

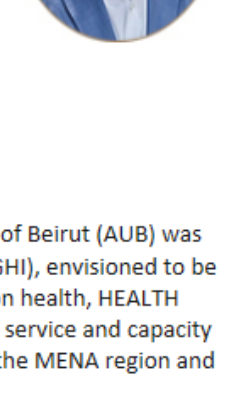
THROUGH THE LENS

- Global Health in Art
- GHI News
- Expert in the LENS
- International Global Health News
- Global Health in Words
- About GHI

MESSAGE FROM GHI LEAD

LENS: A GLOBAL SOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL HEALTH

The global health challenges that occurred throughout recent decades, mostly originating from the Global South, have reminded everyone how fast local health problems can become global concerns. A region of the Global South that has not gained as much global attention compared to its health challenges is the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The MENA is currently at the epicenter of many large-scale humanitarian crises that have impacted millions of lives and whose effects extend beyond its geographic boundaries. This is in addition to the increasing burden of other health challenges such as communicable and non-communicable diseases, among others.



In this context, the Global Health Initiative at the American University of Beirut (AUB) was established as the foundational phase of the Global Health Institute (GHI), envisioned to be a fundamental component towards the achievement of AUB's vision on health, HEALTH 2025. GHI serves as a platform for multidisciplinary engaged research, service and capacity building on global health, with a focus on challenges emanating from the MENA region and the Global South.

We are pleased to share with global health stakeholders the inaugural issue of our newsletter, GHI LENS. The LENS will be the central communication portal for GHI updates, and a platform for news and insights on global health challenges and interventions. A section of the LENS we are especially fond of is the 'Global Health in Art', which will be featured in every issue of the newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue of the LENS.

Best Regards,
 Shadi Saleh, PhD MPH



Saloua Raouda Choucair (June 24, 1916 – January 26, 2017) Lebanese painter and sculptor, was a pioneer of abstract art in Lebanon and the Arab World. She is best known for her modular sculptures composed of multiple interlocking pieces. This modular aspect is also depicted in her painting "Composition in Blue Module", selected as an esthetic representation of the dynamics at play in the content of this inaugural issue of the GHI LENS.

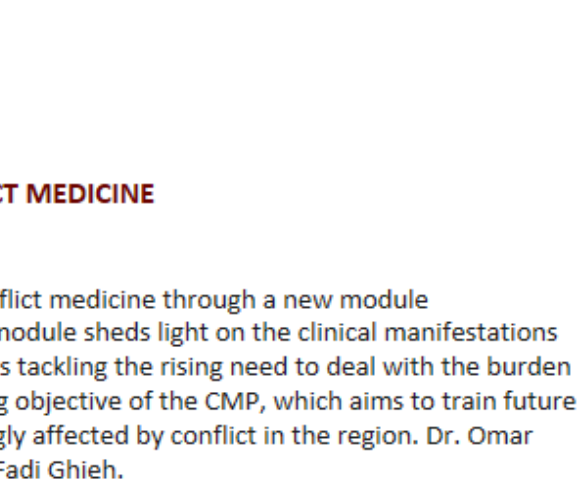
GHI NEWS

CONFLICT MEDICINE PROGRAM | CMP **GOALS OF CMP**

CMP DIRECTORS MEET INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS IN PARIS TO SET A RESEARCH ACTION PLAN ON IRAQIBACTER

February 2017 | Paris, France

The CMP team including Co-Directors Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah and Dr. Omar Dewachi, Program Affiliate Dr. Abdurrahman Bizri, and Research Coordinators Miss Thurayya Zreik and Dr. Fadi Ghieh participated in a two-day meeting organized by Program Affiliate Dr. Vinh-Kim Nguyen with support from the European Research Council and the Graduate Institute of Geneva. The meeting aimed to set a research agenda for studying multidrug-resistant (MDR) Acinetobacter baumannii, also known as Iraqibacter, which has been observed to infect war wounds around the region. Experts from the medical and social sciences community discussed multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary approaches towards solving the problem of MDR Iraqibacter infections in war injuries in the Middle East and North Africa region. The meetings resulted in the formation of research clusters around the anthropology, sociology, microbiology, and clinical aspects of MDR Iraqibacter as well as initiating a research plan to tackle both the origins of and the solutions to the Iraqibacter problem.



FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS AT AUB LEARN ABOUT CONFLICT MEDICINE

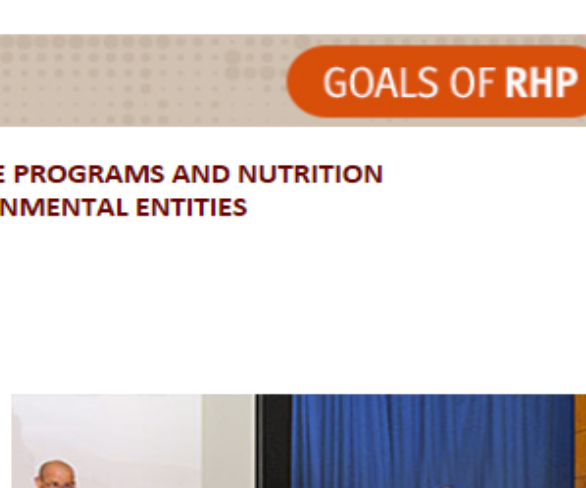
January 2017 | Beirut, Lebanon

First year medical students will now be exposed to the concept of conflict medicine through a new module incorporated into the Global Health and Social Medicine course. The module sheds light on the clinical manifestations of war that students might encounter during their medical career, thus tackling the rising need to deal with the burden of conflict-related injuries. This course falls under the capacity building objective of the CMP, which aims to train future doctors to deal with the potential influx of patients who are increasingly affected by conflict in the region. Dr. Omar Dewachi instructs the course assisted by Miss Thurayya Zreik and Dr. Fadi Ghieh.

CMP CO-DIRECTOR EMPLOYS AUGMENTED REALITY TECHNOLOGY TO REMOTELY ASSIST A SURGERY IN GAZA

November 2016 | Beirut, Lebanon

Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah led a groundbreaking procedure by which he remotely assisted a surgeon in Gaza to perform a reconstructive hand surgery using cutting edge augmented reality technology. Proximie, a US-based company, developed the online interactive augmented reality platform which is a big step in supporting doctors in resource-poor settings across war-torn situations. In November 2016, a short documentary by Al Jazeera about the procedure titled Operation Gaza won the prestigious Foreign Press Association Award for Science Story of the Year 2016. To watch the documentary, follow the [link](#).



REFUGEE HEALTH PROGRAM | RHP **GOALS OF RHP**

RHP CO-DIRECTOR HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED FOR SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS AND NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS FROM HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

January 2017 | Beirut, Lebanon

Dr. Lamis Jomaa, assistant professor of community nutrition and RHP co-director, presented results from her cross-sectional study conducted between October 2015 and March 2016 in Akkar District, Lebanon. The food and nutrition security status of Syrian refugee households was compared to that of Lebanese households from communities with high and low concentration of Syrian refugees. Socio-demographic characteristics, household food security status, coping mechanisms, anthropometric measurements, and dietary intake were explored from 324 mother-child pairs representing these communities. Alarming high levels of severe food insecurity among refugees were recorded, and significantly higher levels of food insecurity were observed among Lebanese households from communities with high concentration of Syrian refugees compared to communities with low concentration of Syrian refugees. Preliminary findings reflect inadequate dietary intakes, mostly among Syrian refugee children followed by children from Lebanese households in communities with high concentration of Syrian refugees, highlighting the need for interventions to help alleviate the risk of nutrition insecurity.



