LSIDCM
Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology
Fighting Infections Since 1992

Under the Patronage of His Excellency
The Minister of Public Health
Dr. Rakan Nassereldine

26th ANNUAL CONGRESS
of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology

Prevention in Action:
The Frontline Strategy Against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

29 - 31 October 2026 | Le Royal Hotel, Dbayeh

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Welcome Note



Dear Distinguished Colleagues, Esteemed Guests, and Valued Partners,

On behalf of the Organizing and Scientific Committees, it is my distinct honor to welcome you to the **"26th Annual Congress of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (LSIDCM)"**, taking place on **October 29–31, 2026, at Le Royal Hotel, Dbayeh, Lebanon.**

It is with great pride that we gather once again to celebrate scientific excellence, foster collaboration, and reaffirm our shared commitment to advancing the field of infectious diseases and clinical microbiology. This annual congress has become a cornerstone scientific event, bringing together leading physicians, microbiologists, researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and industry partners from Lebanon and across the region to exchange knowledge, inspire innovation, and address the evolving challenges shaping modern healthcare.

This year's theme, "Prevention in Action: The Frontline Strategy Against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)", reflects one of the most urgent and defining healthcare priorities of our generation. Antimicrobial resistance continues to threaten decades of medical progress, demanding coordinated, evidence-based, and multidisciplinary action. Through this congress, we seek to emphasize that prevention remains our strongest and most sustainable defense—through robust infection prevention and control programs, antimicrobial stewardship, vaccination, surveillance systems, scientific research, and collaborative healthcare policies.

Over the three days, we are proud to present a comprehensive scientific program featuring internationally recognized experts and distinguished regional leaders who will share the latest advances in clinical practice, groundbreaking research, emerging technologies, and innovative strategies.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our distinguished faculty, moderators, and invited speakers for generously sharing their expertise, experience, and vision. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our sponsors, partners, and exhibitors. Your continued trust and generous support are instrumental in making this congress possible and in enabling us to deliver a scientific program of the highest standards.

To all our participants, whether joining us from Lebanon or from abroad, thank you for your presence, your engagement, and your dedication to improving patient care.

I wish you a productive, inspiring, and memorable congress filled with meaningful scientific exchange, valuable networking opportunities, and lasting collaborations. I look forward to welcoming each of you personally and wish you an exceptional and rewarding experience.

With my warmest regards,

Mona Jradeh, MD
President
Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (LSIDCM)

Committee

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President: Mona Jradeh, MD
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Nadine Yared, MD
Raymond Mikhael, MD
Rima Moghnieh, MD
Souha Kanj, MD
Zahi Helou, MD
Zeina Kanafani, MD

Program Day 1 | Thursday, October 29, 2026

Time	Topic
08:00 – 09:00	Registration and Welcome
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome Address **Mona Jradeh, MD**
09:05 – 10:35	**SESSION I - Infection Prevention & Outbreak Preparedness: From Everyday Practice to Emerging Threats**
Moderators: Mona Youssef, MD; Souad Abou Harb, MD; Tahseen Mahfouz, MD	
09:05 – 09:25	Single Use or Safe to Re-Use? **Eliane Maasri, BS, MPH, CPHQ**
09:25 – 09:45	Isolation Policy in the MDR Era **Naji Aoun, MD**
09:45 – 10:05	Outbreaks Under Fire: Investigation and Infection Control in Times of Conflict **Zeina Kanafani, MD**
10:05 – 10:25	Emerging Viral Outbreaks **Pierre Abi Hanna, MD**
10:25 – 10:35	Questions and Answers (Q&A)
10:35 – 11:05	**COFFEE BREAK**
11:05 – 12:15	**SESSION II - Antimicrobial Stewardship in the MDR Era**
Moderators: Elie Haddad, MD; Nathalie Rizk, MD; Zahi Helou, MD	
11:05 – 11:25	AMS as a Standard of Care & Types of Stewardship Programs **Mona Jradeh, MD**
11:25 – 11:45	Applying Behavioral Change to AMS: Identifying Behavioral Determinants and Designing Effective Interventions **Rima Moghnieh, MD**
11:45 – 12:05	Prolonged Infusion of Beta-Lactams: One Strategy on the Path to Precision Dosing **Nisrine Haddad, PharmD**
12:05 – 12:15	Q&A

Time	Topic
12:15 – 13:45	**SESSION III - Diagnostic Stewardship in the MDR Era**
	Moderators: Gilbert Helou, MD; Tamima Jisr, MD; Wafaa Jreige, MD
12:15 – 12:35	Screening at the Speed of Spread: Confronting the Multi-drug Resistance Burden with Rapid Diagnostics **Rindala Saliba, PharmD, PhD, Clinical Pathologist**
12:35 – 12:55	Biomarkers to Guide Antibiotics Duration **Ghenwa Dakdouki, MD**
12:55 – 13:15	Surveillance – Antibiograms & Epidemiology of Resistance Mechanisms **Georges Araj, PhD**
13:15 – 13:35	A Modern Approach to HAIs: An Integrated Leadership – Driven Strategy **Eid Azar, MD**
13:35 – 13:45	Q&A
13:45 – 14:45	**LUNCH BREAK**
	Moderators: Fadi Hbeiche, MD; Nada Chamseddine, MD
14:45 – 15:15	From Rapid Diagnosis to Timely Action: Transforming Pneumonia and Sepsis Management with Syndromic Testing *Bioteck Symposium* **Naim Aoun, MD**
15:15 – 16:05	**SESSION IV - KEYNOTE LECTURES**
	Moderators: Abdul Rahman Bizri, MD; Mona Jradeh, MD
15:15 –15:40	Human Conflicts as a Source of Dissemination of Antimicrobial Resistance **Souha Kanj, MD**
15:40 – 16:05	Governing AMR When Systems are Broken: Translating Global Commitments into Local Action in Fragile and Conflict- Affected Settings **Rana Hajjeh, MD**
16:05 – 16:15	**COFFEE BREAK**

Program Day 1 | Thursday, October 29, 2026

Time	Topic
16:15 – 17:30	**Round Table Discussion** One Health in Lebanon: From Concept to National Action **Chair: Mona Jradeh, MD** *President of the LSIDCM* - **Atika Berry, MD,** *Head of the Preventive Medicine Department, Communicable Diseases Unit, Ministry of Public Health (representing MOPH)* - **Souha Kanj, MD,** *Tenured Professor of Medicine, AUBMC (Representing LOP in Beirut)* - **Bilal Abdallah, MD,** *Member of the Parliament, Chairman of the Parliamentary Health Committee* - **Alissar Rady, MD,** *Team Lead, World Health Organization Country Office* - **Léa Kaï,** *Manager of UNDP's Climate Change Projects, Ministry of Environment* - **Eng. Abeer Sirawan**, *Studies & Coordination Director, Ministry of Agriculture* - **Rana Hajjeh, MD** *President of the Population Council , USA* - **Abdul Rahman Bizri, MD,** *Infectious Diseases Specialist and Member of the Lebanese Parliament* - **Lina Farah, PhD,** *FAO Representation in Lebanon* - **Ghassan Matar, MSc, PhD,** *Chairperson, Department of Experimental Pathology, Immunology and Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, American University of Beirut*
17:30 – 18:00	**OPENING CEREMONY** Address of the Master of Ceremony - **Zahi Helou, MD** Address of the President of the LSIDCM - **Mona Jradeh, MD** Address of the President of LOP in Beirut - **Elias Chelala, MD** Address of the WHO representative - **Ahmed Zouiten, MD** Address of H.E. the Minister of Public Health - **Rakan Nassereldine, MD** **HONORING CEREMONY** Master of Ceremony - **Ghenwa Dakdouki, MD**
18:00	**OPENING RECEPTION**

