

1st Annual Lebanese Pharmacovigilance Conference - Briefing

Exploring Pharmacovigilance In The MENA Region And
Shaping The Good Pharmacovigilance Practices

Launching Of The Good Pharmacovigilance Practices Guideline



Time
9:00AM - 5:00PM



Venue
Lebanese American
University Byblos
Campus



1st Annual Lebanese Pharmacovigilance Conference

On September 30th 2023, the Lebanese National Pharmacovigilance Program at the Ministry of Public Health, marked one of its milestones by holding the 1st Annual Lebanese Pharmacovigilance Conference titled “Exploring Pharmacovigilance in The Mena Region and Shaping the Good Pharmacovigilance Practices”. The conference was hosted by the Lebanese American University, Byblos campus, under the patronage and presence of His Excellency Dr. Firass Al Abiad, the Minister of Public Health.

The event hosted pharmacovigilance experts from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, UAE, and Switzerland. In addition to pharmacovigilance representatives of national and international pharmaceutical companies, university professors, and students.

Among the distinguished guests who attended the conference: Prof. Bassam Badran – President of the Lebanese University; Dr. Shanti Pal – Team Lead – World Health Organization (WHO) Headquarter – Geneva; Dr. Abdinasir Abubakar – WHO Representative – Lebanon Country Office; Dr. Omar Al Rifai, WHO Pharmacovigilance Focal Point; Dr. Walid Ammar – MoPH Former Director; and Dr. Naser Alsharif – Dean of the School of Pharmacy – LAU.



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Opening Ceremony

The conference was initiated with an opening ceremony. It started with a speech by Prof. Rita Karam, the LNPVP Coordinator. During her speech, she illuminated the journey that the Lebanese National Pharmacovigilance Program (LNPVP) undertook to reach its current status, overcoming numerous challenges along the way. She stressed on the fact that the LNPVP's mission is to protect Lebanon's health by prioritizing the benefits of medication while minimizing risks. This aligns with the vision for a safer, healthier country. Achievements made by the LNPVP in the past two years were presented along with 2024 plan of action.



Dr. Naser Alsharif, the Dean of the School of Pharmacy at LAU, conveyed his sincere appreciation to the LNPVP team. He emphasized that the unwavering commitment of the team is of utmost importance to public health. Dr. Naser then discussed the cost effectiveness of minimizing medication errors and its impact in decreasing financial expenditures on regularity authority. He stressed on the important role pharmacovigilance centers play in safeguarding such practices.



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Dr. Abdinasir Abubakar, the WHO Representative – Lebanon – Country Office, reaffirmed the significance of pharmacovigilance for the nation and expressed his gratitude to the LNPVP for their outstanding contributions.

Prof. Bassam Badran, the President of the Lebanese University, highlighted the pivotal role that Lebanese universities can assume in this context by integrating pharmacovigilance courses into their curricula. He expressed his pride and deep respect for the dedicated efforts, knowledge, and expertise demonstrated by the PV Team to ensure the efficient operation of the Lebanese Pharmacovigilance center.



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In his speech, Dr. Firass Al Abiad stated that strengthening pharmacovigilance and safety measures stands as a fundamental and inseparable component of the Ministry's goals, aimed at ensuring patient safety while alleviating financial burdens on healthcare systems and patients alike. Consequently, the pharmacovigilance program holds a distinctive position among the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Public Health.

Additionally, he expressed his appreciation to the National Pharmacovigilance Program team, led by Prof. Rita Karam, for the accomplishments of the past year in this domain, as well as the forthcoming work plan for the upcoming year.

He then officially announced the launching of the Lebanese Pharmacovigilance Practices Guideline which was followed by cutting a cake celebrating this momentum.

The opening ceremony was followed by two scientific and technical sessions where several speakers shared their insights during the presentations and panel discussions provided.



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Morning Session: Sharing the Pharmacovigilance Experience in the MENA Region

In the morning session titled “Sharing the Pharmacovigilance Experience in the MENA Region” Dr. Shanthi Pal, Dr. Manal Younis, Dr. Jaber Jaber and Dr. Lamis Karaoui shared their views on pharmacovigilance from different aspects. The session was moderated by Dr. Abeer Zeitoun, the LNPVP Clinical and Technical Manager.



First, Dr. Shanthi Pal – Team Lead – Pharmacovigilance WHO Headquarter, provided a comprehensive look at the worldwide pharmacovigilance efforts, offering tangible examples and real-world data on received ICSRs from the global database.

This was followed by Dr. Manal Younus – the head of Iraqi Pharmacovigilance Center – Ministry of Health and Dr. Jaber Jaber – Head of Rational Drug Use and Pharmacovigilance Department – JFDA, who provided a summary of the pharmacovigilance initiatives conducted at their respective centers. They shared their experiences and highlighted the work and activities undertaken in their respective countries.

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Morning Session: Sharing the Pharmacovigilance Experience in the MENA Region

Finally, Dr. Lamis Karaoui – Lebanese American University Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Experiential Education – stressed on the role of education in enhancing the pharmacovigilance culture.

The morning session was concluded with a panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Omar Al Rifai – the Pharmacovigilance Focal Point – WHO Beirut Office, where all the speakers from the morning session in addition to Prof. Antoine Abou Rached (Professor of Gastroenterology and Hepatology – Lebanese University) and Dr. Rabih Dabliz (Senior Manager for Quality and Medication Safety Services at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi) shared their expertise and provided insightful answers to questions related to “Sharing the Pharmacovigilance Experience in the MENA Region”.



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Afternoon Session: Shaping the Pharmacovigilance Partnership Between MAHs and Health Authority

The afternoon session titled “Shaping the Pharmacovigilance Partnership Between MAHs and Health Authority” was moderated by Prof. Rita Karam, the LNPVP coordinator.

The session hosted the following presenters: Mrs. Mayssa Abou Ghannam; GCC Country Safety Team Lead – Johnson & Johnson,



Mrs. Raghda Hassan Pharmacovigilance; Cluster Lead – Middle East – Takeda, and Mrs. Yomna Tarek Abdelgayed; Global Safety Manager – Egypt and Levant Clusters – Amgen.

All the speakers shared their thoughts and insights, while highlighting the challenges, of implementing the GVP guideline in their representative countries. Learned lessons that may help the Lebanese GVP implementation process were also shared.

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Afternoon Session: Shaping the Pharmacovigilance Partnership Between MAHs and Health Authority

The session was concluded with a panel discussion that hosted all the speakers, in addition to Dr. Hadir Rostom – Pharmacovigilance Consultant and Lecturer in MSA University – Egypt, and moderated by Dr. Marie Louise Abi Hanna (SPIL Representative), where all participants engaged in a fruitful discussion while sharing their expertise and providing insightful answers to questions related to “Shaping the Pharmacovigilance Partnership Between MAHs and Health Authority”.



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Reflection On Our Journey

The Pharmacovigilance Conference was an exceptional event, bringing together experts and professionals in the field to share valuable insights and knowledge. The high-quality presentations and engaging discussions showcased the latest developments and best practices in pharmacovigilance. Overall, the positive feedback from attendees featured the conference's success in providing valuable insights and fostering meaningful connections within the pharmacovigilance community.

