



AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT  
MEDICAL CENTER

المركز الطبي في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت

# OBGYN

## Newsletter

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We are back with a rich issue packed with news and messages of hope. In this combined winter/spring issue, we highlight the honoring ceremony of Dr. Karam Karam that was held in April, a few days following his birthday, and announce the recipients of the Dr. Roland Tannous and Dr. Ralph Papas Awards for 2025. For those who missed attending the ceremonies of Dr. Karam and of Drs. Papas and Tannous, you will have the opportunity to watch them now. In addition, you will be introduced to a new addition of our department, Dr. Lina Taha, a reproductive endocrinology and infertility specialist who has just joined the department. You will also be able to go over some recent remarkable news about our residents and enjoy the reader's favorite section, "Did You Know?" which provides fascinating random facts. Don't miss the new look of the "Meet the Alumni" section. We hope that you enjoy reading this issue, which is published in spring, season of hope and contrast and a time of renewal, change, and anticipation.

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



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## 2024 CHRISTMAS DINNER: FIRST OUTING AFTER THE WAR

On December 21, 2024, in what marked both a celebration of Christmas and a return to simple joys, the residency program director, residents, and staff came together for their first outing—a heartfelt getaway following the end of a devastating war. The dinner was held at Liza's Restaurant in Achrafieh, Beirut, in a warm and festive setting, offering a much-needed opportunity to connect outside the hospital walls. This gathering not only celebrated the holiday spirit, but also reinforced the sense of camaraderie and team spirit, enhancing collaboration and mutual support within the department.





## A WELL-DESERVED BREAK DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN

On March 27, 2025, during the holy month of Ramadan, our faculty members and residents gathered to break their fast with a delicious iftar, surrounded by warm company and comforting flavors. The air was filled with laughter, lively conversations, and a much-needed sense of normalcy. It was more than just a meal—it was a celebration of togetherness and moments of collective healing and shared gratitude.





## CONGRATULATIONS

The Department of OBS/GYN would like to congratulate Dr. George Hatoum for receiving the "Highest CREOG Score" Award for the academic year 2024-25, during his first year of residency. This award is given to residents who achieve the highest percentile compared to their peers at the same level of training.

Congratulations to Dr. Hanan Aghar (PGY IV) and Dr. Ali El Safadi (PGY III), our first-place winners during the Departmental Resident Research Day that was held on Saturday, April 26, 2025. Dr. Aghar was recognized in the Original Research category and Dr. El Safadi in the Proposal/QI Project category. Well done to you both on your outstanding presentations.

Dr. Ali Khalil was the recipient of the 2025 "National Faculty Award for Excellence in Resident Education," presented by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Council on Resident Education in Obstetrics and Gynecology (CREOG).

This honor is based on voting by OB/GYN residents and acknowledges his vital role in their education. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Dr. Reem Abdallah on her promotion from assistant professor to associate professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology in the Physician-Educator Track (Track 2), as one of 13 Faculty of Medicine faculty members who applied during the 2024-25 promotion and tenure cycle.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Huriyah El Moussa (PGY III) was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. This prestigious honor recognizes individuals who exemplify humanistic and professional patient care and can serve as role models and mentors throughout their medical careers. Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement.





## A SPECIAL AWARD TO A SPECIAL PERSON

Congratulations to Christiane Sobhieh, the nurse manager at the Women's Health Center, Dr. Khaled Idriss Delivery Suite, and Haifa Idriss ART Unit, on receiving the Financial Performance Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions over the past year. This honor reflects not only her unwavering dedication and professionalism, but also her innovative approach to financial planning, process improvement, and project execution. The award ceremony took place on January 23, 2025, at the Issam Fares Lecture Hall, where colleagues from the department gathered to celebrate with Christiane this well-deserved achievement. We thank Christiane for her continued exemplary service to the department and institution and congratulate her once again on this milestone in her bright career.





## THE FIRST KMC RESIDENT ROTATION AGREEMENT

We are proud to announce that the Department of OBS/GYN was the first at AUB to finalize its Program Letter of Agreement with Keserwan Medical Center (KMC). As part of this collaboration, our residents began their rotations at KMC on February 10, 2025, under the direct supervision of Dr. Elie Hobeika, the site director, gaining valuable hands-on experience in a new clinical setting. This milestone will provide enriching learning opportunities, expose residents to a wider range of obstetric and gynecologic cases, and help meet ACGME-I accreditation requirements. It reflects our commitment to excellence in medical education and the continuous growth of our residency program.