Time	Topic
09:00 – 10:10	**SESSION V - Update on the Treatment of Resistant Microorganisms**
Moderators: Laure Yammine, MD; Mona Youssef, MD; Zahi Helou, MD	
09:00 – 09:20	Anti-gram Positive Therapy **Jacques Choucair, MD**
09:20 – 09:40	Treating MDR Gram Negative Infections **Nada Chamseddine, MD**
09:40 – 10:10	The Changing Landscape of Antifungal Therapy: From Resistance to New Therapeutic Strategies **Sarah Delliere, MD**
10:10 – 10:20	Q&A
10:20 – 10:50	**COFFEE BREAK**
Moderators: Douaa Abou Hamdan, MD; Ghassan Awar, MD	
10:50 – 11:20	Exploring the Role of Zavicefta (Ceftazidime- Avibactam) in Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) Gram-negative Infections *Symposium sponsored by Pfizer in Partnership with Droguerie Fattal* **Rima Moghnieh, MD**
Moderators: Hassan Rahal, MD; Zahraa Barek, MD	
11:20 – 11:50	Meropenem-Vaborbactam: When Carbapenems Fight Back *Symposium sponsored by Hikma* **Aline Zakhem, MD**
Moderators: Hassan Ayoub, MD; Sara Nahhal, MD	
11:50 – 12:20	The Role of Betalactams in the Era of Resistance *Symposium sponsored by Arwan Pharmaceutical Industries* **Ghenwa Dakdouki, MD**
12:20 – 13:40	**LUNCH BREAK**
13:40 – 14:30	**SESSION VI - Bacteriophage Therapy**
Moderators: Ghassan Matar, MSc, PhD; Souha Kanj, MD	
13:40 – 14:00	Harnessing the Human Microbiome as Bacteriotherapy to Combat Multidrug Resistance and Reduce Antibiotic Use **Melhem Bilen, PhD**
14:00 – 14:20	Real-World Outcomes of a National Bacteriophage Therapy Program: Seven Years of the Pittsburgh Phage Program (P3) **Ghady Haidar, MD**
14:20 – 14:30	Q&A

Program

Day 2 | Friday, October 30, 2026

Time	Topic
14:30 – 16:00	**SESSION VII - One Health Approach to AMR**
	Moderators: Ghassan Matar, MSc, PhD; Jacques Choucair, MD; Mounzer Hamzeh, PhD
14:30 – 14:50	Genomic Surveillance in a One Health Approach: Characterizing Potential Outbreaks and Antimicrobial Resistance in Enteric Bacteria **Heather Carleton, MPH, PhD** *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*
14:50 – 15:10	Scars, Soil, and Superbugs: Genomic Mapping of AMR in MENA Conflict Zones **Antoine Abou Fayad, PhD**
15:10 – 15:30	Microbiology-Enabled Stewardship in a One Health Perspective **Ziad Daoud, PhD, FACSc., HCLD(ABB), SM(ASCP)^{cm}**
15:30 – 15:50	Zoonotic Transmission of Genes from Animal Livestock to Humans **Issmat Kassim, MS, PhD**
15:50 – 16:00	Q&A
16:00 – 16:30	**COFFEE BREAK**
16:30 – 17:20	**SESSION VIII - Redefining STI and HIV Prevention: The Era of PrEP and PEP**
	Moderators: Ghassan Awar, MD; Naji Aoun, MD; Pierre Abi Hanna, MD
16:30 – 16:50	Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): The Role of Doxy PEP and PrEP **Khalil Ghanem, MD**
16:50 – 17:10	Stopping the HIV Tide: The Role and Success of PrEP **Lydia Aoun Barakat, MD**
17:10 – 17:20	Q&A
17:20 – 18:20	**Oral Presentations**

Moderators: Bassam Bilen, MD; Gilbert Helou, MD; Jamal Hammoud, MD; Naji Aoun, MD

Time	Topic
09:00 – 10:40	**SESSION IX - Vaccination across the Lifespan – Public Health Impact: Current Recommendations in Special Patient Populations**
Moderators: Georges Khalil, MD; Iman Mahfouz, MD; Nicolas Saoud, MD; Rima Wakim, MD	
09:00 – 09:20	Immunization of Special Pediatric Populations **Raymond Mikhael, MD**
09:20 – 09:50	Vaccines as an Overlooked AMR Intervention: Closing the Loop between Immunization and Stewardship **Rana Hajjeh, MD**
09:50 – 10:10	Vaccination without Barriers: Reaching Vulnerable Populations in Diverse Settings **Umayya Musharrafieh, MD**
10:10 – 10:30	Immunization of Immunocompromised Patients **Aline Zakhem, MD**
10:30 – 10:40	Q&A
Moderators: Wafaa Jreige, MD; Zahi Helou, MD	
10:40 – 11:10	Help Break the HPV Chain *Symposium sponsored by MSD* **Naji Aoun, MD**
11:10 – 11:40	**COFFEE BREAK**
11:40 – 13:00	**SESSION X - Antimicrobial Prophylaxis in the Era of Multidrug Resistance: From Prevention to Practice**
Moderators: Hayat Mezher, MD; Roula Husni Samaha, MD; Samer Nasser, MD; Ziad El Rassi, MD	
11:40 – 12:00	Antimicrobial Prophylaxix in High Risk Hemato-Oncology Patients in the Era of MDR **Rima Moghnieh, MD**
12:00 – 12:20	Surgical ABX Prophylaxix: The Evidence behind Timing and Duration **Rita Murri, MD**
12:20 – 12:40	Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis in the Era of MDR **Maddalena Giannella, MD**
12:40 – 13:00	Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Vascular Graft and Intracardiac Device Implantation **Zeina Kanafani, MD**
13:00	**Closing Remarks** **Mona Jradeh, MD**



Eliane Maasri, BS, MPH, CPHQ

Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ),
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Program Manager,
Saint George University Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Mrs. Eliane Maasri is an Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) professional with nearly 14 years of experience in infection prevention, patient safety, and healthcare quality. She currently serves as the IPC Program Manager at SGUMC, where she leads and oversees the comprehensive hospital-wide infection prevention and control program, including infection surveillance, outbreak management, policy development, staff education, and the implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies.

Mrs. Maasri holds a Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Sciences and a Master of Public Health (MPH) and is a Certified Professional in Healthcare Quality (CPHQ).

Mrs. Maasri has also played a key leadership role in Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, leading the Infection Prevention and Control (IPCA) chapter and coordinating efforts to ensure compliance with international infection prevention and patient safety standards.

Her professional focus is on strengthening infection prevention practices, advancing healthcare quality, and promoting a sustainable culture of patient safety.

Abstract

Single Use or Safe to Re-Use?

Reuse of medical devices labelled "single use" is common worldwide, driven by cost, supply shortages and sustainability. Many countries permit it only through validated, regulated reprocessing, while others prohibit it. Lebanon has no national framework, leaving each hospital to decide alone. This talk reviews international practices and regulatory models, the reprocessing process and the evidence on safety and the infection-control risks of unvalidated reuse.

Drawing on these international practices, it proposes a hospital-level decision tool for Lebanon and steps for infection control professionals to put it into practice.



Naji Aoun, MD

Assistant Dean for International Programs,
Clinical Associate Professor,
University of Balamand
Head, Department of Infectious Diseases,
Clemenceau Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Naji Aoun is a Lebanese-French physician specializing in Infectious Diseases, with extensive experience in clinical practice, medical education, antimicrobial stewardship, and healthcare leadership. He currently serves as Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases at Clemenceau Medical Center in Beirut, where he also leads the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program and chairs the Infection Control Committee.

Alongside his clinical responsibilities, Dr. Aoun holds the positions of Assistant Dean for International Programs and Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Balamand.

Dr. Aoun also serves as Medical Advisor to the French Embassy in Lebanon and as a consultant to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Abstract

Isolation Policy in the MDR Era

Rapid molecular diagnostics offer opportunities to optimize contact precautions and reduce unnecessary isolation of patients with multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs). This presentation reviews evidence on the use of PCR and rapid diagnostic tests to guide isolation decisions, particularly in healthcare settings with limited resources. Drawing on international guidelines and studies relevant to Lebanon, it examines their impact on diagnostic turnaround times, patient management, and infection transmission. While rapid testing can shorten pre-emptive isolation and facilitate earlier clearance of exposed contacts, it does not justify premature discontinuation of precautions in confirmed carriers. The presentation emphasizes risk-stratified approaches that integrate rapid diagnostics, local epidemiology, and infection prevention and control practices.



Zeina Kanafani, MD, MS, FIDSA

Tenured Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases,
Assistant Dean for Medical Student Affairs, Faculty of Medicine
Hospital Epidemiologist, American University of Beirut Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Zeina Kanafani is a Tenured Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases, Assistant Dean for Medical Student Affairs at the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine, and the Hospital Epidemiologist at the American University of Beirut Medical Center.

