr. Hamze serves as an attending physician specializing in obstetrics, gynecology, and fertility care in Canada, while preparing for his return to Lebanon to continue his medical career and contribute to the field in his homeland. Throughout his career, Dr. Hamze has demonstrated a strong commitment to academic excellence, presenting his research at numerous esteemed international conferences, including ESHRE, ASRM, and CFAS. He is married to Mrs. Sara Khamees, who shares his dedication to family and professional growth. Together, they are proud parents to two daughters, Heaven and Maelle.

CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Faysal El Kak was recently inaugurated as the president of the East Mediterranean Federation of Sexual Health (EMFeSH), one of the five federations of the World Association of Sexual Health (WAS). This will promote the work of the WISH Program in the department. Congratulations.

Dr. Abdallah Adra was inducted as a new member of the prestigious International Academy of Perinatal Medicine (IAPM) during the 14th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Academy, that was held in New York City from June 26–30, 2024. The ceremony at the Metropolitan Club saw the induction of five new members from all over the world. Congratulations.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Ali El Safadi, a PGY-III, was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society on June 12, 2024. This prestigious honor recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional humanism and compassion in medicine. Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement.



ACADEMIC NEWS

Dr. Anwar Nassar was invited to review three research proposals submitted to the Medical Research Center at Hamad Medical Corporation. These proposals tackled topics within the field of his expertise. He also participated in the virtual Consensus Meeting titled "Innovations in postpartum hemorrhage management," that was organized by Organon and was held virtually on October 31, 2024.

As a member of the Arab Board and as an elected member of the Maternal Fetal Medicine–Arab Board Division, Dr. Ihab Usta was invited to a two-day meeting in Amman, Jordan, to discuss the criteria for establishing a fellowship program in a specific center including number of beds, qualifications of supervisors, a fully organized fellowship program, and educational activities. A new meeting will be set soon to prepare questions for fellows for OSCE and a written and oral examination.

Dr. Abdallah Adra was an invited speaker at the 8th International Congress of the Iraqi Society of OBS/GYN that was held on September 12–14, 2024, in Baghdad, Iraq where he presented on "Navigating recurrent pregnancy loss: Evidence-based care." He was also invited to the OSCAR 4 Congress on Women's Health, where he delivered an online presentation about "How postpartum hemorrhage unmet needs affects patients, communities and healthcare delivery."

Dr. Tony Bazi was invited to present at the 11th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Pelviperineology that was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 2, 2024, to speak about "Recurrent urinary infections in women."

Dr. Faysal El Kak participated as an invited speaker in several international conferences including the 17th Congress of European Society of Contraception that was held in Bilbao, Spain, on May 1–4, 2024, the 17th European Federation Sexology Congress that was held in Bologna, Italy, on May 23–26, 2024, and the 5th International Consultation on Sexual Medicine International Consultation in Sexual Medicine that was held in Madrid, Spain, on June 28–29, 2024. He also participated in a training course on Female Sexual Dysfunction, organized by ISSWSH and ISSM, Vietnam, during October 2024.

Dr. Sandrine Atallah chaired a session about the psychological and interpersonal dimensions of sexual function and dysfunction during the 5th International Consultation on Sexual Medicine that was held in Madrid, Spain, on June 28–29, 2024. She was also an invited speaker at the 25th World Meeting on Sexual Medicine that was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on September 26–29, 2024, and at the 8th Annual Congress of the Middle East Society for Sexual Medicine that was held in Cairo, Egypt, on December 5–6, 2024.

DID YOU KNOW?

Identical twins don't have the same fingerprints. Multiple signaling molecules along with slight differences in the shape of the finger and the rate of its growth interact to create those unique variations.

The first time the word "period" was used on TV in reference to menstruation was 1985 during a Tampax commercial.

Finland is the happiest country on Earth for six years in a row. This might not be surprising, given that Finland is the home of Santa Claus, reindeer, and one sauna for every 1.6 people.

Medical errors are the third leading cause of death in the USA.

Wearing a tie can reduce cerebral blood flow by up to 7.5 percent, which is what makes men feel dizzy, nauseous, and experience headache if they tighten their ties.

The pope can't be an organ donor because his body, which must be buried intact, belongs to the universal Catholic Church.

There is enough gold inside Earth to coat the planet in 46 cm of gold.

The current American flag was designed by Bob Heft, a high school student during a school project in 1958.

Ingesting large quantities of nutmeg can cause hallucinations due to the mind-altering effects of myristicin, a natural compound present in nutmeg.

The Olympic world record for the longest human long jump (8.95 m by Mike Powell in 1991) is greater than the world record for longest horse long jump (6.10 m by horse Extra Dry in 1900).

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



GEORGINE AWAD

Q: When did you join the Department of OBS/GYN?

A: I joined the department in 2016.

Q: What is your title?

A: I am a senior embryologist (certified from the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology).

Q: What are your main duties?

A: I oversee all the in-vitro fertilization laboratory techniques including embryo handling and transfer, embryo/egg/sperm cryopreservation and thawing, and embryo biopsy for preimplantation genetic testing. I also manage laboratory operations, ensuring adherence to strict protocols, safety standards, and quality control measures and discuss embryo development progress with patients.

Q: Prior to joining this department, what were you doing?

A: I was the chief senior embryologist at Levant Hospital and Centre Medical de la Femme.

Q: If you were not doing this job, what would you have chosen to do?

A: I would have chosen to be a pediatrician.

Q: What is most enjoyable about your job?

A: One of the most fulfilling aspects of being an embryologist is the opportunity to help couples achieve their dreams of having children.

Q: What do you find most challenging about your job?

A: Dealing with the high emotional stakes involved in fertility treatment can be challenging. Managing your own emotions while supporting patients through their fertility journey requires empathy and emotional resilience. The pressure to maintain accuracy and quality throughout these procedures can be intense, especially when every decision can impact the outcome of a fertility treatment cycle.

Q: If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you choose to go and why?

A: I would visit Spain because of its blend of cultural richness, natural beauty, and vibrant lifestyle.

Q: What do you enjoy doing during your free time?

A: Spending quality time with my kids and cooking. Trying out new recipes and sharing meals with family and friends is something I find enjoyable.

Q: What is something that most people don't know about you?

A: One thing that most people may not realize about me is that despite appearing strong on the outside, I am quite emotional and sensitive on the inside.

Q: What is your point of weakness?

A: My kids.

Q: Who is your favorite artist?

A: Fairuz.

Q: What is your favorite song these days?

A: Lyawm yawmi by Ziad Burji.

Q: What is the movie or book you recently enjoyed watching or reading?

A: The movie that I enjoyed watching is The Pursuit of Happiness. This movie highlights the sacrifices parents are willing to make for their child and the importance of family support.