## 2025 MATCH: TWO OF OUR CHIEF RESIDENTS

We are proud to announce that in the 2025 match cycle, two of our chief residents who plan to pursue a career in the US by repeating their residency have successfully matched. Dr. Hanan Aghar will be joining Inova Fairfax Hospital in Northern Virginia, and Dr. Zeinab Haidar will be joining Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.



## THE LATEST ADDITION TO OUR FAMILY



We are pleased to welcome Dr. Lina El Taha to the Department of OBS/GYN as an instructor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology with a specialization in reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

An AUB alumna, Dr. El Taha brings a wealth of clinical expertise and academic excellence, having completed her residency and fellowship training at AUBMC, followed by an ACGME-I accredited fellowship at Sidra Medicine, Qatar.

She has been recognized for her academic and clinical achievements, including the Resident of the Year Award and the SHARP diploma, and has contributed extensively to research and international academic forums.

Dr. El Taha will be involved in patient care at the Women's Health Center (WHC) and the Haifa Idriss ART Unit, while playing an essential role in teaching and mentoring trainees across all levels. Her clinical experience and dedication to women's health will be a valuable addition to our team. Dr. El Taha can be reached at her office, extension 5613, or at the WHC on 01 75 96 19, for appointments. Please join us in warmly welcoming Dr. El Taha to her new role.

## 2025 CREOG EXAM: EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS

AUB's OBS/GYN residents have once again achieved exceptional results in the 2025 CREOG In-Service Training Exam, scoring two standard deviations above the international mean—an achievement that highlights their dedication, rigorous training, and the strength of AUB's OBS/GYN program. Despite the ongoing war and political instability, they remained focused on their medical education, proving their resilience and reinforcing AUB's position as a leading institution for OBS/GYN training among the 17 international and 310 US-based programs that participated in this year's exam.

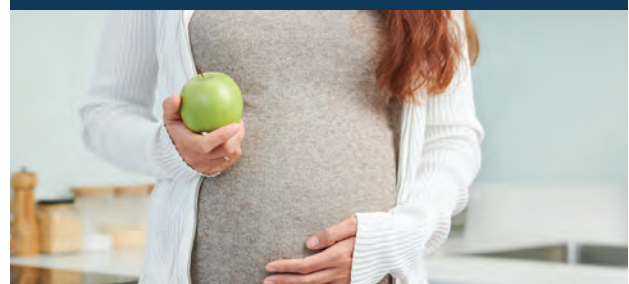
## PATIENT EDUCATION SESSIONS

Our postgraduate PGY3 and PGY4 residents are actively contributing to the planning and delivery of patient education sessions conducted for pregnant women. Their involvement includes preparing evidence-based material, leading group discussions, and addressing patients' questions on prenatal care, nutrition, expectations during delivery, and postpartum recovery. These sessions aim to empower expectant mothers with the knowledge and confidence to navigate pregnancy and childbirth safely, and they are regularly done in collaboration with the nursing staff, dietitians, and psychologists.



Start your journey of knowledge with our  
**Patient Educational Sessions**

### MY PATH TO MOTHERHOOD



## STILL LEADING, STILL HEALING: CELEBRATING DR. KARAM'S 53 YEARS OF SERVICE

On April 10, 2025, the American University of Beirut (AUB) and its medical center (AUBMC) hosted a deeply moving ceremony, honoring Dr. Karam Karam for his remarkable 53 years of service to AUB, Lebanon, and beyond. Organized by the Department of OBS/GYN, the event brought together a distinguished audience including AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri, Dean Raymond Sawaya, Chairperson Anwar Nassar, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, and other national figures, faculty, and colleagues, all there to celebrate a true giant in medicine and education. The tributes reflected not only Dr. Karam's enduring professional excellence, but also his unmatched humanity, wisdom, and humility. President Khuri noted, "Your work will continue to influence the medical field and touch lives for generations. But what they will remember most is your kindness, your wisdom, and your belief in others." Dean Sawaya called his journey "a masterclass in humanity, humility, and healing," while Dr. Nassar added, "Your achievements are like jewels on your crown." He went on to say, "From you, we learned how to be among the best, while remaining humble and elegant, loving and lovable." The highlight of the evening came as Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, on behalf of the president of the Lebanese Republic, presented Dr. Karam with the Lebanese Order of Merit.

