

## **2016 Middle East Medical Assembly Explores Precision Medicine**

### **A New Era towards Personalized Healthcare**

**(May 17, 2016) Beirut, Lebanon** – The Middle East Medical Assembly (MEMA) 2016 Updates, held from May 12 to May 14, 2016 was launched in an opening ceremony in the presence of the American University of Beirut (AUB) President Dr. Fadlo Khuri, Executive Vice President for Medicine and Global Strategy, Raja N. Khoury Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB, Mohamed H. Sayegh, and members of the AUB community.

MEMA 2016 Updates entitled “Precision Medicine: A New Era towards Personalized Healthcare”, taking place at the American University of Beirut (AUB), explored a relatively new field of medicine: “Precision Medicine”. This bold new research aims to revolutionize healthcare and disease treatment in Lebanon and the region by providing advanced prognosis for patients. Organized by the Continuing Medical Education (CME) Office at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), the Medical Chapter of AUB Alumni Association and AUB – Faculty of Medicine in partnership with Cleveland Clinic, MEMA brings together physicians and experts in all fields discussing the latest challenges and novelties in precision medicine and genomics.

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Anwar Nassar, MEMA 2016 Chairperson and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at AUBMC, noted, “MEMA 2016 focuses on how this emerging concept will affect cancer treatment, nursing care, reproductive endocrinology and infertility, preventive medicine, cardiovascular disease and many other aspects of medicine.”

Dr. Mohamed H. Sayegh welcomed the attendees and spoke of the importance of MEMA as a platform for the latest advances in medical care. He said, “New genetic knowledge worldwide presents a significant stride in clinical practice, and AUBMC has taken the lead by being the first in the region to set the ground for precision medicine through establishing the Pillar Genomics Institute (PGI) of precision medicine. This institute will revolutionize the way diseases are treated, linking advanced research and next-generation sequencing in the laboratory to the patient's bedside.”

Dr. Fadlo Khury said, “This year’s MEMA takes place at a special time in our history, as AUB celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. From its founding to the current day, the history of AUB’s medical school and medical center is replete with physicians and educators who have made history by building healthcare capacity and knowledge in this country and beyond. It has been sixty-five years since AUB held its first MEMA in 1951, under the title “Medical Symposium” at the time. Since then MEMA never failed to put forward topics that would lead the discussion in healthcare advancement.”

Mr. Youssef El Zein, Managing Partner of Pillars Partners and donor of the Pillars Genomics Institute for Precision Medicine or PGI concluded: “In essence PGI will assemble state of the art genetic technical equipment with the leading experts at AUBMC with the aim of putting precision medicine at the forefront of clinical practice in Lebanon and the region. In doing so, AUB Medical Center is advancing its commitment to leading the introduction of precision medicine revolution in the Middle East.”

MEMA 2016 was honored with the presence of keynote speaker, Dr. Barry London, Potter-Lambert Chair, Director of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine and Director of the Abboud Cardiovascular Research Center at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine who said: “Precision medicine targets therapies based on individual patient characteristics, clinical studies, genetics, biomarkers, environmental exposures; we now have amazing new sources of data that serve as the right tools for prodigious successes in many fields such as cancer biologicals. Ultimately, the goal of precision medicine is to take the prior personalized patient treatment to more advanced levels.”

The conference described the clinical applications of genomics and discussed the difference between germline mutations, somatic mutations and epigenetic modifications while also exploring the current uses of precision medicine and future applications. It was marked by the presence of physicians in all specialties, including cardiology, endocrinology, family practice, gastroenterology, hematology oncology, pathology, pediatrics, pharmacology, radiology, surgery and women’s health as well as nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, dietitians, physician assistants, trainees, students and researchers.

MEMA’s exhibition and rich program spread over two days and featured various sessions and workshops about innovative technologies currently used in genomics, both at the diagnostic and research levels, in addition to the clinical utility side. Topics will discuss the utilization of state-of-the-art pharmacogenomics and genetic testing in the patient care setting and feature updates on cutting edge genomic technologies in research and diagnostics. Other topics included precision medicine in healthcare, genetic epidemiology, data analysis in precision medicine applications, pharmacogenomics, oncology and cardiovascular diseases.

As a pioneer driver and promoter of cutting-edge research, AUBMC continues to spearhead the Arab region towards a thriving future in medical care and research in alignment with its 2020 Vision.

**End**

### **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

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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.

**For more information please visit our website [www.aubmc.org](http://www.aubmc.org) or contact:**

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