THE "SYRIAN TRAGEDY" AND CHILDHOOD CANCER DURING THE WORLD CANCER CONGRESS

October, 2016 | Paris, France

Dr. Fouad Fouad, assistant research professor in population health and RHP co-director, highlighted the need for a new approach in dealing with cancer among Syrian refugee children during the World Cancer Congress. He underlined the scarcity in data on cancer among Syrian refugees in Lebanon with estimates reaching 270-360 yearly new cases of childhood cancer (Data from Syria before 2011). This constitutes a major challenge with the hefty cost and long treatment duration that exceed the financial resources of most relief organizations. This is further aggravated by the difficulty in delivering treatment to refugees who are on the move, lack health coverage, and are psychologically distressed. The UNHCR support policy to Lebanon's health services includes referring refugees with high medical costs to a specialized committee that decides on the matter. Examples from Jordan show that more than half of cancer treatment applications are rejected on grounds of "poor prognosis" or "too expensive" (UNHCR 2014). The prevailing situation calls for establishing new guidelines that are capable of addressing cancer care in the context of conflict and protracted displacement.

NUTRITION, OBESITY AND RELATED DISEASES | NORD **GOALS OF NORD**

NORD LAUNCHES "TOWARDS THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: THE CASE OF LEBANON"

March, 2017 | Beirut, Lebanon

The purpose of this project is to investigate how food consumption patterns in Lebanon have moved away from the traditional healthy Mediterranean diet to a westernized health-endangering food consumption pattern. It also aims to develop policies and population-based interventions that promote adherence to the Mediterranean diet. This project contributes to the Regional Initiative (RI) titled "Building resilience for enhanced food security and nutrition in the Near East and North Africa" (RI-FSN) as well as the RI on "Sustainable small-scale agriculture for inclusive development" (RI-SSA), through providing evidence-based information that supports decision-making for better populations' health. This project is the first phase and cornerstone in an integrated Mediterranean diet by addressing aspects of health, sociocultural, economics, and environment in an integrated approach starting from Lebanon and expanding to the region.

NORD AND RHP ORGANIZE "TOWARDS IMPROVING NUTRITION AMONG REFUGEES IN LEBANON: A CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP"

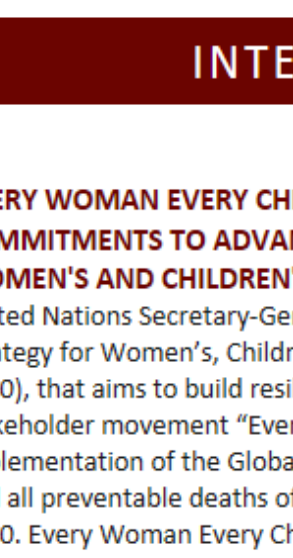
February 2017 | Beirut, Lebanon

The workshop aimed to further the food and nutrition security knowledge of school teachers, health care professionals and social workers working with Syrian refugee children and youth in West Bekaa. Experts in the field of nutrition and food security from AUB as well as a senior researcher from the University of Hohenheim presented on the prevalence and hazards of malnutrition and obesity among refugee youth, the role of nutrition during adolescence and pregnancy, and the importance of physical activity in this age group. Additionally, integrating lesson plans on basic health and nutrition concepts within the schools' curricula and neighboring health care centers was recommended. A total of 28 trainees attended the workshop and requested that similar sessions be regularly organized to ensure the sustainability of health programs that address malnutrition and major health challenges among refugee children.



