



## **Report of Activities**

*September 2010-December 2012*

The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care- Balsam is a non-governmental organization established in March 2011 that works to relieve patient suffering and improve quality of life. We provide holistic support to patients dealing with life-threatening illness by providing medical services as well as psychological, social, practical, and spiritual support within the family and home environment. We are committed to developing palliative care in Lebanon and ensuring that it becomes integrated into our healthcare system.

**Our team includes:**

**Physician:** Hibah Osman, MD, MPH



**Clinical Psychologist:** Michael Khoury, MD, MA



**Nurses:** Janane Hanna, RN, MSN, AOCNS



**Clinical Pharmacist:** Dania Ghaziri, PharmD



Rebecca El-Asmar, RN, MSN, AOCNS



**Outreach Coordinator:** Loubna Batlouni, MPH



Mohammad Saab, RN, MSN candidate



## **I. Patient care:**

Our philosophy is to utilize an interdisciplinary team approach to support patients and their families and encourage them to make informed decisions about their medical care that are in line with their values and belief system. We aim to prevent and relieve suffering and help patients maintain the best possible quality of life despite their illness.

### **❖ Process of care:**

We currently provide medical services primarily in the Greater Beirut area. Referrals can be made by a healthcare provider, the patients themselves or by a friend or relative. The team performs an assessment to decide on the patient's palliative care needs. If a patient can benefit from palliative care he/she is admitted and the Balsam team works on understanding the patient and the family's wishes and goals to tailor a personalized plan for care. Patients are cared for by a registered nurse under the supervision of the Medical Director. Our clinical psychologist and clinical pharmacist support the team to provide optimal care. The nurse conducts regular home visits to assess the patient and follow up on his/her care. The team is available 24/7 whenever a need arises. The team also follow the patient and family during episodes of hospitalization. Medical management is continuously coordinated with the patient's primary physician. The patient, family, and caregivers are constantly supported. If the patient passes away the Balsam team continues supporting the family during the bereavement period. Patients who reside outside the Greater Beirut Area or who do not need our full package of services may receive partial support. This could include provision of medical equipments, telephone support, or one visit for planning of home care.

### **❖ Patient Load**

**Table 1. Information on patient load from September 2010 till December 2012**

<b>Admitted</b>	<b>68</b>	10 partial support**
		58 full support
<b>Not Admitted*</b>	<b>13</b>	
<b>Total Referrals</b>	<b>81</b>	

\*Patients who do not need palliative care

\*\*Patients who do not need full support or reside outside Greater Beirut

**Table 2. Patient-Days per year**

<b>Number of patient-days in 2011</b>	890
<b>Number of patient-days in 2012</b>	2490
<b>Total</b>	3380

### **Patient Statistics from September 2010 till December 2012:**

**53 %** of patients are females, **88%** are Lebanese, and **88%** had a cancer diagnosis.

**65** is the patient average age, and the age range is **20 to 90** years old.

**53%** of patients are admitted within **0 to 2** days from referral and **41%** of patients received care for **11 to 50** days. (Refer to Appendix for more details).

## II. Advocacy

We are working on promoting palliative care at the community as well as at the policy level. We aim to increase awareness about the philosophy and practice of palliative care as a means to support patients with serious illness.

### ❖ **Advocacy Events and Activities:**

#### **National Committee for Pain Relief and Palliative Care**

The National Committee for Pain Relief and Palliative Care was launched on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 by Dr. Walid Ammar, Director General of the Ministry of Public Health. Several members of Balsam are currently serving on the committee.

#### **AUB Civic & Volunteering Fair**

A volunteering fair was organized by the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at AUB on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2012. A Balsam booth served to raise awareness about palliative care.

#### **World Palliative Care Day Conference**

The National Committee for Pain Relief and Palliative Care held a conference on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 to share the work and recommendations of its four subcommittees: Education, Practice, Research and Policy. Dr. Hibah Osman presented the report of the Practice Subcommittee and Dr Huda Huijer (Balsam board member) presented the report of the Research Subcommittee. Balsam distributed brochures at the event.