She earned her MD and completed her Internal Medicine residency at the American University of Beirut, followed by a Master of Science in Epidemiology. In 2004, she pursued fellowship training in Infectious Diseases at Duke University Medical Center before returning to AUB in 2007 to join the faculty, where she continues to pursue her clinical, academic, and leadership roles. She has recently embarked on a PhD in Biomedical Sciences to deepen her engagement in basic science research, particularly in microbiology.

Dr. Kanafani has authored approximately 150 peer-reviewed publications and secured research funding in support of her work. Her primary research interests include hospital-acquired infections, antimicrobial resistance, infections in immunocompromised hosts, and infective endocarditis.

Abstract

Outbreaks Under Fire: Investigation and Infection Control in Times of Conflict

Armed conflict creates ideal conditions for infectious disease outbreaks while simultaneously weakening the systems needed to detect and control them. Population displacement, overcrowding, damaged infrastructure, shortages of healthcare workers and supplies, and a strained healthcare system increase disease transmission in the community as well as within hospitals. This presentation will examine how conventional outbreak investigation and infection prevention principles can be adapted to resource-constrained and insecure settings. It will highlight practical approaches to rapid risk assessment, case detection, surveillance, laboratory support, isolation and cohorting, antimicrobial stewardship, and protection of healthcare workers.

Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Vascular Graft and Intracardiac Device Implantation

Infections involving vascular grafts and intracardiac devices are uncommon but potentially devastating, often requiring prolonged antimicrobial therapy, complex surgical intervention, or device removal. Effective prevention begins with careful patient assessment, meticulous implantation technique, and appropriately selected perioperative antibiotic prophylaxis. This presentation will review the principles and the evidence guiding prophylaxis for vascular graft procedures and cardiac implantable electronic devices, including antibiotic selection, timing, dosing, redosing, and duration. It will also address challenges such as methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus risk, prolonged procedures, and the role of adjunctive strategies in patients at increased risk.



Pierre Abi Hanna, MD, MPH

Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases
Faculty of Medical Sciences, Lebanese University,
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Pierre Abi Hanna is a board-certified specialist in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases, with expertise in clinical infectious diseases, infection prevention and control, and public health. He currently serves as Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the Lebanese University.

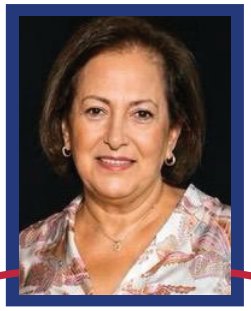
Holding both a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree and a Master of Public Health (MPH), Dr. Abi Hanna combines clinical expertise with a public health perspective, focusing on the prevention, diagnosis, and management of infectious diseases.

His principal areas of professional interest include clinical infectious diseases, infection prevention and control, and public health.

Abstract

Emerging viral outbreak

Ebola virus disease continues to re-emerge, causing devastating outbreaks and generating widespread global concern. This presentation will review past and current outbreaks and examine recent advances in vaccines and therapeutics. Through the story of these outbreaks, particular emphasis will be placed on lessons learned and the critical role of infection prevention and control in limiting transmission and protecting patients, healthcare workers, and communities.



Mona Jradeh, MD

Infectious Diseases Specialist,
Head, Infectious Diseases Division, University of Balamand
President, Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Mona F. Jradeh is an Infectious Diseases specialist with more than 30 years of experience in clinical practice, academic medicine, public health, and professional leadership in Lebanon. She currently serves as President of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (LSIDCM) and Head of the Infectious Diseases Division at the University of Balamand.

Dr. Jradeh obtained her medical degree from the Lebanese University before completing her residency in Internal Medicine and fellowship training in Infectious Diseases at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC).

Since 1995, she has been actively involved in the LSIDCM, holding several leadership positions, including longstanding membership on its Executive Committee and service as Treasurer. Dr. Jradeh has played an important role in the development of national clinical guidelines addressing infectious diseases and antimicrobial use. Her contributions include Lebanese guidelines for community-acquired pneumonia, febrile neutropenia in patients with cancer amid increasing antimicrobial resistance, urinary tract infections, and COVID-19.

Beyond her clinical and academic responsibilities, she has been actively engaged in national public health initiatives. She is a member of the National Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Program and participated in the National COVID-19 Task Force. She also previously served on the National Committee for Classification of Acute Flaccid Paralysis.

Abstract

AMS as a Standard of Care & Types of Stewardship Programs

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing threat to patient safety and effective healthcare. Antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) is a key strategy to ensure that antimicrobials are used appropriately while improving patient outcomes, reducing adverse effects, limiting resistance, and avoiding unnecessary costs.

This presentation will highlight why AMS should be considered a standard of care and an integral component of healthcare quality and patient safety. It will review the core principles of AMS and the different models of stewardship programs, including prospective audit and feedback, preauthorization, pharmacy- and infectious diseases–led interventions, unit-based programs, diagnostic stewardship, antimicrobial use surveillance, and education.

The presentation will emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration and adaptation of AMS strategies to local resources, epidemiology, and AMR priorities. Ultimately, effective AMS aims to ensure that the right antimicrobial is given to the right patient, at the right dose, by the right route, for the right duration—and only when needed.



Rima Moghnieh, MD, FIDSA, FRCP

Clinical Professor of Medicine,
Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program Director,
Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine,
Lebanese American University
Head, Division of Infectious Diseases, LAU Medical Center–Rizk Hospital, Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Rima Moghnieh is Clinical Professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program Director at the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine, Lebanese American University, and Head of the Division of Infectious Diseases at LAU Medical Center–Rizk Hospital. Her main areas of expertise include antimicrobial resistance (AMR), antimicrobial stewardship (AMS), infection prevention and control (IPC), clinical research, and evidence-based guideline development.

Dr. Moghnieh has contributed extensively to the development of national infectious diseases guidelines and AMR strategies in Lebanon. She has served as an external consultant to the World Health Organization on AMR and IPC, contributing to the development of National Action Plans for AMR and national IPC guidelines in several countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region. She currently serves as a member of the WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (STAG-AMR).

She has co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed publications. Her research interests span several areas of infectious diseases, with a particular focus on epidemiology, AMR surveillance, hospital-based AMS and IPC, healthcare-associated infections, and vaccinology.

Abstract

Applying Behavioral Change to AMS: Identifying Behavioral Determinants and Designing Effective Interventions

Antimicrobial stewardship interventions often fail when they focus only on knowledge gaps without addressing the behavioral determinants that shape prescribing. This lecture will introduce a practical, theory-informed approach to behavior change in antimicrobial stewardship using the COM-B model, the Theoretical Domains Framework, and Behavior Change Techniques. Through an acute diarrhea stewardship project as an applied example, the session will illustrate how to define a target behavior, identify barriers and facilitators to guideline adherence, map these determinants to appropriate intervention strategies, and translate behavioral theory into feasible implementation approaches. The aim is to demonstrate how behavioral science can strengthen implementation, improve adherence to stewardship pathways, and support more appropriate antimicrobial use in routine clinical practice.



Rima Moghnieh, MD, FIDSA, FRCP

Clinical Professor of Medicine,
Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program Director,
Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine,
Lebanese American University
Head, Division of Infectious Diseases, LAU Medical Center–Rizk Hospital, Lebanon

Abstract

Exploring the Role of Zavicefta (Ceftazidime-Avibactam) in Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) Gram-negative Infections

Multidrug-resistant Gram-negative infections represent an increasing therapeutic challenge, particularly in settings with a high burden of antimicrobial resistance. Ceftazidime–avibactam has emerged as an important treatment option for selected resistant Enterobacterales and Pseudomonas aeruginosa infections, although its appropriate use requires an understanding of its antibacterial spectrum, resistance mechanisms, and the clinical context. This lecture reviews the mechanism and antibacterial spectrum of ceftazidime–avibactam, examines the Lebanese antimicrobial resistance landscape, and summarizes evidence for its efficacy from pivotal randomized trials and comparative real-world studies. These data will then be translated into Lebanese clinical practice, with emphasis on appropriate patient selection, targeted therapy, and optimal use of ceftazidime–avibactam within an antimicrobial stewardship framework.

