



THE LEBANESE CENTER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE – BALSAM

المركز اللبناني للعناية
التلطيفية – بلسم

Annual Report - 2018

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Supporters,

We present to you the Annual report for our 9th year of operations, the year 2018.

We have witnessed an increase in the network of referrals being from health care providers and from patients' families.

Our team has served close to 300 patients over the past year.

The increase in demand for palliative care is evident and increasing. The rate-limiting step is defined by the resources and the capacity of the dedicated Balsam's team.

Three landmark milestones distinguished this past year. First, Balsam, along with several national stakeholders met with K2P to develop a strategy and action plan for integration of palliative care into the Lebanese Health Sector. Second, we have witnessed the Decree issued by the Ministry of Public Health approving and regulating the compensation for Palliative Care Services in Lebanon. Third, a Memorandum of Understanding has been finalized between Balsam and the American University of Beirut to delineate the continuous cooperation and complimenting patients' care.

I feel proud to belong to Balsam and to have the chance to work along the side of a dedicated team where each member goes the extra mile to ensure and provide the best support to our patients.

I conclude by saying that we, in Balsam, are lucky and very appreciative to all our sponsors and supporters.

We are waiting for you in our annual fundraising dinner on July 4th, 2019.

Respectfully,

Salah Zeineldine, MD, FACP
Founding Board Member & Executive Director
May 30th, 2019



MISSION
VISION

OUR MISSION



The Lebanese Center for Palliative care- Balsam- is a non-governmental organization that aims to relieve the suffering and improve the quality of life of patients with serious illness through patient care, advocacy, capacity building and research.



OUR
VISION

To ensure that palliative care is available and accessible to all people in Lebanon.



2018 – A YEAR OF CHANGE

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The past year was a year of immense changes for Balsam. With Dr. Osman moving to the United States in August to join Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Harvard Medical School as a physician in the Division of Palliative Care and Geriatric Medicine, the organizational restructuring and transition to the new leadership started at the beginning of March. Aline Zakhem was appointed Medical Director; Roula Doughan took on the role of Operations Manager; and Salah Zeineldine became Balsam's new Executive Director. Despite this major transition, our activities continued as usual and our clinical operations were not affected. Patients and families continued to receive care in the usual Balsam fashion: with the same standards and protocols, by the same highly skilled team, and with the same empathy and professionalism that they have come to expect.



2018 – A YEAR OF CHANGE



Executive Director - Salah Zeineldine

Dr. Zeineldine is a physician specialized in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and Allergy and Immunology. He is on faculty in the Department of Internal Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) and serves as the Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education. He is the president of the Lebanese Pulmonary Society (Lebanese Order of Physicians) and is on the Board of Trustees of the Ain WaZein Hospital in the Shouf.

Dr. Zeineldine has always been a strong supporter of palliative care and was a founding board member of the Lebanese Center for Palliative Care - Balsam. His commitment to palliative care and his community, his knowledge and understanding of the Lebanese health care system, his clinical skills and his strategic approach made him the ideal candidate to assume the role of Executive Director.



Operations Manager – Roula Doughan

Ms. Doughan joined Balsam in January 2016. She holds a Master's degree in Human Resource Management and has worked in both the public and private sectors. This includes 3 years in the Training and Development Division at BLOM Bank as well as 5 years in the Office of Ministry of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR), UNDP; where Roula was involved in the restructuring and reorganization of public administration. Roula stopped working for a few years to devote her time to her young family. She initially returned to the work force on a part-time basis as Balsam's Human Resource and Outreach Coordinator. Within a few months of joining Balsam she started taking on more tasks and quickly assumed the role of Operations Coordinator. It didn't take Roula long to realize that working in an NGO is very different from her previous experiences. She finds it challenging, rewarding and very fulfilling. She especially enjoys working with the members of Balsam team, all of whom are passionate about their work and are strongly committed to the Balsam mission. Roula's main focus is supporting the necessary expansion of Balsam. This includes managing projects, improving workflow and the work environment, ensuring adequate staffing, and planning fundraising events to secure Balsam's sustainability. She is committed to maintaining the welfare of the Balsam team, which she believes is its most valuable asset. Her extensive experience over the past two years at Balsam made her a natural choice to assume the position of Operations Manager.

2018 – A YEAR OF CHANGE



Medical Director – Dr. Aline Zakhem

Dr. Zakhem joined the Balsam team in 2015 as a part-time physician to supervise and support nurses in their work. Aline is a specialist in Infectious Diseases with subspecialty training from MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas in Infectious Diseases of Immuno-compromised Patients. She is on the faculty at the Department of Internal Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center. She has extensive experience with seriously ill patients and is committed to improving their quality of life. Dr. Zakhem has excellent clinical skills, a very caring approach, and a natural ability to support, guide and lead a multidisciplinary team. She was an excellent candidate to assume the position of Medical Director at Balsam.