Dr. Karam, deeply moved, expressed his heartfelt gratitude: "For those who entrusted me with their praise, a debt, all my life I will carry. How can I repay, when not enough is left for me?" His words captured the humility and grace that have defined his career. This celebration was a tribute to a living legacy. Dr. Karam continues to shape the minds and values of future generations with the same unwavering commitment that has defined his career for over five decades. His dedication stands as a testament to the values of AUB: excellence, compassion, service, and leadership. To witness this remarkable celebration and hear the full tributes, you can watch the ceremony here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpKOUhLPhMI>.















For those who missed the honoring ceremony that was held on December 12, 2024, to celebrate the lives of two colleagues, Drs. Roland Tannous and Ralph Papas, here are highlights from this emotional event (<https://youtu.be/QOhiMx8kHHA>). Drs. Tannous and Papas will always be remembered for their dedication and impact on everyone who had the privilege of getting to know them.

We are pleased to announce that this year's recipient of the Dr. Roland Jamil Tannous Award is Dr. Yasmina Salam (PGY II), and the recipient of the Dr. Ralph Said Papas Award is Dr. Ali El Safadi (PGY III).





## CARACALLA PERFORMS IN SUPPORT OF HER Fund

On May 1, 2025, the Department of OBS/GYN proudly organized a special performance by the renowned Caracalla Dance Theatre, presenting their iconic production of 1001 Nights in support of HER Fund at AUBMC. Held under the patronage of our department, the event brought together faculty, staff, supporters, and art enthusiasts from across the AUB and AUBMC communities and beyond for an unforgettable evening of culture and purpose.

The performance captivated the audience with its vibrant choreography, artistic brilliance, and compelling storytelling, transforming the night into a celebration of both heritage and hope. Most importantly, all proceeds from the event were directed to the HER Fund, which for the past 11 years has been providing financial assistance to underprivileged female patients in need of critical gynecologic and obstetric care.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this remarkable evening, from the dedicated performers to the generous attendees, whose presence and support made this event truly memorable and most importantly to Alissar and Evan Caracalla for their continuous support.

Together, we will always Heal HER, Embrace HER, and Remember HER.





## ACADEMIC NEWS

Dr. Sandrine Atallah was an invited speaker and chair at the European Society for Sexual Medicine (ESSM) 2025 conference, held in Vienna, Austria, on February 20–22, 2025. She contributed to sessions on depression and sexuality, sexual violence in conflict, male hypoactive sexual desire disorder, and psychological counseling for prostate cancer patients. She was also appointed chairperson of the International Society for Sexual Medicine (ISSM) Membership Committee, co-leader of the ISSM–Movember Webinar Series, and mentor for the ISSM Future Leaders Program.

Dr. Faysal El Kak was an invited speaker at the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey (MENAT) Master Trainers' Forum, that was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2024. He participated as a member of the expert group on human papillomavirus (HPV) prevention in the development process of the Human HPV Policies Atlas for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, under the European Policy Forum (EPF), that was held in Riyadh, KSA, in January 2025. He was also appointed associate editor of the Sexual Medicine Reviews Journal for the period from 2025 to 2028 and was selected to serve as a member of the Sexual Health and Well-Being Advisory Group (SWAG) of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva. Finally, Dr. El Kak conducted and facilitated a regional workshop on menopause policy, organized by the WISH program and the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at AUB, on February 27, 2025.



## PUBLICATIONS

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## WISH PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

AUB (through the Women's Integrated Sexual Health program [WISH program]) was an invited observer in the Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development, and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP), the main arm of WHO work. The meeting, which was held on April 29–30, 2025, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, included the main funding countries and the main decision-making agencies. This is a testimony of the long standing distinguished relationship between AUB and the WISH program with WHO.

In April 2025, the WISH program launched a campaign to raise awareness about HPV and its link to several cancers, including cervical, throat, and anal cancers.


