

## **Immuno-Oncology in Cancer Treatment; a New Promising Modality**

### ***The American University of Beirut Holds the Third Middle East and North Africa Immuno-Oncology Forum***

The Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute (NKBCI) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) in collaboration with King Hussein Cancer Foundation and Center (KHCC), Amman Jordan, organized the third Middle East and North Africa Immuno-Oncology Forum (MIOF) on November 5 and 6, 2021 at the NKBCI center.

The MIOF is the only conference in the region aimed to tackle all aspects of Immuno-oncology practices in the different types of cancer, be it solid or liquid by gathering the field's diverse research and business communities such as oncologists, hematologists, research scholars and students in one place.

This year, the conference featured leaders in the field of Hematology – Oncology, as well as certified healthcare professionals, pharmacists, and nurses, who held interactive scientific sessions covering various diagnostic and therapeutic advancements in immune-oncology. The program highlighted the most effective best practices across the full spectrum of cancer treatment, from Breast, Lung, GI, Prostate, and Ovarian to Malignant Hematology, as an initiative to unite the diverse research and business communities working in this field under one roof to explore different aspects of immuno-oncology. Oncologists, hematologists, research scholars and students exchanged their knowledge and shared ideas on how to improve research, advance the standards of care and enhance outcomes for Hematology-Oncology patients.

The opening ceremony was attended by AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri, Dean of the Raja N. Khuri Faculty of Medicine and VP for Medical Affairs at AUB Raymond Sawaya, Director of Naef K Basile Cancer Institute Ali Taher, Chief Medical Officer at King Hussein Cancer Center Hikmat Abdel Razek, and co-chairs of this activity, Dr. Hazem Assi, Dr. Jean El Cheikh, and Dr. Kamal El Rabih.

As a keynote speaker, Dr. Khuri shed light on the past, current, and future practices in immuno-oncology, emphasizing the path of development it followed and said: "We aspire to promote the image of state-of-the-art academia, medicine and innovation of both our institutions, AUBMC and KHCC. "

Dr. Sawaya added that "immuno-oncology is a promising therapy, but it still requires development of knowledge and more research."

Dr. Taher stated: "In these difficult times, providing the best quality of life for our patients depends on our ability to continuously build and empower our team with necessary scientific knowledge. We will continue to support all scientific activities in an aim to remain up-to date

with all treatment modalities and instill knowledge about new approaches in cancer treatment to reduce its incidence”. He added: “At NKBCI, we thrive to offer a holistic care to all our patients through our renowned specialized faculty and our established subspecialized multidisciplinary clinical programs supporting patient recovery journey from all ends.”

From his side, Dr. Abdel Razek stressed on how proud he is of this collaboration and its importance in developing the knowledge and introducing new modalities of treatment to improve cancer patient outcomes.

Lastly, Dr. Assi noted: “The most essential component is to believe that we can further push toward a future with endless enthusiasm and continuous efforts in cancer immunotherapies to define new approaches and technologies.”

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. Through holding similar forums, AUBMC will continue to thrive to improve healthcare services and delivery for the community with respect and dignity to all. Additionally, this conference fulfills the mission of NKBCI at AUBMC in applying a state-of-the-art medical knowledge and technology in Lebanon and the region, and the development of integrated and advanced programs in patient care, research, education, and prevention.

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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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