**OUR
TEAM**

**OUR
TEAM**



Aline Zakhem
Medical Director



Roula Doughan
Operations Manager



Janane Hanna
Clinical Nurse Specialist



Rebecca El Asmar
Clinical Nurse Specialist



Alia Tabsh
Senior Palliative Care Nurse



Chadia Fayad
Senior Palliative Care Nurse



Karen Rbeiz
Palliative Care Nurse



Maya Abdul Rahman
Palliative Care Nurse



Karim Farah
Palliative Care Physician



Joe Khoury
Palliative Care Physician



Rana Yamout
Palliative Care Physician



Dania Ghaziri
Clinical Pharmacist



Michael Khoury
Psychologist



Hiba Makke
Social Worker



Maya Alam
Quality Coordinator

New additions to the team

The Balsam family continues to grow. In 2018 we welcomed 4 new team members. These included 3 new additions to the medical team and 1 new member on the management team.



Rana Yamout

Dr. Yamout joined Balsam in May 2018. She earned her medical degree from Saint Joseph University (USJ) in June 2009. She started her residency in Anesthesiology and Critical Care at Hotel Dieu de France (HDF) hospital in Beirut and went on to complete it in Paris, France. While in France, she completed a fellowship in chronic pain which triggered her interest in caring for the seriously ill. She therefore went on to pursue a Masters of Research in Palliative Medicine at the University of Paris Descartes and completed further training in pain management and palliative care at Gustave Roussy Institute and Bichat hospital. She later completed a visiting fellowship in pain management and palliative care at the Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey in September 2015.

Since returning to Lebanon in November 2015, she established a palliative care consultation service at Clemenceau Medical Center (CMC) where she worked as an anesthesiologist. She also contributed to the establishment and operationalization of the palliative care unit at Hotel-Dieu de France hospital in 2017. Dr. Yamout joined the Department of Anesthesiology at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) in June 2018 where she is a member of the Palliative and Supportive Care Team and she contributes to the pain service.

OUR TEAM



Maya Abdel Rahman

Maya Abdel Rahman joined Balsam in March 2017 as a palliative care nurse. Maya holds a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Nursing from the Lebanese University (2005) and received her Master's of Science in Nursing – Adult Track from the American University of Beirut Hariri School of Nursing in 2012. She completed a residency in pain management at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) in the United States and received her board certification in pain management nursing by ANCC in October 2016.

Maya has been a nurse on the pain service at AUBMC since 2013. She is very passionate about her work and finds it extremely rewarding to be able to alleviate the pain of patients. She joined Balsam to expand her work beyond pain management and learn to address all the palliative care needs of patients and their families. She is involved in teaching new nurses and residents about pain assessment and management at AUBMC.



Maya Alam

Maya Alam joined the Balsam team in May 2018 as Executive Assistant. Maya holds a Master's Degree in Human Resources from the American University of Beirut (AUB) and has 8 years of experience in the HR field. Her previous work experience includes ensuring quality practices in the SABIS School Network as well as assuming the role of HR Leader for Consulting Staff at Deloitte. Maya also spent three years at Bank Audi where she was responsible for developing organizational policies and procedures and served as an Employee Relations Officer for a number of employees. Maya's background in human resource management and her experience in quality assurance make her a valuable addition to Balsam's management team. This is Maya's first experience working at an NGO, She finds it extremely gratifying to contribute to the Balsam mission. She finds the reward achieved from being a part of Balsam very different from anything she has experienced before.

OUR TEAM



Karen Rbeiz

Karen Rbeiz joined Balsam in July 2018 as palliative care nurse. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from the American University of Beirut Hariri School of Nursing. Before joining Balsam, Karen spent 4 years as pediatric medical/surgical nurse at the American University of Beirut Medical center. Karen's personal experience with loss led her to see the value and critical role of palliative care. Her gentle approach and her experience with children makes her a great asset to Balsam. Karen provides care to both adult and pediatric patients.

Congratulations to Balsam physician Joe El Khoury who completed his Palliative Care Diploma (DU) at Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1 in May. Joe also spent one week at Maison Médicale Jeanne Garnier in Paris for further bedside training and two months at the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida where he spent time with the Palliative Care team as well as in the Pain Clinic and Pain Rehabilitation Center.





TYPE OF SERVICE

TYPE OF SERVICE



Balsam supports patients with serious illnesses, and their families, in order to prevent and relieve suffering, and to help patients maintain the best possible quality of life despite their illness. We help patients make informed decisions about their medical care, in accordance with their own values and beliefs. Our holistic and interdisciplinary approach includes medical services as well as psychological, social, practical and spiritual support within the family and home environment.

