



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Beirut, March 18, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Global Health Institute at AUB Expands Dialogue on Conflict-Related Healthcare Education

The Global Health Institute (GHI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), through its Academy Division and Conflict Medicine Program (CMP), hosted an event titled "Reshaping Formal Healthcare Education: Insights and Roadmap for Adoption." The event was attended by key stakeholders from academia, healthcare organizations, and the humanitarian sector. It focused on the future of healthcare education in conflict-affected settings and the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in strengthening training programs. The event aimed to explore practical pathways for integrating conflict-responsive training into various healthcare curricula, fostering the development of deployable healthcare teams capable of delivering patient-centered care in conflict and fragile settings.

Dr. Zaher Dawy, AUB provost, opened the event, and reaffirmed AUB's commitment to advancing healthcare education and its responsibility to train professionals capable of addressing challenges in fragile and conflict settings. Dr. Shadi Saleh, founding director of GHI, stressed the critical need to tailor global health education to local contexts. He advocated for a more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach that integrates nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, and mental health to better equip healthcare professionals to respond to the complexities of conflict settings.

A keynote address by Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah, director of the Conflict Medicine Program at GHI, highlighted the need to move beyond conventional trauma care by recognizing the economic and geopolitical forces shaping conflicts. He pointed to critical gaps in medical education, particularly the lack of structured training for post-trauma care, and stressed the importance of systematizing discharge protocols, optimizing resource allocation, and equipping healthcare professionals with the skills to manage long-term complications. Using data from conflict settings, he underscored how indirect deaths—resulting from disease, malnutrition, and inadequate follow-up care during conflict—often far exceed those caused by direct violence, making it imperative to rethink how conflict medicine is taught and applied.

Two expert panel discussions further explored the different dimensions of healthcare education in conflict settings. The first panel, moderated by President of the Order of Nurses in Lebanon Abir Alame, focused on the real-world experiences of healthcare professionals in conflict zones and explored the critical gaps in current educational frameworks and clinical training, underscoring the essential skills that should be integrated into healthcare curricula. Panelists

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

included Mia Atoui, clinical psychologist and cofounder and president of Embrace NGO in Lebanon; Peter Skelton, rehabilitation in emergencies consultant at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Switzerland; Dr. Joe Salloum, president of the Order of Pharmacists in Lebanon; and Dr. Reham Jaffal, chief of health protection and promotion at the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jordan. Discussions highlighted the ethical complexities of providing care in fragile settings, the limitations of existing training models, and the structural barriers that impede effective crisis response.

The second panel, moderated by Dr. Samar Nouredine, dean and professor at the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing at AUB, explored practical strategies for embedding conflict-related training within healthcare education frameworks. Panelists Dr. Naser Alsharif, dean and professor at the School of Pharmacy at the Lebanese American University; Dr. Fathia Shabo, director of the Training Council for Psychiatry at the Sudanese Medical Specialization Board; Dr. Ibtissam Saab, professor and head of the Physical Therapy Department at the Beirut Arab University; and Dr. Khaled Alsweedi, dean of pharmacy at the University of Aden in Yemen. They discussed the importance of integrating crisis management, ethical decision-making, cultural sensitivity among others into healthcare curricula. They underscored the need for interprofessional collaboration, medical neutrality, and structured ethical training, while advocating for innovative educational approaches such as simulation-based learning and distance education to enhance practical preparedness for conflict settings.

This event served as a platform for a continued discussion of the dialogue previously launched by GHI at the “Integrating Conflict Medicine in Medical Education – A Necessity and a Challenge for Conflict-Affected Settings” event earlier this year, which highlighted the need to incorporate conflict medicine into medical school curricula. This second discussion broadened the conversation to engage a wider range of healthcare professionals, reinforcing GHI’s role in shaping conflict-related healthcare education. Together, these two events highlighted the urgent need to equip healthcare professionals with the skills to operate effectively in conflict settings, marking a significant step toward embedding conflict medicine as an essential component of all formal healthcare education programs in the MENA region.

About GHI

The Global Health Institute (GHI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) addresses global health challenges with a focus on context and sustainable impact by employing an interdisciplinary approach. GHI is structured into three divisions: The Programs Division, which leads research, policy, and advocacy efforts; the Academy Division, which provides capacity-building initiatives for diverse populations; and the ASSIST Division, which supports community-level actors, particularly non-governmental organizations, with a range of services and resources.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar, PhD

Executive Director of Communications
Lecturer – Political Studies and Public Administration Department
Founding Director – Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory
Fellow – Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs

T +961 1 37 43 74 Ext: 2676 | **M** +961 3 42 70 24

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

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 750 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 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.

Stay up to date on AUB news and events.

aub.edu.lb | [Facebook](#) | [X](#)