

For Immediate Release



AUB to disseminate results of 10 years of research on maternal and newborn health in region during 2-day conference

Beirut, Lebanon- 16/05/2011 - The American University of Beirut will be holding a two-day conference in which 10 years of research on maternal and newborn health in Lebanon and the region will be disseminated to the public.

Organized by the Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth Research Network which is housed in AUB's Faculty of Health Sciences, the conference will take place all day on May 17 and 18 at the Riviera Hotel and will include local, regional and international participants.

The Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth regional research network was formally established in 2001 at the Center for Research on Population and Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences, AUB. Over its 10-year existence, the CCCC has become an internationally visible and reputable multidisciplinary network of over 20 researchers in Egypt, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and Syria.

Its goals are to render maternal health care safer for mothers and their newborns and to maximize available choices for women during pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period.

The network is multidisciplinary including clinicians (doctors and midwives), anthropologists, economists, statisticians, health systems experts and public health specialists. It has produced previously undocumented evidence on childbirth policies and practices in the Middle East.

Research by network members has documented the discrepancy between routine and best practices consistent with the current scientific evidence and the lack of responsiveness of health services and of women's involvement in the decision-making process of care. Together network members have published over 40 peer-reviewed publications. We have suggested areas amenable to improvement, provided baseline information and tested a number of interventions to improve maternal and newborn health care. The CCCC has also developed innovative research tools which it has made widely available.

The network employs innovative means of actively disseminating its research findings using scientific articles and regional and international conference presentations but also television programs, newsletters for women and partnerships with health providers to promote evidence-based practice.

Summary of main findings of research to date:

- Some routine practices in hospitals are not based on the most up to date research about making childbirth safe for mothers and newborns

- Problems of quality (e.g. poor provider-patient communication; lack of standardized procedures) have been identified (variable across contexts)
- Women are not sufficiently involved in decision-making related to their obstetric care
- Underutilization and deficiencies in the type of services provided after birth
- High and increasing rates of cesarean section and some unnecessary procedures increase the risk of over-medicalizing birth

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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 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of more than 7,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the 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 420-bed hospital.

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