We accept self-referrals as well as referrals from local physicians. Once a patient is evaluated and accepted into our care, an individualized care plan is developed by our interdisciplinary team to address the needs of the patient and family. Balsam care usually includes regular home visits by one of our palliative care nurses, who assesses and manages the patient's symptoms and supports the family. The frequency of nurse visits depends on the needs of the patients, and may vary during the course of the illness. Care is provided under the supervision of our team of physicians and in coordination with the patient's primary treating physician. We are accessible and available to our patients around the clock for emergencies. Our clinical psychologist and clinical pharmacist offer support to the nurses and physicians on the team to ensure that they are providing optimal care. Our social worker provides additional support to patients and families based on their psychosocial needs. The team continues to support patients if they are hospitalized, and collaborates with the hospital team to ensure a smooth transition once the patient is ready to be discharged. If a patient passes away, the Balsam team continues to support the family through the bereavement period.

Although our capacity to provide full services remains limited to the Greater Beirut area, Balsam has from the outset been supporting patients and physicians outside Beirut by telephone. Our Distance Support Program was formally established in 2015 to provide a structured mechanism for supporting patients living outside Beirut. Our Distance Support patients and caregivers can seek telephone advice from a Balsam nurse around the clock, and they find it a valuable source of guidance and support in moments of need.



PATIENT CATEGORIES

PATIENT CATEGORIES

Our patients fall into three different categories, according to the kind of services they receive.

Standard Care: Most of our patients fall in this category. They generally have advanced illnesses that are progressive and expected to require increasing levels of care. They live within the Greater Beirut area and are accessible for frequent home visits. They include our "high needs" and "stabilized" patients. High-needs patients receive our full package of services as they have active symptoms requiring daily management, or significant psychosocial needs. Nurses visit these patients at least once weekly and provide emergency visits when needed. Our stabilized patients are those whose medical or psychosocial needs are minimal. Most of them are patients who had high needs at one point but were managed and stabilized under our care. They require fewer interventions and do not need weekly visits. Stabilized patients may deteriorate and develop high needs as their illness progresses. In 2018, Balsam provided standard support to a total of 161 patients (see Patient Statistics section for details).

Distance Support: Distance support patients require regular contact but generally live outside the Greater Beirut area. The care is tailored to the needs of the family and their accessibility to the Balsam team. The service may include a one-time home visit by a Balsam physician or nurse to set a care plan wherever feasible. Patients are then managed remotely, by guiding and advising the family by phone. In 2018, we provided Distance Support for 37 patients.

One-Time Visits: For chronically-ill patients who are expected to remain stable, our intervention might include only one visit. The visit includes patient assessment, management of medications, assessment of equipment needs, and education of the family. It can be an important source of guidance and support for family caregivers. Additional visits may be scheduled, depending on the needs of the patient and the availability of Balsam staff. In 2018, fifteen families benefitted from this service.





CAPACITY BUILDING

As part of our efforts to spread awareness and knowledge by providing palliative care training to medical professionals in Lebanon and the region, here are some of the activities Balsam team members were engaged in during 2018:

COURSE: Essentials of Palliative Care

Balsam organized a course aimed at introducing practicing clinicians to the concepts of palliative care. The course was held over a period of seven weeks (April 14-May 26) and explored a comprehensive patient and family centered approach to people living with serious illness. It was attended by 29 participants including physicians, nurses, social workers and mental health professionals from eleven different institutions across the country. The course was based on the Palliative Care International Curriculum developed by Ohio Health and Ohio State University and covered core concepts including symptom management, communication skills and challenges associated with advanced illness. Faculty included physicians, nurses and other health professionals with extensive experience in providing palliative care in the Lebanese setting.

The course was very well received. Below are sample of the feedback from participants:

- “An eye opening experience.”
- “I will now look at my patient differently; I will be more attentive to him.”
- “... everything has changed; my way of looking, hearing, assessing, caring and supporting patients and their families.”
- “A very fruitful course that made me more capable in healing both the body and soul.”



CAPACITY BUILDING

WORKSHOP: Meeting the palliative and end of life care needs of gender and sexual minorities LGBT

Balsam hosted this workshop in collaboration with LebMASH as part of Lebanon's LGBT Health Week 2018. The activity aimed at exploring the issues and palliative care needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. The workshop was facilitated by Claude Chidiac, Lecturer in Palliative Care, St. Francis Hospice UK, with guest speaker Professor Kathryn Almac from the University of Hertfordshire, UK. It provided opportunities to reflect on and identify ways of providing culturally competent care for LGBT people and their families and partners within a palliative care context.

Other contributions to courses and conferences:

*** Dr. Osman gave a lecture on palliative care in head and neck cancer at the first Lebanese American University (LAU) Head and Neck Symposium in February 10

*** Dr. Osman gave a lecture on Balsam and palliative care to first year medical students at the American University of Beirut as part of their Global Health and Social Medicine course

***Balsam physician, Dr. Joe El Khoury was invited in April to attend the 26th Annual Moroccan Oncology Society Congress in Tangiers, Morocco attended by more than 400 oncologists from all over Morocco, where he gave sessions on communication, symptom management, and physician burn out. All sessions were well attended and received.