Antimicrobial Prophylaxis in High Risk Hemato-Oncology Patients in the Era of MDR

Infectious complications remain a major concern in patients with hematologic malignancies and recipients of hematopoietic cell transplantation, yet infectious risk is not uniform and antimicrobial prophylaxis should be tailored to the nature, depth, and duration of the underlying immune defect. This lecture reviews antimicrobial prophylaxis in high-risk hematology-oncology settings, with particular attention to biologic and cellular therapies and the evolving evidence for fluoroquinolone prophylaxis, integrating current recommendations, local resistance epidemiology, baseline colonization, and Lebanese data to support a transition from broad risk-based prophylaxis toward a more selective, individualized, and resistance-aware approach.



Nisrine Haddad, PharmD, BCPS

Senior Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacist,
American University of Beirut Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Nisrine Haddad earned her B.S. in Biology from the American University of Beirut in 2009, followed by Pharmacy and Pharm.D. degrees from the Lebanese American University in 2013 and 2014. She completed a Pharmacy Practice Residency at Houston Methodist Hospital in 2015.

Since 2018, Dr. Haddad has been a senior antimicrobial stewardship pharmacist at AUB Medical Center and is involved in several hospital committees, including antimicrobial stewardship and infection control. She is a board-certified pharmacotherapy specialist and completed the MAD-ID advanced antimicrobial stewardship training.

Dr. Haddad has presented locally, nationally, and internationally and is a member of various professional societies, including the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists and the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. She has authored numerous publications in the fields of antimicrobial stewardship and clinical pharmacy.

Abstract

Prolonged Infusion of Beta-Lactams: One Strategy on the Path to Precision Dosing

This presentation explores the role of prolonged-infusion beta-lactam antibiotics in optimizing antimicrobial therapy and addressing antimicrobial resistance. It reviews the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic principles supporting extended and continuous infusion strategies, particularly in critically ill patients and those with altered drug clearance. Drawing on international consensus recommendations and major clinical trials, including MERCY, BLING III, and BEATLE, the session evaluates the impact of prolonged infusion on therapeutic target attainment and clinical outcomes. Practical considerations, including loading doses, renal function, therapeutic drug monitoring, and antimicrobial susceptibility testing, will be discussed. The presentation also examines evidence in pediatric populations, highlighting opportunities and remaining challenges in implementing individualized, precision-based beta-lactam dosing.



Rindala Saliba, PharmD, PhD

Deputy Laboratory Director,
Head of Clinical Microbiology,
Clemenceau Medical Center,
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Rindala Saliba is a clinical microbiology specialist with expertise in antimicrobial resistance, clinical pathology, and molecular diagnostics. She currently serves as Deputy Laboratory Director and Head of Clinical Microbiology at Clemenceau Medical Center in Beirut, Lebanon, a Johns Hopkins Medicine International affiliate.

Dr. Saliba holds a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree and a specialized diploma (DES) in Clinical Pathology from Saint Joseph University of Beirut and Paris Descartes University. She also obtained a university diploma in Antibiotics and Antimicrobial Therapy Optimization from Paris Diderot University, followed by a PhD in Clinical Microbiology from Sorbonne Paris Nord University, France.

An active researcher, Dr. Saliba has authored or co-authored more than 20 peer-reviewed scientific publications in internationally recognized journals, including JAC-Antimicrobial Resistance, Journal of Clinical Microbiology, Scientific Reports, and Journal of Hospital Infection.

Abstract

Screening at the Speed of Spread: Confronting the Multi-drug Resistance Burden with Rapid Diagnostics

Antimicrobial resistance is among the most pressing threats to modern medicine, and carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales (CPE) and vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) are of particular concern: their determinants are plasmid-borne, they colonize commensal flora, and hospitals act as amplifiers between community and healthcare settings. CPE and VRE are contained through a "search and isolate" strategy that requires three weekly rectal culture screens, a delay that constrains bed management. This lecture reviews the determinants of MDRO transmission, the phenotypic recognition of ESBL, AmpC and Ambler class A, B and D carbapenemase profiles and the chromogenic, acidimetric, immunochromatographic and molecular tests available for rapid carbapenemase confirmation. It then examines where rapid molecular testing changes practice: the diagnostic accuracy of PCR for direct CPE detection in rectal swabs, and



Ghenwa El Dakdouki, MD

Associate Professor of Internal Medicine,
Chair of the Internal Medicine Department, Infectious Diseases Division, and Infection Control Department,
Hammoud Hospital University Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Ghenwa El Dakdouki is an Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and a specialist in Infectious Diseases, with extensive experience in clinical practice, medical education, research, and healthcare leadership. She currently serves as Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine, Infectious Diseases Division, and Infection Control Department at HHUMC. She also practices as a Consultant in Infectious Diseases at CMC, AWZ, and LMC.

Dr. El Dakdouki completed her medical training at the Lebanese University in 1998, followed by a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) in 2003. She subsequently pursued specialized training in systemic diseases at Claude Huriez Hospital in Lille, France. She also holds a certificate in Molecular Biology from Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ) and a diploma in Hospital Management.

Alongside her clinical and administrative responsibilities, she has been actively involved in medical education and academic training at the Lebanese University, Beirut Arab University, and the University of Balamand, contributing to teaching programs in medicine and public health. Her academic contributions include numerous scientific publications in national and international journals, as well as ten published books.
Her professional interests encompass infectious diseases, infection prevention and control, diabetic foot management, scientific research, medical education, and community health awareness. She remains committed to strengthening healthcare services, mentoring future healthcare professionals, and promoting evidence-based clinical practices.

Abstract

Biomarkers to Guide Antibiotic Duration

Optimizing antibiotic treatment duration is essential to improving clinical outcomes while minimizing antimicrobial resistance, adverse effects, and unnecessary antibiotic exposure. Biomarkers such as procalcitonin (PCT) and C-reactive protein (CRP) have emerged as valuable tools to support antibiotic stewardship by providing objective measures of inflammatory response and treatment progression. This presentation explores the clinical utility of biomarkers in guiding antibiotic discontinuation, reviews current evidence supporting biomarker-guided treatment strategies across different infectious syndromes, and discusses their limitations in clinical practice. Particular emphasis will be placed on integrating biomarker trends with clinical assessment to individualize treatment duration, reduce unnecessary antibiotic use, and promote evidence-based antimicrobial stewardship.



George F. Araj, PhD, D(ABMM), FAAM

Professor and Director of Clinical Microbiology,
American University of Beirut Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Prof. George F. Araj is Professor and Director of Clinical Microbiology at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC), a position he has held since the early 1990s. He earned his PhD in Medical Sciences from AUB and completed postdoctoral training in Clinical Microbiology at several leading medical institutions in the United States. He became a Diplomate of the American Board of Medical Microbiology in 1986 and a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology in 2000.

Previously, he held academic and leadership positions at Kuwait University and Mubarak Al Kabeer University Hospital. An internationally recognized expert in Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Prof. Araj has published over 250 scientific papers and book chapters and serves on numerous scientific and editorial committees. His distinctions include the Abdul Hameed Shoman Award (2024), the AUB Faculty of Medicine Dean's Award (2026), and recognition among the world's top 1–2% most-cited scientists (2022–2026), as reported in the submitted biography.

Abstract

Surveillance – Antibiograms & Epidemiology of Resistance Mechanisms

The Clinical Microbiology Laboratory perspectives are essentially simulated to the "AWACS" in streamlining Infectious Diseases related aspects. Based on strong foundation of manpower, facility and technological tools, it is geared to provide rapid, reliable, clinically relevant- cost effective diagnostic & therapeutic quality testing results whether using conventional, automated, and or molecular methods. As such the generated data for antibiograms as well as surveillance of pathogens and their AMR reveal credible information and epidemiologic trends over time. Conduction of dependable research, especially in addressing critical and emerging pathogens is the light house of guiding surveillance and epidemiology regarding changing prevalence of pathogen types and their associated AMR. This is important and helpful data in clinical practice, decision and policy making for ICP, ASP, MOPH, as well as to other healthcare professionals in the country.

All are corner stones in the containment of the AMR and outbreak problems. Empowering CME, providing training as well as implementing proficiency testing are also cornerstones for maintaining stellar infectious diseases practices and pillars in governance of private and governmental health sectors.



Eid Azar, MD

Professor of Clinical Medicine,
Assistant Dean for Research, SGUB
Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases,
Head of Infection Control and Prevention,
Chair, Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, SGHUMC
Lebanon

Biography

Prof. Eid Azar is a Professor of Clinical Medicine (Infectious Diseases) and Assistant Dean for Research at Saint George University of Beirut. He serves as Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases, Head of Infection Control and Prevention, and Chair of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program at Saint George Hospital University Medical Center.