### ❖ **Articles in magazines and newsletters:**

**Laha Magazine** “*Preserving the beautiful memories even in bad times. Palliative care changes the patient’s outlook on life*” health section –Issue #585

**The Monthly Magazine** (Al-Shahriyya) “*The Monthly Interviews Dr. Hibah Osman, Founder of Balsam*” -Issue # 117

**IC Newsletter** “*Dying with Dignity*” Summer 2012 Issue.

**The Daily Star** “*Balsam helps terminally ill live life to the fullest*” 26 Sep 2012

**E Hospice (www.ehospice.com)** “*Palliative Care in Lebanon*” 23 October 2012.

### ❖ **Balsam Online:**

You can like us on Facebook on ***Balsam- The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care***, follow us on Twitter on ***Balasm- LCPC***, and visit our website [www.balsam-lb.org](http://www.balsam-lb.org)

### **Table 3. Likes, Followers, and Hits**

<b>Likes on Facebook (from March 2012 till December 2012)</b>	215
<b>Followers on Twitter (from October 2011 till December 2012)</b>	105
<b>Visits on Website (from January 2012 till December 2012)</b>	6987

### **III. Capacity Building**

We provide training to healthcare providers through lectures, courses, and workshops. We also receive training and attend conferences to further develop our skills and knowledge.

#### **❖ Presentations in Conferences and Workshops**

##### **18th International Congress on Palliative Care, Montreal**

Ms. Rebecca El-Asmar and Ms. Janane Hanna attended the 18th International Congress on Palliative Care in Montreal, Canada in October 2010. Rebecca presented her research on “Developing an Educational Package for Breast Cancer Patients in Lebanon”, and Janane presented her work about “Guidelines and Recommendations for Establishing a Hospital-Based Palliative Care Program in Lebanon”.

##### **8<sup>th</sup> National Forum of the Lebanese Society of Medical Oncology, Beirut**

Ms. Janane Hanna was invited to speak at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Forum of the Lebanese Society of Medical Oncology in December 2010. Her presentation was on “Pain Management in Oncology Patients”.

##### **MEMA: Workshop on Cancer Pain and Palliative Care, Beirut**

The Middle East Medical Assembly, in collaboration with the Hariri School of Nursing at AUB, organized a workshop on Cancer Pain and Palliative Care on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2011. Dr. Hibah Osman and Ms. Janane Hanna contributed to the workshop with presentations on the topic of palliative care in Lebanon.

##### **European Association of Palliative Care Conference, Lisbon**

Dr. Hibah Osman attended the European Association of Palliative Care Conference in Lisbon, Portugal from the 17<sup>th</sup> till the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2011. She gave a presentation on “Palliative Care Research in Lebanon and the Region” at the pre-congress meeting of the International Primary Palliative Care Research Group.

##### **Lebanese Society for the Study of Pain Conference, Beirut**

Ms. Janane Hanna, attended the Lebanese Society for the Study of Pain Conference during October 2011. She presented on the "Organizational Aspects of the Pain Service", elaborating on the role of the nurse in pain management.

##### **Global Academic Programs Conference, Oslo**

Ms. Rebecca El Asmar attended the MD Anderson's yearly Global Academic Programs conference held at Oslo, Norway from the 14<sup>th</sup> till the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2012. She presented her project: "Developing an Educational Package for Breast Cancer Patients".

##### **Lecture about pain at Jinan University, Beirut**

A workshop about Pain Management was organized on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 by Jinan University in Saida to raise awareness about the topic. The event targeted nurses working in the South of Lebanon. Ms. Janane Hanna, lectured about pain management and pain types.

#### **❖ Presentations in AUB courses**

##### **Death and Dying course**

Dr Hibah Osman offered a course entitled Death and Dying during fall semester 2011-2012 at the Faculty of Health Sciences of AUB- Department of Health Promotion and Community Health. Graduate students discussed issues pertaining to end of life and Palliative Care.

### **Guest speaker in courses**

Dr. Hibah Osman gave a session in a graduate course entitled Population and Health Policy offered at the Faculty of Health Sciences during fall semester 2012-2013. She also participates in the Social and Preventive Medicine course offered to medical students at FHS. Dr. Osman is hosted on an annual basis as a guest lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine, and also lectures residents in various hospital departments.

### **Lectures to nursing students**

Mr. Mohammad Saab was invited to present about palliative care to junior nursing students during their Medical Surgical Nursing course at the Hariri School of Nursing-AUB. He was also invited by graduate nursing students to attend a presentation about palliative care by nurses in the Advanced Practice Nursing course. Both activities took place during fall semester 2012-2013.

