

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB part of CDC's Global AR Lab and Response Network**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA, announced in a press release its selection of the American University of Beirut (AUB) as part of the newly established Global Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory and Response Network (Global AR Lab and Response Network).

With the aim to combat antimicrobial resistance (AR) and infectious diseases worldwide, CDC just launched two global networks that will contribute to growing laboratory expertise and detecting AR threats in healthcare: the Global Action in Healthcare Network and the Global AR Lab and Response Network, which AUB is part of.

AUB is one of nearly 30 organizations around the world to benefit from \$22 million awards. The award was granted through research efforts and future proposed plans on antimicrobial resistance/PulseNet, a collaborative initiative led by Professor Ghassan M. Matar, chairperson of the Department of Experimental Pathology, Immunology, and Microbiology at AUB's Faculty of Medicine, in collaboration with departmental Co-PI Dr. A. Abou Fayad and co-investigators in the Center for Infectious Diseases Research (CIDR).

"Being part of this Global Network will benefit AUB, Lebanon at large, as well as the region," explained Dr. Matar. "This builds laboratory capacity to detect bacterial species Sequence Types (STs) by Whole Genome Sequencing and antimicrobial resistant organisms in healthcare settings, the community, and the environment in Lebanon and the MENA region, within a 'One Health Approach.' It allows for developing novel and innovative ways to respond to threats like AR."

Antimicrobial resistance is a global threat. In bacteriology, it occurs when a certain bacterial organism develops resistance against an antibiotic or group of antibiotics. Drug resistance increases the risk of infection severity and the possibility of cure.

In his Laboratory, Dr. Matar and his team perform antimicrobial susceptibility testing to determine whether the bacterium of concern is capable of expressing resistance to the antimicrobial agent of choice or not. They utilize traditional and state-of-the art molecular techniques to understand the genetic elements that confer antimicrobial resistance in infections relevant to the public health. They also assess the treatment potential of combination therapy against multidrug resistant (MDR) bacterial agents.

“Throughout the years, Dr. Matar has led significant milestones in leading the fight against the global threat of antimicrobial resistance,” stated Dr. Raymond Sawaya, vice president for medical affairs and Raja N. Khuri Dean at the Faculty of Medicine, in his announcement of this milestone to the Faculty of Medicine community. “He never ceased to publish impactful research, secure competitive funds, and collaborate with international agencies. On top of that, he consistently and vigorously worked on advancing his department and the Faculty of Medicine at large.”

CDC explained in its announcement that its Global AR Lab and Response Network will build on successes of its sister program, the US AR Lab Network, which was established in 2016. It will utilize proven global expertise and inform data-driven responses to target emerging and existing and possibly expanding AR threats, such as healthcare pathogens, drug-resistant enteric pathogens, fungal pathogens, invasive bacterial and respiratory pathogens, and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

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**For more information please contact:**

Simon Kachar, PhD  
Interim Director of the Office of Communications  
Director of News and Media Relations  
Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024  
Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676  
Email: [sk158@aub.edu.lb](mailto:sk158@aub.edu.lb)

## Note to Editors

### About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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