His clinical and research interests focus on antimicrobial resistance, antimicrobial stewardship, infection prevention and control, hospital epidemiology, and emerging infectious diseases. Prof. Azar has authored more than 35 peer-reviewed publications, presented extensively at international scientific meetings, and has led multiple national and institutional initiatives, including Lebanon's COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

He is actively involved in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education and in developing research capacity through the establishment of multidisciplinary clinical and academic programs.



Naim Aoun, MD

Pulmonary and Critical Care Consultant & ICU Director,
American Hospital Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Biography

Dr. Naim Aoun is a board-certified Consultant in Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Medicine, currently practicing at the American Hospital Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he also serves as Assistant Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Dr. Aoun obtained his medical degree from Saint Joseph University of Beirut, Lebanon, before pursuing postgraduate medical training in the United States. He completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Massachusetts, followed by fellowship training in Pulmonary Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, and Sleep Medicine at Tufts University in Boston.

Prior to joining the American Hospital Dubai, Dr. Aoun practiced as a consultant in the United States for 11 years, during which he also held the position of Chief of Medicine.

In addition to his clinical and administrative responsibilities, Dr. Aoun has contributed to medical research and scientific education through numerous publications and abstracts in peer-reviewed journals, as well as contributions to several medical book chapters.

He is also an active international speaker, participating in scientific and educational activities across the Gulf region and the United States, including pharmaceutical-sponsored medical education programs.

Abstract

From Rapid Diagnosis to Timely Action: Transforming Pneumonia and Sepsis Management with Syndromic Testing

Dr. Aoun will share real-world clinical cases from his practice, highlighting how rapid syndromic testing has supported clinical decision-making and influenced the management of critically ill patients with suspected pneumonia and sepsis. Through these cases, he will demonstrate how access to rapid diagnostic information can help clinicians move from diagnosis to timely, targeted action in critically ill patients.



Souha Kanj, MD, FACP, FIDSA, FRCP, FESCMI, FECMM, FISAC

Professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases,
Chairperson, Infection Control Program
Co-Director, Antimicrobial Stewardship Program
American University of Beirut Medical Center
Adjunct Professor, Duke University Medical Center, USA
President, International Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (ISAC)
Lebanon

Biography

Prof. Souha Kanj is a tenured Professor of Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center, where she served as Head of the Division of Infectious Diseases until 2024. She is Chair of the Infection Control Program, co-Chair of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program, and Consulting Professor at Duke University Medical Center where she trained in Internal Medicine and ID.

Prof. Kanj co-authored over 325 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and UpToDate® cards. She serves as an advisory member for WHO programs in infection control, antimicrobial resistance, priority pathogens, diagnostic stewardship, COVID-19, and fungal infections. She is an advisory international board member for Lancet and Associate Editor for Mayo Clinics Proceedings. Her research focuses on nosocomial infections, antimicrobial resistance and stewardship, nosocomial infections, infection control, ID during wars, and fungal infections.

A fellow of several professional societies, including ACP, IDSA, RCP, ESCMID, and ECMM, she is a board member of the Alliance for prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA), and was co-chair of the Antimicrobial Stewardship study group of the International Society of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (ISAC). She is currently President of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (LSIDCM) and President of ISAC. Her accolades include awards from the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research, Shoman Award for Research excellence in Arabs, Arab league Excellence in Medicine, Intissar Ahdab Award for Excellence in Research at AUB, the Faculty of Medicine Research Award at AUBMC, the Valkhof Professorship then an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL. She has ranked in the top 2% cited researchers in the Stanford University citation indicator for 2023-2025 and is the most cited researcher in ID in the Arab countries.

Abstract

Human Conflicts as a Source of Dissemination of Antimicrobial Resistance

This presentation explores the impact of armed conflict on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), highlighting how disrupted healthcare systems, population displacement, inadequate infection prevention and control, and inappropriate antibiotic use contribute to the emergence and spread of resistant pathogens. Drawing on evidence from the Middle East and other conflict-affected regions, it examines the burden of multidrug-resistant bacteria, including carbapenem-resistant Acinetobacter baumannii and Pseudomonas aeruginosa, as well as emerging invasive fungal infections. The session addresses challenges in diagnosis, surveillance, and treatment in resource-limited settings and discusses practical strategies to strengthen antimicrobial stewardship, infection prevention and control, microbiological capacity, and healthcare resilience. It emphasizes the importance of coordinated regional and international efforts and a One Health approach to mitigating AMR during and after conflict.



Rana Hajjeh, MD

Global Public Health and Infectious Diseases Expert
Former President, Population Council
Former Director of Programme Management,
World Health Organization (WHO), EMRO
USA

Biography

Dr. Rana Hajjeh is an internationally recognized public health leader with more than 30 years of experience in global health, infectious disease epidemiology, immunization programs, health policy, and health systems strengthening. Her career spans senior leadership positions at the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Population Council.

Most recently, Dr. Hajjeh served as President of the Population Council in New York, a global research organization dedicated to advancing health and development, particularly for women and girls. From 2019 to 2024, she was Director of Programme Management at the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO), overseeing technical programs and contributing to regional responses to major public health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic, humanitarian crises, conflicts, and natural disasters. Previously, as Director of Communicable Diseases at WHO EMRO (2016–2019), she led infectious disease prevention and control programs across 22 countries, encompassing immunization, antimicrobial resistance, infection prevention and control, and major communicable diseases.

Before joining WHO, Dr. Hajjeh spent 23 years at the CDC, where she held several senior leadership positions, including Director of the Bacterial Diseases Division (2008–2016). She also directed the GAVI Hib Initiative (2005–2010), supporting the introduction of Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccines in resource-limited countries. Throughout her career, she has contributed to international responses to major outbreaks, including meningococcal meningitis, cholera, Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), and Ebola.

Dr. Hajjeh earned her medical degree from the American University of Beirut and is American board-certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases. She completed epidemiology training through the CDC's Epidemic Intelligence Service in 1993.

A distinguished researcher and academic, Dr. Hajjeh has authored more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and book chapters and has served on numerous scientific advisory boards and boards of trustees. She holds visiting professorships at Emory University, Johns Hopkins University, the American University of Beirut, and the University of Balamand.

Her contributions to global immunization and infectious disease prevention have earned her numerous distinctions, including the prestigious 2014 U.S. Federal Employee of the Year Award for her work in advancing vaccine access worldwide.



Rana Hajjeh, MD

Global Public Health and Infectious Diseases Expert
Former President, Population Council
Former Director of Programme Management,
World Health Organization (WHO), EMRO
USA

Abstract

Governing AMR When Systems Are Broken: Translating Global Commitments into Local Action in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings

Antimicrobial resistance already causes an estimated 1.27 million deaths annually worldwide, with the heaviest burden falling on fragile and conflict-affected health systems. A robust global architecture exists to contain it — the WHO Global Action Plan, national action plans, and the 2024 UN political declaration — yet this framework is rarely tested against the conditions under which Lebanon and much of the Eastern Mediterranean Region now operate: health-worker emigration, drug supply collapse, fragmented governance, and surveillance systems that under-detect resistance precisely where it is highest. This talk will discuss the need for the AMR strategy to be designed for fragility, rather than retrofitted onto it. Lessons from various crisis-tested global programs offer a practical template: innovative surveillance, flexible regional financing, primary-care-anchored stewardship, and explicit inclusion of displaced populations. The talk closes with concrete asks for national leadership, UN organization, partners and donors to close the gap between global commitment and local implementation reality.

Vaccines as an Overlooked AMR Intervention: Closing the Loop Between Immunization and Stewardship

Antimicrobial stewardship and immunization are typically treated as separate tracks, yet vaccines already function as a stewardship intervention — a connection WHO's October 2024 modeling makes explicit: full deployment of 44 vaccines against 24 priority pathogens could avert 515,000 AMR-associated deaths and 2.5 billion antibiotic doses annually, with currently licensed vaccines (Hib, pneumococcus, typhoid) already averting 106,000 deaths a year. This talk distinguishes two mechanisms — direct prevention of the resistant pathogen itself (Hib and pneumococcal vaccines), and indirect prevention of antibiotic-triggering viral illness (influenza vaccination) — and reframes the day's pediatric, adult, and special-population immunization sessions as stewardship interventions in their own right. Despite 87% of national AMR action plans referencing vaccination, implementation lags: immunization status is rarely part of stewardship rounds or antibiogram reviews, and the two programs typically report through separate lines. Drawing on introduction of new vaccines experience e GAVI Hib Initiative and studies on vaccination's durability in humanitarian settings, the talk closes with concrete steps to integrate immunization into AMS practice and to accelerate the vaccine pipeline against priority resistant pathogens.