### **❖ Conferences Attended and Training Received**

#### **San Diego Hospice and the Institute of Palliative Medicine, San Diego**

Dr. Hibah Osman was invited to participate in a 4 week International Visiting Scholars Program at San Diego Hospice and the Institute of Palliative Medicine in June 2010.

#### **MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston**

Ms. Janane Hanna and Ms. Rebecca El Asmar both received the Karen Bahadrian award for Best Oncology Nurse from the American University of Beirut Medical Center (May 2010 and May 2011 respectively). This award sponsored their training at MD Anderson Cancer Center where they were exposed to the different palliative care services offered to patients and caregivers (October 2010 and January 2012 respectively).

#### **AAHPC Annual Conference, Vancouver**

Dr. Osman attended the annual assembly of the American Association of Hospice and Palliative care in Vancouver, British Columbia, from the 16<sup>th</sup> till the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 2011. The meeting was an excellent opportunity for networking and learning about Palliative Care.

#### **National Palliative Care Workshop: Ensuring Access to Opioids, Kiev**

Dr. Osman attended the National Palliative Care Workshop: Ensuring Access to Opioids in Kiev, Ukraine from the 17<sup>th</sup> till the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2011. Her visit was supported by the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care. The aim of the workshop was to improve availability and accessibility of opioid medications for pain management in Ukraine.

#### **Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services, Dublin**

Mr. Mohammad Saab completed a six weeks training program in Our Lady's Hospice in Dublin, Ireland during January and February 2012. He rotated in various departments and got exposed to a variety of services offered to patients requiring Palliative Care.

#### **Harvard Palliative Care Center, Boston**

Dr. Hibah Osman visited palliative care providers at the Harvard Palliative Care Center during October 2012. She spent time with Dr. Vicki Jackson, Director of the Palliative Care Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital as well as the Pediatric Advanced Care Team (PACT) at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

#### **19<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Palliative Care, Montreal**

Mr. Mohammad Saab attended the 19<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Palliative Care from the 9<sup>th</sup> till 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 in Montreal, Canada. He got exposed to the latest updates on palliative care. He attended workshops on symptom management and took part in a panel discussion on compassion fatigue and bereavement.

### **Dignity Therapy Workshop and Training, San Diego**

Dr. Michel Khoury attended a Dignity Therapy workshop in San Diego Hospice conducted by Dr. Harvey Chochinov from the 28<sup>th</sup> till the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2012. He then attended an internship from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 at the hospice to observe Dignity Therapy being conducted in acute and home care settings by experienced professionals.

#### **IV. Research**

Scientific information on palliative care remains limited. Providers of palliative care can help advance the field by contributing to the current knowledge base. We plan on contributing to scientific and practical research in palliative care by sharing our experiences and outcomes.

#### **Publication by Balsam's Director**

Dr. Hibah Osman and Dr. Scott Murray published an article entitled "Primary palliative care: the potential of primary care physicians as providers of palliative care in the community in the Eastern Mediterranean Region" in the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal. This review came out during February 2012 and discussed the potential of primary care physicians to play the role of providers of palliative care in communities of the region.

#### **Legacy Building Manual:**

A Legacy Building Manual for Palliative Care Specialists working in Lebanon and the region was developed in May 2012 by Ms. Loubna Batlouni. Legacy building activities are a series of memory saving activities done by terminally ill patients with the help of family members and caregivers.

#### **Publications in Human and Health Magazine**

"Human and Health" is a periodical magazine published by the Syndicate of Hospitals in Lebanon. An article about "Managing Symptoms in Palliative Care" written by Dr. Hibah Osman was published during July 2012 in Issue number 20 of the magazine.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care**

Balsam submitted two abstracts to the 13<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care that will take place in Prague from 30<sup>th</sup> of May till the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2013. Accepted abstracts will be announced by the EAPC in March 2013.

#### **V. Networking**

Balsam hosts many guests, volunteers and interns who are interested in learning more about Palliative Care. This has helped Balsam create a network of people who understand the NGO's mission and who have become supporters and advocates of the team's work.