*** Janane Hanna presented the benefits of palliative care in patients with heart failure at the Nursing Symposium of the 13th International Congress of the Lebanese Society of Cardiology, the 4th Middle East Heart Failure Meeting in December. The event was organized in collaboration with Dr. Angela Massouh, the heart failure Clinical Nurse Specialist and a very dear friend of Balsam.

***Nurses Alia El Tabsh and Chadia Fayad were invited to give training sessions on "Awareness in Basic Palliative Care" to nurses at St. George hospital in Hadath in December. The session was attended by physicians, nurses, social workers and mental health professionals.



RESEARCH



ASCO palliative care resource stratified guideline

Osman H, Shrestha S, Temin S, Ali Z, Corvera R et al. Palliative care in the global setting: American Society of Clinical Oncology Resource-Stratified Practice Guideline. *Journal of Global Oncology* 2018;4: 1 – 24.

Dr. Osman served as co-chair of the expert panel that developed this guideline at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). The guideline provides recommendations for implementation of palliative care across a variety of settings taking into account the resource constraints of different countries. The topics covered include models of palliative care, team membership and training, optimal timing of initiation of palliative care services, and the different components of palliative care interventions. The guidelines are intended to complement the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) palliative care guideline published in 2016 which have had a major impact on clinical practice in the United States and other developed countries. The 2016 ASCO guideline resulted in a shift in practice by calling for the initiation of palliative care early in the course of cancer treatment rather than reserving it for the late stages of disease when disease modifying therapies are no longer an option. Our hope is this resource-stratified guideline will have a similar impact on lower and middle income countries by providing guidelines that can be implemented in settings with limited resources.



K2P Policy Brief

Soueidan S, Osman H, El-Jardali F. K2P Policy Brief: Integrating Palliative Care into the Health System in Lebanon. Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center, Beirut, Lebanon, July 2018.

This policy brief is the outcome of the stakeholder meeting organized by Balsam in collaboration with K2P and the Ministry of Public Health.

Integrating palliative care and symptom relief into primary health care: a WHO guide for planners, implementers and managers. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018. License: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0IGO.

Dr. Osman contributed to this manual aimed at helping policy makers and managers integrate palliative care into the primary health care system. The project was lead by Dr. Eric Krakauer and involved palliative care providers from different countries. The manual was launched with 2 other publications on integration of palliative care into pediatrics as well as integration of palliative care in response to humanitarian emergencies and crises.



**ADVOCACY
& OUTREACH**

K2P Stakeholder Meeting

The K2P Center of the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, and Balsam – the Lebanese Center for Palliative Care, joined forces to host a meeting of major stakeholders to develop a strategy and action plan for the growth, development and integration of palliative care into the Lebanese health sector. The meeting held in July brought together key players in Lebanon to strengthen education, increase training and enhance public awareness about the concept and importance of palliative care. This initiative funded by a grant from SoUK LB (a program funded by the British Embassy in Lebanon) was a response to the rising need for all seriously ill patients to receive care that improves their quality of life by alleviating their suffering.

Contract with Best Assistance S.A.L.

Balsam signed an agreement with Best Assistance S.A.L to incorporate palliative care into their scope of services in July. Beneficiaries of Best Assistance now have access to palliative care services that are covered by their insurance provider. This is an important step towards achieving the integration of palliative care into the Lebanese health system and ensuring that its services are available and accessible to all those who need it.



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AUBMC

Since it was established, Balsam has worked closely with the medical team at AUBMC to meet the needs of patients and families and increase knowledge and awareness in palliative care. This collaboration was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding signed last July. The MOU is a sign of the commitment of both institutions to provide excellence in care to patients and their families and trained highly skilled empathic health care workers.

Social Entrepreneurship Conference; ImpACT Beirut

On the 27th of February, Balsam exhibited at the Social Entrepreneurship Conference; ImpACT Beirut organised by AUB Entrepreneurship Club in collaboration with impACT at the American University of Beirut (AUB). This is their third event after Berlin and Kabul. The conference was a good opportunity for Balsam to spread awareness, gain insights, extend networks and get inspired.

EVENT A

In its campaign to shed light on social impact initiatives, EVENT A chose Dr. Hibah Osman as their "Person of the Week" on January 22nd. EVENT A was originally founded as a cause-related events management company and grew to include fundraising strategy and professional development services for nonprofit organizations, and different types of social impact organizations. Their post read "Dr. Osman has dedicated her career to helping families with terminally ill patients cope and has made a great impact on many lives".



