

AUBMC's Dr. Naji Receives CNRS Research Excellence Awards for Cancer Research

(November 27, 2015) Beirut, Lebanon – Dr. Naji El Saghir, professor of clinical medicine and hematology-oncology at the American University of Beirut Medical Center, has been awarded the 2015 CNRS Research Excellence Award for “his outstanding contribution to the understanding of breast cancer in young women, genetic mutations, downstaging and improving outcome of breast cancer patients in Lebanon.” The award ceremony was held at the Grand Serail on November 2nd, 2015.

The annual award which is by the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research) recognizes scientists who excelled in conducting research in different scientific disciplines in Lebanon. The award is meant to reinforce scientific research and innovation and to direct research to respond to national needs.

“It is a great honor for me to be recognized by the CNRS for the cancer research I am doing in Lebanon,” said Dr. El Saghir. “Such recognition is a great stimulus for me and our group to continue our research and to advance it further. Without research, we could not have documented nor known that half of breast cancer cases in Lebanon occur in women below the age of 50 and that most women in Lebanon and Arab countries with breast cancer were diagnosed at an advanced stage; and we would not have known what to do to lower these rates. It is because of such research data that we have embarked on studies to learn of the causes of cancer in young women, and we have launched large-scale awareness campaigns that helped reduce the number of cases of advanced breast cancer by detecting the disease at early stages.”

“Our 2014 study showed that there is a recent decrease in advanced breast cancer, with more than 60 percent of patients now diagnosed as early stage I and stage II. We showed that we are performing less total mastectomies and more partial mastectomies that conserve women’s breasts; and more than 90 percent of women with stage I, and more than 80 percent of women with stage II are alive and free of disease after 10 years. Those are excellent results and show that we have changed the face and outcome of breast cancer in Lebanon,” said Dr. El Saghir.

Spreading the word that early breast cancer has become curable, have reduced the fear of cancer and more women are enrolling in screening and early detection campaigns. However, Dr El Saghir notes that we still have lots of work to do to reach all women. He also organizes fundraising campaigns throughout the year to help breast cancer patients in need for financial

support at AUBMC, and started breast cancer patient support groups at the Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute at AUBMC.

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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 health care needs of over 360,000 patient visits annually.

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