EXPERT IN THE LENS

CORE EXPERT PROFILE: GHASSAN ABU SITTAH, CMP CO-DIRECTOR

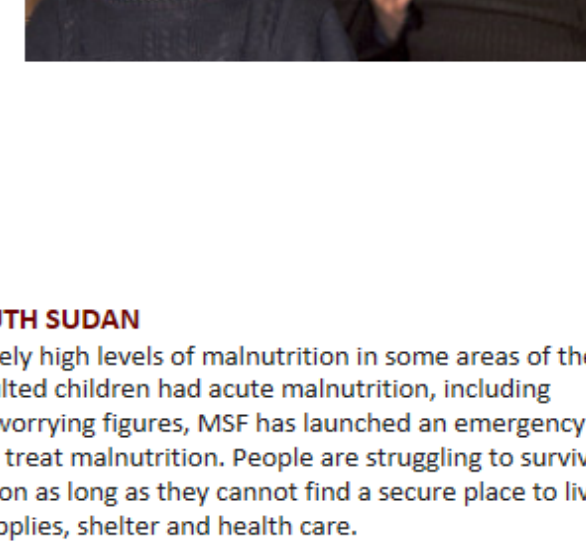


Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah is a medical doctor and the head of the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC). He has co-founded and currently co-directs the Conflict Medicine Program at AUB's Global Health Initiative. Dr. Abu Sittah graduated from the University of Glasgow's Faculty of Medicine and went on to pursue his postgraduate studies in plastic and reconstructive surgery with cleft, craniofacial surgery, and trauma fellowships. He has also had a long experience with burns and combat injuries at the AUBMC from neighboring countries. Additionally, he has received multiple humanistic awards, among which is the Humanism and Professionalism Physician Award. His experience working in warzones and dealing with war victims both medically and socially has been published in multiple journals and international newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal and the Daily Telegraph. Furthermore, Dr. Abu Sittah has published on blast injuries and on changing geographies of war in scientific and medical journals. His publications also include several book chapters on war injuries and the medical aid they require. He has gone on several medical missions for cleft surgery and has headed the creation of the cleft and craniofacial surgery unit in addition to being a member of the wound care center at the AUBMC. Dr. Abu Sittah also works dedicatedly with NGOs including Global Smile Foundation and INARA, for which he provides life-saving and life changing surgery.

INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL HEALTH NEWS

EVERY WOMAN EVERY CHILD MOVEMENT SEEKS COMMITMENTS TO ADVANCE THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

United Nations Secretary-General announced an updated Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030), that aims to build resilient and healthy societies. The multi-stakeholder movement "Every Woman Every Child" leads the implementation of the Global Strategy by offering a roadmap to end all preventable deaths of women, children and adolescents by 2030. Every Woman Every Child has mobilized hundreds of partners from international organizations, philanthropic foundations, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector, all of which having made commitments that help fulfill the aims of the Global Strategy. Click to contribute to the Every Woman Every Child movement by making a commitment to the financial, policy or service delivery categories:



REQUIREMENTAL CRISIS AMONG SYRIA'S CHILDREN REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ACTION

A recent study by the international charity Save the Children revealed an alarming mental health crisis among children trapped in Syria, and experts warn the psychological damage could be irreversible. This is the largest research study of its kind conducted during the course of the conflict, involving more than 450 children, adolescents and adults. Findings show that children are living in an almost constant state of fear and exhibiting devastating psychological consequences including severe emotional distress, sleep deprivation, suicide attempts, aggressiveness and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. According to experts, children are suffering from "toxic stress", the most dangerous form of stress response a child can experience. Besides the need for more mental health programs across Syria, adequate funding for psychological resources and training for teachers, the charity is calling for an immediate ceasefire and a negotiated end to the violence.



PROTRACTED CONFLICT AT ROOT OF NUTRITION CRISIS IN SOUTH SUDAN

The protracted conflict in South Sudan has led to famine and extremely high levels of malnutrition in some areas of the country. According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), 25% of consulted children had acute malnutrition, including 8.1% with severe acute malnutrition. As a result of these extremely worrying figures, MSF has launched an emergency response and is expanding its regular mobile clinics in the country to treat malnutrition. People are struggling to survive and it is very unlikely that the situation will improve for this population as long as they cannot find a secure place to live while meeting their basic needs such as safe drinking water, food supplies, shelter and health care.