The WISH program team conducted a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop a training and health promotion program targeting students and counselors, as part of the Women's Integrated Sexual Health–Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (WISH–OXFAM) Project.



Women Integrated Sexual Health ProgramAMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

# VACCINATE TO ELIMINATE HPV

Together, We Can End Cervical Cancer

Scan to visit our website

120+

Women in Lebanon Are diagnosed with cervical cancer annually

59%

Of those lives are LOST every year





## MEET THE ALUMNI

Dr. Samer Cheaib graduated from AUBMC in 2008 as an OBS/GYN and pursued a subspecialty in Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) at Inova Fairfax Hospital in Virginia, USA, completing his fellowship in 2011. During his training and the year that followed, he served as an assistant clinical professor of OBS/GYN at George Washington University School of Medicine (July 2010–June 2012). In 2012, Dr. Cheaib moved to Dubai, where he dedicated his career to advancing MFM. As the director of OBS/GYN and an MFM consultant at Fakhri IVF for over a decade, he played a key role in shaping women's healthcare in the region. He was elected as a member of the oral assessment panel for OBS/GYN licensing in Dubai, where he helps evaluate and guide aspiring specialists. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Cheaib was recognized as the "Ambassador of Hope" after a powerful and heartwarming moment went viral—a newborn he had just delivered instinctively grabbed his mask and pulled it from his face. That image resonated globally, symbolizing hope and a brighter future beyond the pandemic. While his career has been incredibly fulfilling, his greatest blessing is his family. His wife, Haya, is a pharmacist, and together they have two wonderful children—son Kian, who is two years old, and daughter Sia, who is seven months old. They are his greatest source of joy and inspiration.



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



**RAYANE MOHAMAD DIMACHKIE**

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

A: I joined in May 2017.

**Q: What is your title?**

A: I am a registered nurse (RN) at the Dr. Khaled Idriss Delivery Suite.

**Q: What are your main duties?**

A: My main duties are monitoring the mother and baby, assisting with normal vaginal and cesarean deliveries as a circulating nurse, providing emotional support and education to mother during delivery, providing postpartum care, and collaborating with the healthcare team.

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

A: Prior to that, I was still pursuing my undergraduate education.

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

A: If I were not a nurse, I would have chosen to be a counselor or therapist.

**Q: What is most enjoyable about your job?**

A: The most rewarding part is witnessing the tears of joy in the eyes of mothers and fathers each time their babies are born children.

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

A: Managing unexpected complications, such as fetal distress or bleeding, which may require performing a life-saving cesarean delivery.

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

A: I would choose Turkey for its stunning natural landscapes, rich cuisine, and the renowned warmth and hospitality of its people.

**Q: What is your point of weakness?**

A: My point of weakness is my kids.

**Q: Who is your favorite artist?**

A: My favorite artist is Ziad Bourji.

**Q: What is your favorite song these days?**

A: These days I am constantly listening to *Ma Fi Ahdam* for Ziad Bourji.

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

A: I have recently watched the movie *Bahebak* for Tamer Hosny, and I enjoyed it a lot.





## DID YOU KNOW?

Botanically, bananas are classified as berries, while strawberries, which are considered aggregate fruits because they result from multiple ovaries of a single flower, aren't.

The number of possible unique chess games is 10 to the power of 120 ( $10^{120}$ ) which is far greater than the number of atoms in the observable universe estimated at  $10^{80}$ .

Oymyakon in Siberia, Russia, holds the record for the coldest inhabited place on earth with the lowest officially recorded temperature reaching  $-89.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  in 1933.

The shortest commercial flight in the world operates between the islands of Westray and Papa Westray in Scotland covering a distance of 2.7 kilometers and lasting only 57 seconds.

In 1896, the war between the British Empire and the Sultanate of Zanzibar ended in a record time of 38 minutes, making it the shortest war in history.

A day on Venus (one trip around its axis) is equivalent to ~243 Earth days, making it longer than a Venus year (one trip around the sun), which is ~225 Earth days. What is also fascinating about Venus is that it is the only planet in the solar system that spins clockwise.

Cows are social animals and have best friends that they enjoy spending time with and get stressed when separated from.

