The Women’s Health center at the department of Obstetrics & Gynecology - AUB-MC and in collaboration with the Choices and Challenges in Changing Childbirth (CCCC) network at the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Lebanese Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (LSOG) and the Ministry Of Public Health held its first national symposium on “Transforming Maternity Care in Lebanon”, on October 1, 2010, at Issam Fares Auditorium, AUBMC. The symposium was attended by HE minister of Public Health, Dr Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh, gynecologists, midwives, and nurses, representatives of UN agencies, professional societies and groups, and NGOs, as well as representative from the maternal health project from the Italian Embassy. The audience was addressed by opening statements from Drs Faysal El-Kak, coordinator of the activity, Adnan Mroueh, Chair of ObGyn dept, Abdallah Adra, President of LSOG, Iman Nuwayhid, Dean of FHS, and Minister Khalifeh, emphasizing the crucial role of AUB in promoting maternity care in Lebanon.

The symposium addressed 3 main themes: The first theme situated maternal health within the existing health system providing indicators and trends that reflected the status of maternal health and the dropping number of maternal mortality in-terms of delivery of care, clinical practices, and health costs. The second theme described the various types of pregnancy care practices and highlighted the lack of standardized protocols, as well as the importance of incorporating preconception care in pregnancy care. Quality indicators for maternity care were also presented. The 3rd theme addressed a growing health burden in Lebanon which is the rising number of cesarean sections, and how this can affect maternal and newborn outcomes. Analysis of the potential factors for this rise was presented within the framework of the Lebanese health system. The symposium ended by a round table moderated by WHO medical officer, Dr Ziad Mansour, that suggested and recommended implementation of clinical protocols with the help of the ministry and LSOG, as well as initiating tools for practice like the maternity record, the antenatal care record, and involving a wider sector of partners in addressing maternal health. A series of symposia to be held by the Women’s Health center at the department of Obstetrics & Gynecology will address these recommendations in addition to more components of maternity care in Lebanon.

Prepared by Faysal El kak
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