Jacques Choucair, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine,
Faculty of Medicine, Saint Joseph University of Beirut
Head, Infectious Diseases Division,
Hôtel-Dieu de France University Hospital,
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Jacques Choucair is an Infectious diseases consultant in Hotel Dieu de France teaching hospital in Beyrouth affiliated to the Saint Joseph University, School of Medicine.

He graduated from The Saint Joseph University in Beyrouth and from the University of Paris VII faculty of Medicine and University of Paris V, faculty of Pharmacy.

Since December 2018, Dr. Choucair is the head of division of the Infectious diseases department at Hôtel Dieu de France de Beyrouth teaching hospital and an associate professor of Medicine at the Saint Joseph School of Medicine.

He also has a Medical Teaching diploma from the University of Montreal in Canada in 2003.

Dr. Choucair published more than 40 articles and is a reviewer in international journals. His main topics of interest are bacterial resistance and the proper use of antibiotics.

He is member of the scientific committee of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases, member in the Arab association for the proper use of antibiotics, member of the international Society of Infectious Diseases, and member of ESCMID.

Abstract

Anti-gram Positive Therapy

While the gram-negative microorganisms are more frequently responsible of the health associated infections in our region, we must not neglect the multi-drug-resistant gram-positive pathogens.

The gram-positives microorganisms are amongst the deadliest in the world in general and our region in particular especially Staphylococcus aureus and streptococcus pneumoniae. Thereby, it is extremely important to have national data regarding the infection rates and the sensitivity profiles of gram-positive infections.

Actually, the anti-gram-positive armamentarium is quite important and each molecule has its advantages and weaknesses.



Nada Chamseddine, MD

Infectious Diseases Consultant,
Sahel University General Hospital and Zahraa University Medical Center
Professor of Infectious Diseases and Infection Control,
Faculty of Pharmacy, Lebanese University
General Secretary, LSIDCM
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Nada Chamseddine is an Infectious Diseases Consultant and Professor of Infectious Diseases and Infection Control with extensive experience in clinical practice, academic education, and healthcare leadership in Lebanon. She currently serves as General Secretary of the Lebanese Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (LSIDCM), a position she has held since 2026.

Dr. Chamseddine is an Infectious Diseases Consultant at Sahel University General Hospital in Beirut, where she also serves as Co-Chair of the Internal Medicine Department. In addition, she has been practicing as an Infectious Diseases Consultant at Zahraa University Medical Center since 2014.

Alongside her clinical responsibilities, Dr. Chamseddine has served as Professor of Infectious Diseases and Infection Control at the Faculty of Pharmacy of the Lebanese University since 2014.

Her scientific contributions include publications in national and international medical journals, particularly in the areas of infectious diseases, clinical microbiology, and the management of uncommon infections.

Abstract

Treating MDR Gram Negative Infections

This presentation examines the applicability of the 2026 IDSA antimicrobial resistance (AMR) guidance to Lebanon and the MENA region, where resistance patterns differ significantly from those in the United States. Drawing on regional surveillance data and institutional antibiograms, it highlights the predominance of OXA-48 and NDM carbapenemases, high rates of carbapenem-resistant Acinetobacter baumannii, and emerging treatment challenges. The presentation reviews updated therapeutic recommendations, including novel antimicrobial combinations, and emphasizes the importance of carbapenemase identification, locally adapted treatment strategies, antimicrobial stewardship, and infection prevention and control.



Sarah Dellière, MD

Associate Professor of Clinical Mycology
Hôpital Bichat–Claude Bernard,
Institut Pasteur,
France

Biography

Prof. Sarah Dellière is an Associate Professor of Clinical Mycology based in Paris, France, with expertise in fungal infections, clinical microbiology, and medical mycology. She divides her professional activities between the diagnostic laboratory at Hôpital Bichat–Claude Bernard and the Institut Pasteur, combining clinical diagnostic practice with scientific research.

Her principal areas of expertise include invasive and superficial fungal infections, with a particular focus on aspergillosis, mucormycosis, and dermatophytosis.

Her multidisciplinary approach bridges laboratory diagnostics and translational research, supporting the advancement of clinical mycology and evidence-based strategies for the diagnosis and management of fungal infections.

Abstract

The Changing Landscape of Antifungal Therapy: From Resistance to New Therapeutic Strategies

Antifungal resistance is an expanding global threat, from terbinafine-resistant Trichophyton indotineae to multidrug-resistant Candida aurisand azole-resistant Aspergillus fumigatus. These emerging pathogens highlight the One Health drivers of resistance and the limitations of our current antifungal arsenal. This presentation will discuss new antifungal agents, combination strategies and host-directed approaches that may shape future therapeutic strategies. (let me know if you need longer)



Aline Zakhem, MD

Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine,
Acting Head of Infectious Diseases,
Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program Director,
American University of Beirut Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Aline Zakhem is Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center and the Program Director of the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Program . She is currently Acting Head of Infectious Diseases at AUBMC.

Her clinical expertise and research focus is the infections of the immunocompromised host .

Abstract

Immunization of Immunocompromised Patients

Immunization is a key component of infection prevention in immunocompromised patients, yet vaccine responses, safety, and optimal timing vary considerably according to the underlying condition and treatment. This talk will review practical, evidence-informed approaches to vaccination across a broad spectrum of immunocompromised populations, including patients with hematologic and solid malignancies, hematopoietic stem-cell transplant (HSCT) recipients, and chimeric antigen receptor T-cell (CAR-T) therapy recipients. We will also address patients receiving immunomodulators and biologic therapies, people living with HIV, and household contacts of immunocompromised individuals



Melhem Bilen, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Experimental Pathology, Immunology and Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Melhem Bilen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Experimental Pathology, Immunology and Microbiology at the American University of Beirut Faculty of Medicine and a member of the Center for Infectious Diseases Research. He received his PhD in Human Pathology and Infectious Diseases from Aix-Marseille University and completed postdoctoral training in Bioengineering at Stanford University.

His research focuses on the human microbiome, bacterial culturomics, antimicrobial resistance, microbial genomics, and the development of defined microbial communities as next-generation bacteriotherapies. His laboratory integrates high-throughput culturing, antimicrobial susceptibility testing, MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry, whole-genome sequencing, 16S rRNA sequencing, and shotgun metagenomics to investigate the gut resistome and identify potentially beneficial bacterial strains. His work also explores population-scale genomic relationships between bacterial metabolism, antimicrobial resistance, and mobile genetic elements in Escherichia coli.

Abstract

Harnessing the Human Microbiome as Bacteriotherapy to Combat Multidrug Resistance and Reduce Antibiotic Use

This presentation will examine the emerging concept of harnessing the human microbiome as bacteriotherapy to restore colonization resistance, suppress multidrug-resistant organisms, and potentially reduce dependence on antibiotics. Approaches ranging from fecal microbiota transplantation to rationally designed defined bacterial communities will be discussed, together with the importance of identifying microbial strains with appropriate safety, functional, and antimicrobial-resistance profiles.

The presentation will also highlight ongoing work at the American University of Beirut investigating the gut resistome through integrated culturomics, antimicrobial susceptibility testing, whole-genome sequencing, and metagenomic approaches. Recent population-genomic studies of Escherichia coli will illustrate how bacterial metabolic traits, antimicrobial resistance determinants, plasmid carriage, and lineage structure can be interconnected.

Together, these findings support a shift from viewing the microbiome solely as a reservoir of resistance toward considering it as a source of precisely characterized microbial therapeutics that may complement antimicrobial stewardship and contribute to future strategies against multidrug resistance.



Ghady Haidar, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine,
School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh
Transplant Infectious Diseases Physician, UPMC,
United States of America

Biography

Dr. Ghady Haidar is Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and a transplant infectious diseases physician at UPMC, both in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Haidar received his MD from the American University of Beirut in 2011, completed his internal medicine residency at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio in 2014, and then completed fellowships in infectious diseases (2016) and transplant infectious diseases (2017) at the University of Pittsburgh/UPMC, where he has been on faculty since 2017.