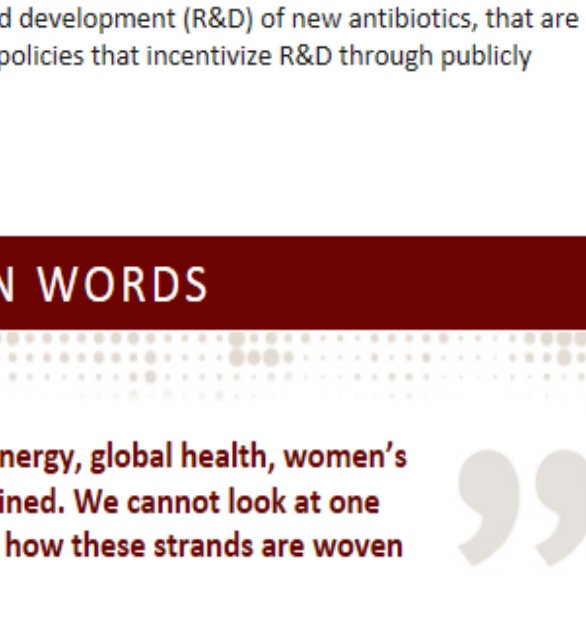
FOOD INSECURITY AND POVERTY POSE MAJOR CHALLENGES TO FEED HUNGER BY 2030 IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In Sub-Saharan Africa, 26% of the population aged above 15 years suffered from severe food insecurity in 2014-15, as revealed in a new report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The Regional Overview of Food Insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa (2016) calls attention to the severe food insecurity and poverty in this region, and the significant challenge in meeting the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030. Several countries in the region remain highly dependent on food imports to ensure adequate food supplies. There is a need to improve access to adequate for farmers and governance of land tenure as well as to increase agricultural productivity and food production. An economic transformation is also essential in the agricultural sector, which is the major source of income in Sub-Saharan Africa that can potentially generate a substantial reduction in poverty and improve food accessibility.



NEW LIFE FOR WAR-WOUNDED IRAQIS STARTS IN JORDAN

A hospital opened recently in Amman, Jordan to address the need of war-wounded patients from Iraq who lack access to reconstructive care. The hospital provides a comprehensive care package for its patients that goes beyond injury treatment to include surgical services, physiotherapy, psychosocial support, accommodation and financial assistance for transport to and from the hospital. A team of medical liaison officers in Baghdad identifies people in need of reconstructive surgery in Iraq and refers them to the hospital in Jordan. The hospital has expanded its services to receive patients from Gaza, Yemen, and Syria, as well.



WHO PUBLISHES LIST OF BACTERIA FOR WHICH NEW ANTIBIOTICS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED

As part of its efforts to address growing pathogen resistance to antimicrobial medicines globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) published its first ever list of antibiotic-resistant "priority pathogens". The list includes 12 families of bacteria that pose the greatest threat to human health, divided into three categories according to the urgency of need for new antibiotics: critical, high and medium priorities. The consequences of inaction can dramatically impact patient care as the medical community is running out of treatment options for multiple drug resistant pathogens. WHO's list is a crucial tool to secure, guide and promote research and development (R&D) of new antibiotics, that are effective for health systems. Governments are urged to put in place policies that incentivize R&D through publicly funded agencies and the private sector for new antibiotic discovery.

GLOBAL HEALTH IN WORDS

Climate change, demographics, water, food, energy, global health, women's empowerment—these issues are all intertwined. We cannot look at one strand in isolation. Instead, we must examine how these strands are woven together.

Ban Ki-moon
 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations

ABOUT GHI

MISSION **VISION**

The American University of Beirut Global Health Initiative addresses global health challenges with a focus on context and sustainable impact by employing an interdisciplinary approach.

GHI is the regional leader and a key global partner on addressing global health challenges with a focus on those affecting low and middle-income countries.

GHI fosters engaged education, committed service and innovative research, as well as strategic partnerships to enhance health in local communities and globally.

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