

## **AUBMC Launches the New Learning Center, the First-of-its-kind in Lebanon and the Region**

**Beirut, January 16, 2019:** The Department of Psychiatry at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and its Medical Center (AUBMC) launched the new “**ΨΙΠΙΡΑΕΙ** Center” on January 9, 2020. This center, the first-of-its-kind in Lebanon and the region, is an outpatient multi-disciplinary setting providing specialized assessments, interventions, referrals, awareness, training, and research to a wide population of persons with learning difficulties, their parents, and other professionals involved.

The launching event was held at the Aida and Daniel Academic and Clinical Center (Daniel ACC) in the presence of AUB and AUBMC faculty and staff and leadership as well as professionals from the community, and parents. The launching ceremony was preceded by a presentation that engaged the audience and discussed best practices in the rehabilitation of persons with specific learning disorder and ADHD. It included school/nursery principals, coordinators, teachers, and specialists including counselors, special education teachers, speech therapists, psychomotor therapists, and occupational therapists.

Marking the official opening, Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, President of AUB said, “We are delighted and proud to launch today a center that bridges between healthcare and education, and cements AUB’s strong belief in the right of everyone to learn and to excel. One of the most fulfilling understandings is to build capacity in others—and we at this university are determined to adapt in order to do so, both in our Medical Center and our university classrooms, where we foster thought that is boldly free, creative, critical, and independent.”

“The new center that will open a new dimension for children with learning difficulties and will create a society in which every individual possess the academic, social and emotional skills needed to succeed,” said Dr. Ziyad Ghazzal, Interim Medical Center Director and Chief Medical Officer at AUBMC.

Dr. Fadi Maalouf, the Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at AUBMC stated, “Failure to identify a learning disability at an early age and to consequently delay the provision of intensive, individualized intervention results not only in academic delays but also in poor mental health and suboptimal social functioning. This is what makes the AUBMC Learning center unique. We are the first to introduce these services to a medical center setting bridging education and healthcare and treating the child as a whole.”

Ms. Hala Raad, Manager of AUBMC **ΨΙΠΙΡΑΕΙ** Center and Senior Special Education Teacher, said, “It is essential to build a good relation with children to reduce stress and help them learn better and more efficiently. I believe that if you can’t reach them, you can’t teach them.” She

also highlighted the high prevalence of learning disorders on the local and international scenes with the scarce number of professionals to answer all these needs. Not only is this Center of paramount importance to those patients (toddler children and adults) with learning disorders but it pioneered the much needed synergy between the medical and special education fields. The Department of Psychiatry and its AUBMC Learning Center are the first to pioneer the presence of Special Education Teachers in a medical center both in Lebanon and in the Arab world.”

Dr. Evelyne Hitti gave a warm testimonial as a parent of a child with a reading disorder. She described her journey and the many hindrances faced along the way until her child, with the help a qualified special education teacher from AUBMC could decode his first words and progress steadily. She also highlighted the importance of the coordination between parents, professionals and schools to further the child’s learning experience.

Ms. Leen Khalil, patient with a specific learning disorder in reading and writing, was also insightful in the description she gave on her academic challenges and the importance of special education interventions on her academic achievements and wellbeing. She assertively stressed on the importance of seeking the right help for children to progress in their learning and reach their potential. She urged parents to encourage their children and not lose hope. Ms. Khalil said she graduated from her school with honors and that she was now a freshman year student which is a proof of how children with learning disorders can succeed.

The AUBMC Learning Center will serve individuals (toddlers, children, adolescents, adults) experiencing difficulties in their academic achievements and behavioral skills stemming from various conditions such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), specific learning disorders (with impairment in reading writing or mathematics), intellectual development disorder, emotional and behavioral conditions/difficulties, illiteracy or poor literacy, language disorders, and developmental coordination disorder.

In response to the stated difficulties and disorders, AUBMC Learning Center intervenes in many areas such as emotional, academic, behavioral, play, motor, speech and communication, studying skills, independence skills, and adaptive functioning.

For long, AUBMC has been a leader in the MENA for delivering excellent patient care, encouraging discovery and research, and providing insightful medical training for professionals. AUBMC will continue to thrive to improve healthcare services and delivery for the community with respect and dignity to all.

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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 five international accreditations of JCI, Magnet, CAP, ACGME-I and JACIE 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 healthcare needs of over 360,000 patient visits annually.

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**Simon Kachar**  
**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)**