

AUB spearheads workshop on how to develop and adapt guidelines to improve delivery of health services

November 6, 2014 -- The Clinical Research Institute (CRI) and the Center for Systematic Reviews on Health Policy and Systems Research (SPARK) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) organized a two-day workshop on how to develop unique and professional guidelines which help improve the delivery of health services. The workshop brought together a panel of prominent experts and fostered a collaborative environment with advanced guidance to clinicians, public health agents, or policy makers, on specific health related issues such as screening for breast cancer in women. The workshop also addressed how local organizations, such as the Ministry of Public Health, can adapt similar guidelines developed by other organizations, namely the World Health Organization (WHO).

The workshop, which took place on November 5 and 6, 2014 at the Gefinor Rotana Hotel, was attended by about forty health experts from Lebanon and Syria. In her speech, Dr. Samia Khoury, Associate Dean for Translational and Clinical Research, representing Dr. Mohamed Sayegh, Vice President of Medical Affairs and Raja N. Khuri Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, commended the collaborative approach of CRI and SPARK to capacity building efforts at AUB, Lebanon, and the region. She also invited workshop participants to build on the skills they will acquire to contribute to future guideline developmental efforts at both the national and regional levels.

Dr. Ali Abu Alfa, the director of the CRI, described how the Faculty of Medicine at AUB and AUB Medical Center established CRI in 2010 with a mission of providing the required infrastructure to support and promote innovative and collaborative research activities, with the ultimate goal of advancing and improving health care provision.

Dr. Fadi El-Jardali, cofounder of SPARK, described SPARK as an interdisciplinary center for producing high-quality systematic reviews responding to the needs of health policy makers. SPARK is a collaborative effort between AUB Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Medicine funded by WHO's Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research.

The facilitators, Dr. Holger Schunemann from McMaster University in Canada, Dr. Joerg Meerpohl from the German Cochrane Centre, and Dr. Elie Akl from the American University of Beirut led the interactive discussions and hands-on - participation through large and small group sessions.

Dr. Holger Schünemann, a leading world expert in guideline development, emphasized the value of an explicit, comprehensive, transparent, and pragmatic approach to bringing research evidence into the guideline development process. He also highlighted the importance of the approach used in the workshop in terms of its being increasingly adopted by many organizations worldwide.

Finally, Dr. Elie Akl, the workshop director, hoped that the workshop would be a stepping stone towards building a national process of developing guidelines for clinicians, public health workers and health services administrators to ensure the

Lebanese population receives the best level of care possible.