Network Lebanon

UN GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK LEBANON (UNGICNL)

In September Balsam applied to join the UN Global Compact Network Lebanon (UNGICNL), the world's largest voluntary corporate citizenship initiative. UNGICNL is a platform for learning, policy dialogue, and partnership based on the UNGC Ten Principles (under the four categories of human rights, labor rights, environment, and anti-corruption) and the newly formulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are currently over 160 GICNL Lebanese private and social sector members (corporations, SMEs and social enterprises, civil society organizations) we are pleased Balsam is one of them.

***Dr. Hibah Osman featured in March in a video for the American university of Beirut –Medical center raising awareness about palliative care and the common misconceptions.

<https://www.facebook.com/AUBMC/videos/1697847966949459/>



■ FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISING



***Balsam is one of several Lebanese organizations that can receive tax-exempt donations from supporters in the United States of America through its collaboration with Act for Lebanon. We are pleased to announce that we received \$11,877 in donations in 2018. Thank you to all our overseas supporters.

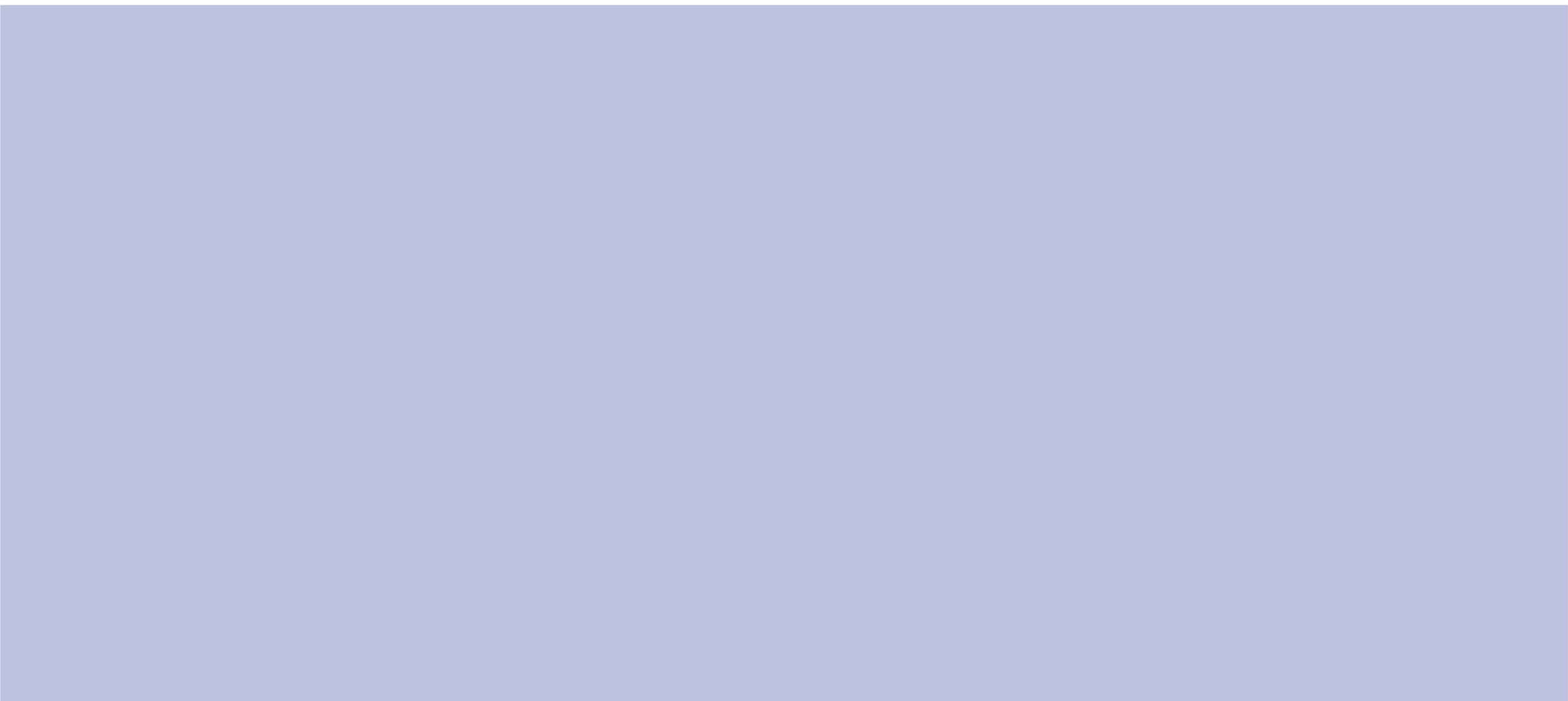
***Thanks to Jad Soubra, Balsam acquired in February a whole new set of nurses' equipment to include: a new Nurse Bag, five Stethoscopes, five Blood Pressure Machines and five Oximeters. Jad, a grade 12 IC student, took the initiative to organize a bake sale as part of his community service activity and raised an impressive \$1,200 for Balsam.