Dr. Haidar is co-chair of the Pittsburgh Phage Program, which provides bacteriophage therapy for patients with difficult-to-treat or multidrug-resistant infections. He is sponsor-investigator on clinical trials of phage therapy. He also serves as Medical Director of the Division of Infectious Diseases' Translational Research Unit and as Director of Research for Bone Marrow Transplant and Hematological Malignancy Infectious Diseases, and he previously directed the Transplant ID Fellowship (2019–2025).

His research focuses on antimicrobial resistance and infections in immunocompromised hosts, particularly patients with organ transplants or hematologic cancers. He has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, including in the New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet Infectious Diseases, The American Journal of Transplantation, and Clinical Infectious Diseases, and speaks regularly at international meetings including IDWeek, the American Transplant Congress, and ESCMID Global.

Abstract

Real-World Outcomes of a National Bacteriophage Therapy Program: Seven Years of the Pittsburgh Phage Program (P3)

This presentation highlights seven years of real-world experience with compassionate-use bacteriophage therapy through the Pittsburgh Phage Program (P3). Between 2019 and 2026, the program received 357 treatment requests, with suitable lytic phages identified for approximately 71% of screened isolates. Among treated patients, phage therapy was generally well tolerated, with encouraging clinical outcomes and no phage-attributable deaths. The findings demonstrate the potential of phage therapy for difficult-to-treat and multidrug-resistant infections while emphasizing the need for expanded phage banks and controlled clinical trials.



Heather Carleton, MPH, PhD

Chief, Enteric Diseases Laboratory Branch (EDLB),
Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases,
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
United States of America

Biography

Dr. Heather Carleton serves as Chief of the Enteric Diseases Laboratory Branch (EDLB) in the Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Her expertise spans enteric diseases, molecular epidemiology, bioinformatics, and next-generation sequencing. As Chair of PulseNet USA, PulseNet International, and the U.S. interagency workgroup Genomics in Food and Feed Safety (Gen-FS), Dr. Carleton leads efforts that leverage genomics to detect, investigate, and connect foodborne, waterborne, and One Health-related disease outbreaks, advancing public health surveillance and response.

Abstract

Genomic Surveillance in a One Health Approach: Characterizing Potential Outbreaks and Antimicrobial Resistance in Enteric Bacteria

This presentation explores how integrating whole-genome sequencing across human, animal, and environmental interfaces strengthens genomic surveillance for foodborne and enteric pathogens. We examine current bioinformatic and epidemiological frameworks used to rapidly identify emerging clusters, trace transmission pathways, and characterize evolving antimicrobial resistance determinants. Attendees will gain actionable insights into how a coordinated One Health approach accelerates outbreak response and informs targeted public health interventions against multidrug-resistant threats.



Antoine Abou Fayad, PhD

Tenured Associate Professor of Microbiology,
Faculty of Medicine, American University of Beirut
Co-Director, WHO Collaborating Center
for Reference and Research on Bacterial Pathogens
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Antoine Abou Fayad is a tenured Associate Professor of Microbiology at the Faculty of Medicine of the American University of Beirut, where he heads the Bacteriology and Molecular Microbiology Laboratory, co-directs the WHO Collaborating Center for Reference and Research on Bacterial Pathogens and directs the GENIAL bacterial genomics program.

A chemist by training (PhD, University of St Andrews; postdoctoral research at the Helmholtz Institute for Pharmaceutical Research Saarland), his research rests on two pillars: the discovery of novel anti-infective agents, and the drivers of antimicrobial resistance in conflict settings. His group has helped establish war, war wounding and munitions-derived heavy metals as drivers of resistance, combining clinical isolate collections from South Lebanon, environmental sampling of bombed sites and whole-genome sequencing, with related work on the Iraq wars, the 2023 Turkey and Syria earthquakes and resistance trends in Gaza.

Since 2019, Dr. Abou Fayad has worked almost continuously with WHO, building next-generation sequencing capacity in Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Lebanon, and since 2023 as a full-time consultant with the cholera team at WHO headquarters, where he designed WHO's cholera diagnostics training package and leads training missions in outbreak settings.

Dr. Abou Fayad has authored more than 50 peer-reviewed publications, including the genomic investigation of Lebanon's 2022–2023 cholera outbreak in Nature Communications, and is an adjunct professor at the Université de Sherbrooke.

Abstract

Scars, Soil, and Superbugs: Genomic Mapping of Antimicrobial Resistance in MENA Conflict Zones

Armed conflict is increasingly recognized as a driver of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), although the mechanisms linking warfare to resistant infections remain poorly understood. Drawing on clinical, environmental, and chemical data from Lebanon, this presentation explores the relationship between conflict-related trauma, carbapenem-resistant Acinetobacter baumannii, environmental contamination, and munitions-derived heavy metals. Findings reveal increased resistance among trauma-associated infections, post-ceasefire peaks in microbiological burden, and widespread environmental resistance. Together with regional evidence from Syria, Gaza, and Iraq, these findings highlight potential pathways through which armed conflict contributes to AMR and the need to better understand environmental selection pressures.



Ziad Daoud, PhD, FACSc., HCLD(ABB), SM(ASCP)cm

Professor of Clinical Microbiology,
Central Michigan University College of Medicine
System Director of Laboratory Services,
MyMichigan Health
USA

Biography

Dr. Ziad Daoud is a medical laboratory executive, clinical microbiologist, professor, and researcher with more than 20 years of experience in laboratory medicine, healthcare leadership, and academic research. He serves as System Director of Laboratory Services at MyMichigan Health, overseeing 14 laboratories and more than 350 laboratory professionals across Michigan, and as Professor of Clinical Microbiology at Central Michigan University College of Medicine.

Dr. Daoud is an ASCP Board-Certified Specialist in Microbiology, a Fellow of the Academy of Clinical Scientists, a High Complexity Lab Director certified by ABB, a CAP-certified inspector, and a Fulbright Fellow at Tufts Medical Center. His research focuses on antimicrobial resistance, One Health, and antimicrobial stewardship. He has authored or co-authored more than 190 peer-reviewed publications and edited five scientific books. His work integrates clinical leadership, education, and research to advance diagnostic services, develop laboratory professionals, and improve patient care.

Abstract

Microbiology-Enabled Stewardship in a One Health Perspective

This presentation highlights the essential role of clinical microbiology in advancing antimicrobial stewardship within a One Health framework. It explores how rapid diagnostics, antimicrobial susceptibility testing, and surveillance data support appropriate antibiotic use and help combat antimicrobial resistance. Emphasis will be placed on diagnostic stewardship, multidisciplinary collaboration, and integrated surveillance across human, animal, and environmental health sectors.



Issmat Kassem, MD

Assistant Professor,
Center for Food Safety, University of Georgia
United States of America

Biography

Dr. Issmat I. Kassem is currently an assistant professor at the Center for Food Safety of the University of Georgia (USA). Dr. Kassem has more than 20 years of research and teaching experience across 3 continents and has published more than 100 peer-reviewed manuscripts and chapters in his field. His research interests include 1) the mechanisms that contribute to the survival and transmission of foodborne and waterborne bacterial pathogens in the host-environment continuum, 2) in-depth analysis of factors that impact the selection and emergence of antimicrobial resistance locally and globally, and 3) devising antibiotic-alternatives to control foodborne and waterborne pathogens.

His overall objective is to develop antibiotic-independent and cost-effective approaches for reducing the burden of foodborne and waterborne bacterial pathogens and antimicrobial resistance on public health and the economy. Dr. Kassem is an advocate of coordinated global efforts and the adoption of the One Health ethos to combat infectious diseases and the emergence of antibiotic resistance, with emphasis on low- and middle-income countries.



Khalil Ghanem, MD, PhD

Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases,
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine,
Program Director, Graduate Training Programs in Clinical Investigation,
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
United States of America

Biography

Prof. Khalil Ghanem is a Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He is the Program Director of the Graduate Training Programs in Clinical Investigation at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Principal Investigator of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Clinical Research Scholars Program (K12).

Prof. Ghanem has been the Principal Investigator of the CDC-funded Johns Hopkins STD/HIV Prevention Training Center since 2014. His research focuses on reproductive tract infections- in particular syphilis and the vaginal microbiome. He is a past president of the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association.