##### **❖ Palliative Care Researchers and Experts:**

- Dr. Esther Duncan is a Palliative Care physician working at Marie Curie Hospice in Edinburgh. During her visit to Lebanon she attended Balsam weekly meetings since she was interested in palliative care internationally, including resource-challenged areas.
- Dr. James Tulsky, Director of the Center for Palliative Care at Duke University, presented a lecture titled: "Good Communication is not magic: An Empirical Approach to Talking with Seriously Ill Patients". The lecture took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 and was organized by the Salim El-Hoss Bioethics & Professionalism Program at AUB Faculty of Medicine. Balsam team met with Dr. Tulsky afterwards and had a long discussion about Palliative Care.

- Dr. Omar Bortolazzi, an Italian researcher holding a PhD in History, visited Balsam on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2012. Dr. Bortolazzi had a special interest in palliative care specifically in the MENA region. He attended an interdisciplinary team meeting at Balsam and interviewed Mr. Mohammad Saab, one of the balsam nurses, about the cultural aspects of palliative care in Lebanon.

❖ **Practicum Students and Interns:**

- Ms. Loubna Batlouni worked as an intern at Balsam during the spring semester 2012 while she was a graduate student working towards an MPH at AUB. She used qualitative methods to develop a culturally relevant Legacy Building Manual for Palliative Care Specialists. After her graduation, she joined Balsam as the Outreach Coordinator.
- Ms. Tibyaan Abdo Badr, a Sudanese Public Health graduate student at AUB, chose Balsam as her practicum site during summer semester 2012. She was doing her Master of Public Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences, concentrating in Health Management and Policy. As her Culminating Experience Project, Tibyaan developed a manual about Quality Indicators for Home Based Palliative Care.
- Ms. Rania Mosleh is a Registered Nurse at the Children's Cancer of Lebanon-inpatient facility. She is completing her Master's degree in Community and Public Health Nursing at AUB. She did her 6 weeks of clinical residency at Balsam during December 2012 and January 2013.

❖ **Volunteers:**

- Ms. Heba Salem who holds a Master of Arts degree in Expressive Therapy and Mental Health Counseling from Lesley University in Cambridge, attended weekly Balsam meetings during summer 2012 and was assigned to work with a few patients who greatly benefited from art therapy.
- Ms. Nour Shamas contacted Balsam hoping to apply her knowledge and experience in hospice and palliative care during Fall 2012. As a clinical pharmacist, she attended weekly meetings to discuss patient cases, review patient medication lists, answer drug information questions, and cater to any medication related issues that come up.
- Ms. Gillian Grisel is an American certified Massage Therapist and a graduate Public Health Student at AUB. She volunteered during November 2012 to provide massage therapy to Balsam patients who expressed how relaxing and comforting the experience was.

❖ **Organizations:**

- Lueur D'Espoir is a Moroccan organization that contacted Balsam during July 2012. Ms. Fatima Bou Taibi asked for Balsam's assistance and support to their efforts in establishing a palliative care center in Morocco. Balsam and Lueur D'Espoir discussed possible collaboration projects.
- Diakonia is a local non-governmental organization that provides psychosocial support to people who have been or are undergoing difficult life circumstances (loss of a loved one, illness, divorce...). Balsam staff met on several occasions during September and October 2012 with key personnel in Diakonia to discuss possible future collaboration projects for distressed patients and caregivers.

## **VI. Fundraising**

Our services are offered at no cost and we are funded through private donors and fundraisers. We are currently approaching national and international organizations to fund our endeavours and we hope to build an endowment fund to ensure the sustainability of our efforts.

### **St Barbara Costume Party**

*December 3, 2011*

A St Barbara Costume party was organized by Balsam staff and was held at The Red Booth pub in Hamra. The event hosted over 100 attendees, and was a great success. All proceeds were donated to Balsam.

### **SCOME Christmas Gala Dinner**

*December 23, 2011*

The Standing Committee on Medical Education (SCOME) of the Lebanese Medical Student International Committee (LeMSIC) has adopted Balsam as a cause. SCOME held a fundraising Christmas dinner on December 23rd 2011 at the Bristol Hotel. Part of the proceeds was donated to Balsam.

### **Skybar Fundraising Event**

*September 11, 2012*

Friends of Balsam organized a fundraiser at Skybar to support Balsam's work. The event included a dinner, a live band, a fashion show, tombola, and a silent auction. The Fundraiser event was covered in; Laha Magazine, Mondanite, Special Magazine, and L'orient Le Jour. All proceeds went to Balsam.