***Every year, faculty members from the Hariri School of Nursing at AUB organize a donation drive over the Christmas holiday to support a charity of their choice. Participants in this initiative decided to support Balsam. Faculty members visited the Balsam offices in February to deliver the \$300 that were collected this year.

***AUBMC medical students Ghina el Fout and Mohamad Maktabi took the kind hearted initiative to plan and host an all-day bake sale on May 9th at Saab Medical Library. The two were so inspired by Balsam's work that they chose to throw their own energies into raising funds and awareness for Balsam.

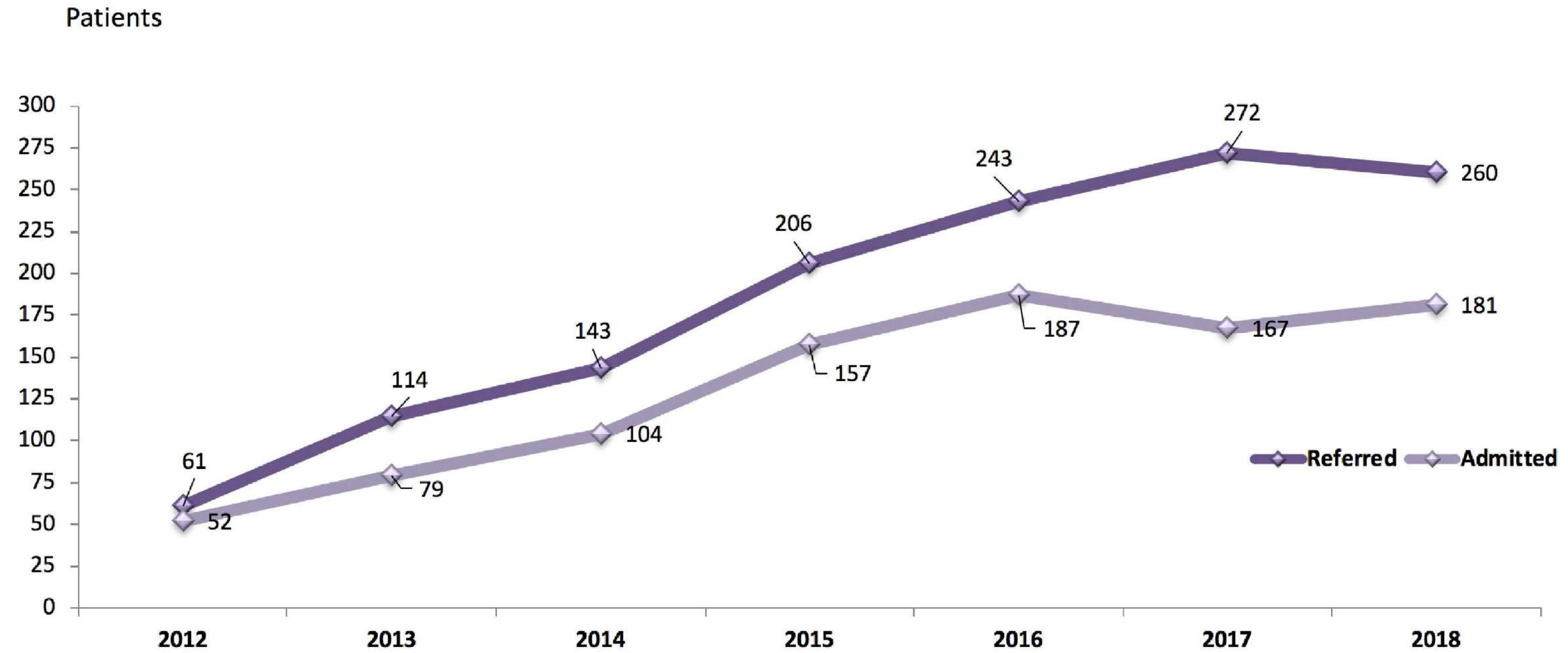
*** In October, Morgan International (<https://www.morganintl.com//>) joined efforts with Balsam in a new campaign to promote Balsam's work and raise donations through its client base. Morgan offers professional certifications and diploma programs in the fields of finance, accountancy, human resources, marketing, and logistics. Their Balsam campaign includes featuring a Balsam film in their class announcements and in their reception area, a social media campaign to raise awareness about Balsam's work, and donation boxes in their offices and classrooms.