Abstract

Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): The Role of Doxy PEP and PrEP

Doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis (DoxyPEP) represents an important advance in the prevention of bacterial sexually transmitted infections. Although clinical trials and emerging population-level data demonstrate its substantial impact, important questions remain regarding the consequences of widespread use. This presentation will review the evidence supporting DoxyPEP and explore evolving concerns, including its potential effects on antimicrobial resistance, the human microbiome, and the clinical and serologic manifestations of syphilis. Particular attention will be given to emerging data suggesting that DoxyPEP may result in less symptomatic syphilis and lower RPR titers at diagnosis, with potential implications for disease recognition and management. The presentation will conclude by considering the future of STI biomedical prevention and how best to target DoxyPEP to those most likely to benefit while balancing its individual and population-level benefits against potential unintended consequences.



Lydia Aoun Barakat, MD, FIDSA, AAHIVMS

Professor of Medicine, Section of Infectious Diseases,
Associate Chair for Ambulatory Affairs,
Department of Medicine, Yale School of Medicine,
Director, Yale Center for Infectious Diseases
United States of America

Biography

Dr. Lydia Aoun Barakat is a Professor of Medicine, Section of infectious disease at Yale School of Medicine. She is Board certified in Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, and the American Academy of HIV Medicine. She is currently the Associate Chair for Ambulatory Affairs at the Department of Medicine, the Director of the Yale Center for Infectious Diseases, the Program Director of the Yale HIV Primary Care Residency Pathway, and the Clinical Director for the New England AIDS Education and Training Center, Connecticut Local Partner.

Dr. Aoun Barakat was awarded and managed several HRSA grants that aim to enhance services and quality of HIV care. Her research interests are HIV and aging and HIV workforce development. She is dedicated to expanding HIV educational platforms and to champion effective initiatives in HIV prevention and treatment that improve the lives of people with or at risk of HIV.



Raymond Mikhael, MD

Senior Pediatrician
Head of Pediatrics Department,
Hôtel-Dieu de France University Medical Center
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Mikhael is a pediatrician specializing in infectious diseases, immuno-allergology, and pediatric rheumatology at Hôtel-Dieu de France University Medical Center

Dr. Mikhael graduated from Saint Joseph University in 1987 and completed advanced training at leading institutions in Paris, including Trousseau Hospital, Necker–Enfants Malades Hospital, and the Pasteur Institute. He previously served as Coordinator of General Pediatrics and Infectious Diseases at Hôtel-Dieu de France and Head of the Pediatric Division at Saint Joseph Hospital until 2018.

He has taught at Saint Joseph University and actively contributed to clinical research on pediatric immunodeficiencies in collaboration with international institutions, including the Imagine Institute in Paris and Harvard-affiliated researchers.

His work has contributed to identifying genetic variants and mutations associated with immunodeficiencies in the Lebanese population, with multiple publications in peer-reviewed journals.



Umayya Musharrafieh, MD

Family Medicine Specialist
Chairperson of the Department of Family Medicine,
American University of Beirut
President, Arab Board Council for Family Medicine
Lebanon

Biography

Dr. Umayya Musharrafieh is a family medicine specialist, academic leader, and medical educator with training in infectious diseases, public health, and medical education. She is Chairperson of the Department of Family Medicine at the American University of Beirut and President of the Arab Board Council for Family Medicine.

Dr. Musharrafieh obtained her medical degree and completed her specialty training in family medicine at the American University of Beirut, where she subsequently pursued specialty training in infectious diseases. She also holds a Master's degree in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and a Master's degree in Medical Education from Keele University in the United Kingdom.

Her interest in infectious disease prevention and vaccination reflects the close connection between public health and family medicine. She has been involved in vaccination initiatives, including the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, Influenza campaigns, and advocates for immunization as an essential component of preventive care across the life course.

Abstract

Vaccination Without Barriers: Reaching Vulnerable Populations in Diverse Settings

Vaccines rarely fail because of biology alone. More often, something stands between the vaccine and the person who needs it. This case-based session looks at six settings: pregnancy, older adults, chronic lung disease, Hajj and Umrah, prisons, and disability and displacement. For each one, it covers what to give, what to avoid, and how to deliver vaccines despite biological, circumstantial and structural barriers. Participants will leave with practical steps they can apply in their own practice.



Rita Murri, MD

Professor of Infectious Diseases,
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart
Head of the Infectious Diseases Consultancy Unit,
Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli IRCCS
Italy

Biography

Prof. Rita Murri is Professor of Infectious Diseases at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart and Head of the Infectious Diseases Consultancy Unit at Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli IRCCS in Rome.

Dr. Murri has authored over 230 scientific publications, with research focusing on antimicrobial stewardship, emerging infections, and the use of real-world data in clinical practice.

She currently chairs the Artificial Intelligence Working Group of the Italian Society of Infectious Diseases (SIMIT) and is actively involved in national and international research networks. Her work promotes the integration of AI and big data approaches to enhance infection management, optimize antimicrobial use, and support vaccine strategies. Her expertise lies at the intersection of clinical medicine, epidemiology, and digital innovation, with a strong emphasis on AI applications in infectious diseases.

Abstract

Surgical ABX Prophylaxis: The Evidence behind Timing and Duration

Surgical antibiotic prophylaxis is one of the most effective measures to prevent surgical site infections. Paradoxically, it is also one of the main sources of inappropriate antibiotic use in hospitals. This lecture reviews the evidence underpinning the two parameters that most determine its benefit and harm, timing and duration, and discusses how SAP should evolve in an era of widespread multidrug resistance.

A single narrow-spectrum dose is given 30–180 minutes before incision, with re-dosing only for procedures longer than 3 hours or with major blood loss. Large observational data show that prolonging prophylaxis after surgery does not reduce SSI. Instead, it increases acute kidney injury, Clostridioides difficile infection and selective pressure for resistance. “Just-in-case” prolongation therefore remains a priority target for antimicrobial stewardship, whose interventions in this field have proved highly effective. Moreover, given the high prevalence of MRSA and carbapenem-resistant Gram-negatives, the question is whether standard cefazolin-based prophylaxis is still adequate. Patients colonised with ESBL-producing Enterobacterales carry a substantially higher risk of ESBL-related SSI and organ-space infection.

The take-home message is that SAP works, but only when it is short and well timed. In the MDR era, colonisation-guided targeted prophylaxis is a promising, context-dependent approach that warrants further studies.



Maddalena Giannella, MD, PhD

Full Professor of Infectious Diseases,
Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences,
Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna
Infectious Diseases Consultant, IRCCS Azienda Ospedaliero,
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Biography

Prof. Maddalena Giannella is a Full Professor of Infectious Diseases at Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna, Italy, and an Infectious Diseases Consultant at IRCCS Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria di Bologna (AOUBO). She has extensive clinical and academic expertise in antimicrobial-resistant infections, infections in immunocompromised patients, sepsis, and bloodstream infections.

Prof. Giannella graduated in Medicine and Surgery from Sapienza University of Rome in 2003 and completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the same institution in 2008. She subsequently obtained a PhD in Clinical Microbiology from Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, in 2012.

Prof. Giannella currently chairs the Executive Committee of the European Study Group for Infections in Immunocompromised Hosts (ESGICH) within the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID). She also serves as Associate Editor of Transplant International, the official journal of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT).

Prof. Giannella has authored 314 scientific publications in national and international peer-reviewed journals and has an H-index of 59 (Scopus). Her principal research interests include antimicrobial resistance, infections in solid organ transplant recipients, sepsis, and bloodstream infections.

Abstract

Surgical Antibiotic Prophylaxis in the Era of MDR

This presentation will review the available evidence on the relationship between preoperative MDRO colonization and postoperative infections, with particular attention to Gram-negative bacteria. It will discuss current recommendations for screening and targeted prophylaxis, the limitations of existing observational studies, and the marked variability in clinical practice. The potential role of individualized risk assessment will be explored, integrating the colonizing organism and resistance mechanism with the type of surgery, severity of illness, local epidemiology, and additional patient-specific predictors of infection.

The presentation will also address key practical questions: which patients should undergo screening, when standard prophylaxis may be insufficient, how an active regimen should be selected, and how its duration can be minimized. Ongoing clinical trials evaluating targeted versus standard prophylaxis will be highlighted. Until stronger evidence becomes available, decisions should balance the prevention of severe postoperative infections against antimicrobial stewardship principles, favoring multidisciplinary, locally adapted, and risk-based strategies rather than routine escalation for every MDRO carrier.

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