### **Balsam at the Beirut Marathon**

*November 11, 2012*

Balsam was one of the non-governmental organizations that participated in the 2012 Beirut Marathon. The event was not only a fundraising opportunity but also a chance to raise awareness about how palliative care is about living life to the fullest and not about dying.

## **VII. Testimonials**

*"Love, grace, and affection are just some of the things Balsam provides during a very distressing and difficult time. You put a smile on Hayat's face and she glowed in your presence"- A.A.*

*"الخبرة و التجربة يليي نحنا كعائلة مرينا فيها معكم بالفعل خلتنا نحس انو انتو بلسم. بلسم بالمعنى الروحي والنفسي وبالإضافة للمعنى الطبي. الدور يليي لعبتوا هو يعني الاستغناء عن المفاجآت. يعني صرتوا تحضرونا للاشياء يليي ممكن تصير بمعرفتكم. انتو عم تعالجوا المريض مش المرض فقط وهيدا الشيء مهم كتير." - م.ب*

*"My son was very happy to see you every morning and you were taking care of him... he was good and well treated and I wish I knew about you before he got really sick" – Y.D.*

*" كنت عم حس إنو زوجي بين أيادي أمينة ... بآخر كم أسبوع وقت تعرفنا على بلسم هيدا الوقت يليي كان مفروض يكون أصعب وقت صار أريح وقت نفسياً لأن عارفة إنو في حداً حدي... خففوا عني حمل كبير " أ.ص*

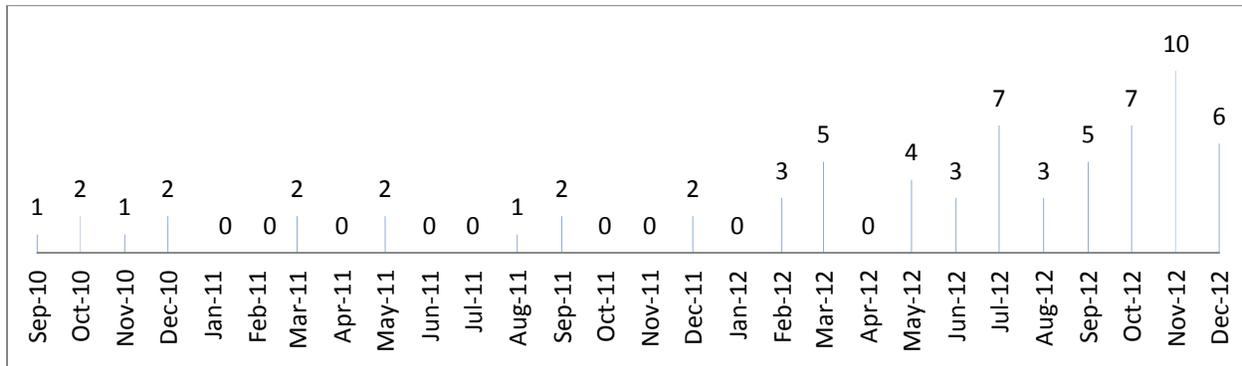
If you would like to support Balsam, refer a patient, or simply get additional information visit our website: [www.balsam-lb.org](http://www.balsam-lb.org) , or contact us on: 01-748574

You can follow us on twitter on *Balsam-LCPC* and like us on Facebook at *Balsam- The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care*

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## Appendix

**Figure 1 Patients admitted by month of referral**



### Information on admitted patients from September 2010 till December 2012

**a. By gender**

<b>Males</b>	32
<b>Females</b>	36

**b. By nationality**

<b>Lebanese</b>	60
<b>Non- Lebanese*</b>	8

*\*German, American, Kuwaiti, Syrian, Palestinian*

**c. By age**

Age range	Average age	Age groups			
		20-40	40-60	60-80	80-90
20-90	65	3	21	28	16

**d. By days from referral to intake**

0-2	3-5	6-8	More than 8 days
46	14	4	4

**e. By days in care following admission**

State	<10	11-50	51-100	101-300	>300	Total
<b>Deceased</b>	23	21	8	2	1	55
<b>Active</b>	2	7	1	1	2	13
<b>Total</b>	25	28	9	3	3	68

**f. By diagnosis**

<b>Cancer cases</b>	60
<b>Other diseases*</b>	8

*\*Elephantitis, Hemorrhagic stroke, Congestive Heart Failure, Peripheral Vascular Disease, Pulmonary Fibrosis, Cerebro-vascular accident, Multiple Sclerosis*