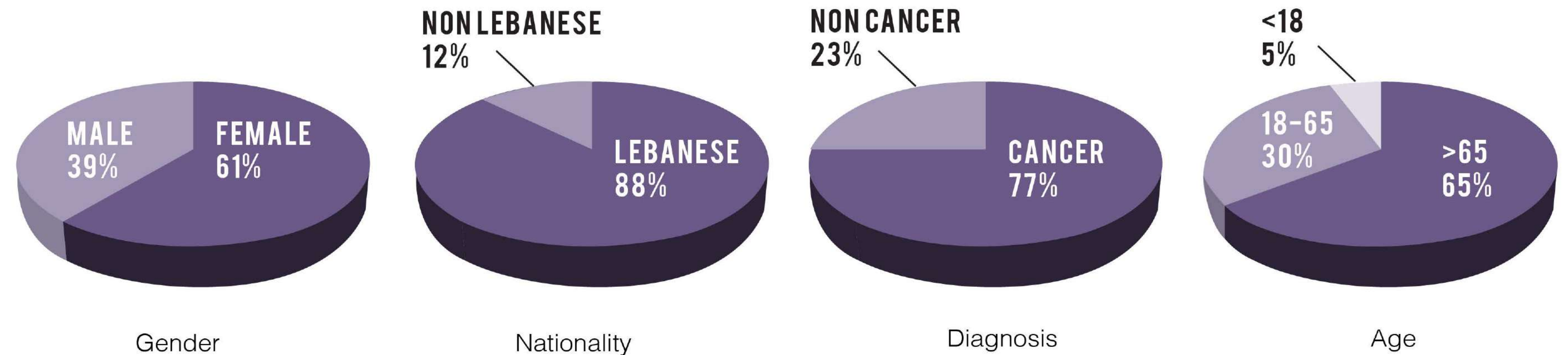
FACTS & FIGURES

Admitted and Referred Patient Trends (2010 - 2018)



* Includes patients carried over from the previous years

Demographic Characteristics (2018):



Number of Physicians Referring Patients to Balsam (2010-2018)

Cumulative number of physicians



Number of Patients Referred Annually (2012-2018)

* Includes patients carried over from previous year

**Patients who are assessed not to need palliative care

*** Patients who live outside Greater Beirut Area and receive the Distance Support

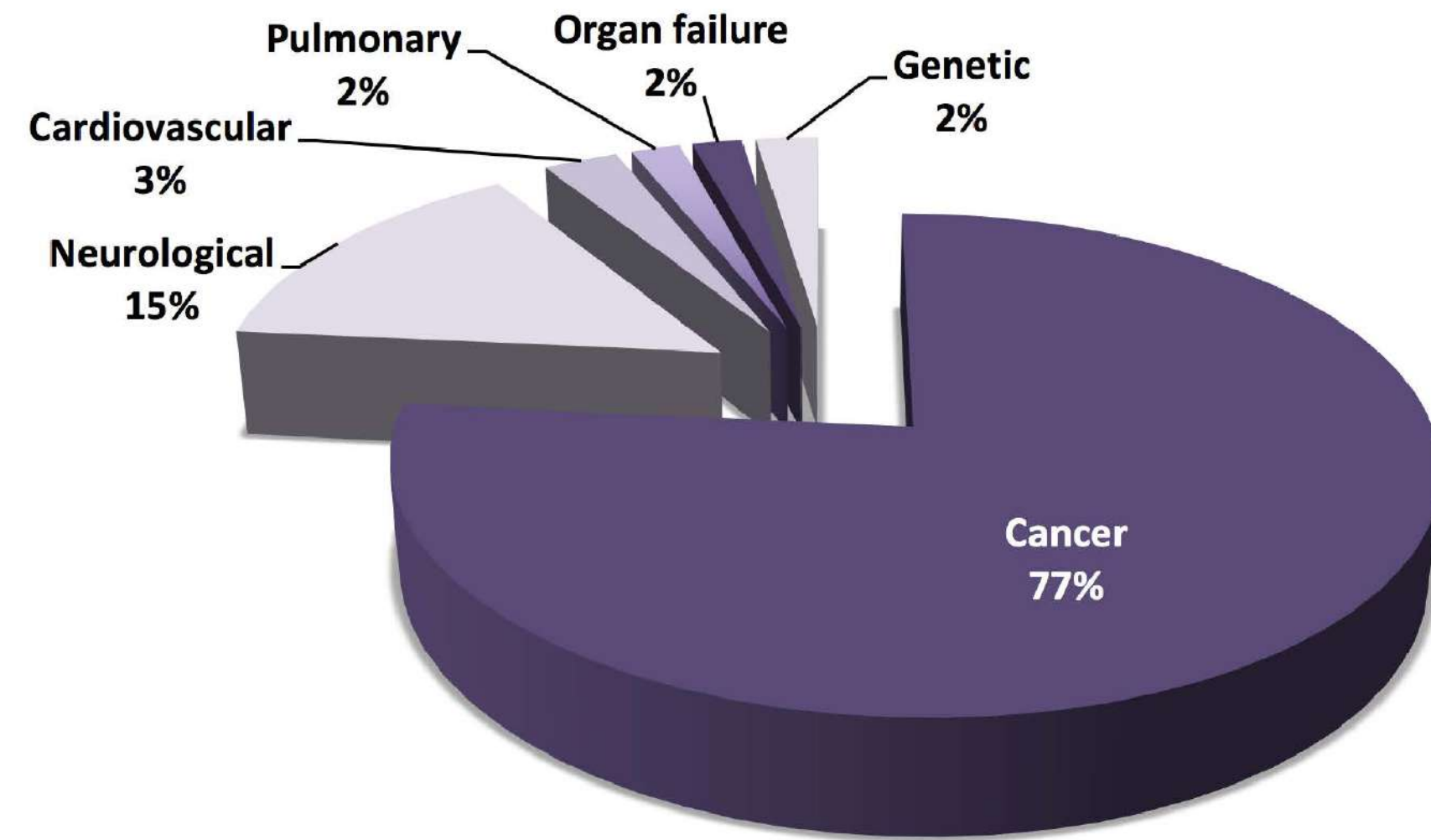
Year	2012		2013		2014	
Admitted	52	57 Standard Care	79	88 Standard Care	104	100 Standard Care
						9 One time visit **
Not Admitted	9		35		39	
Total	66		123		148	

Years	2015		2016		2017	
Admitted	157	130 Standard Care	187	169 Standard Care	194	147 Standard Care
		27 One time visit **		17 One time visit **		9 One time visit **
		16 Distance Support ***		29 Distance Support ***		38 Distance Support ***
Not Admitted	49		56		105	
Total	222		271		299	

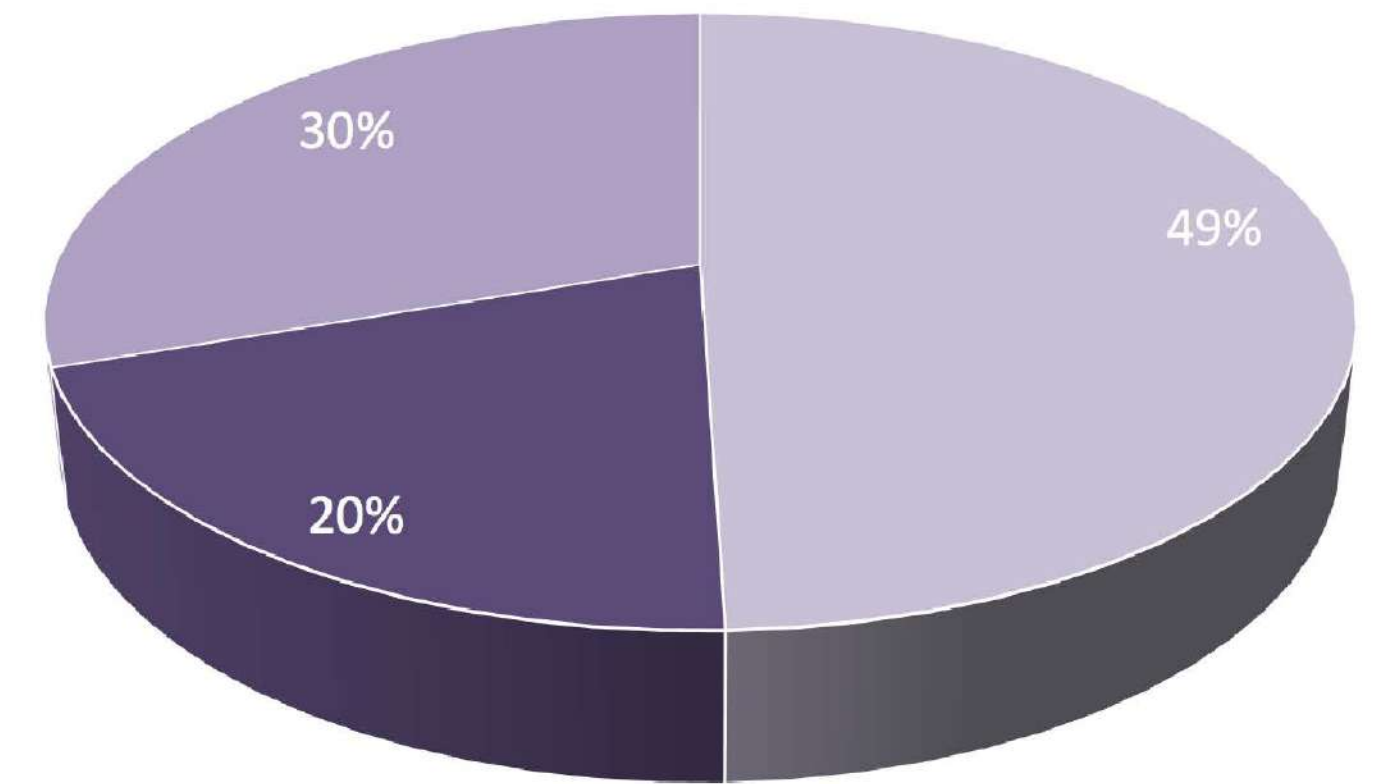
Number of Patients Referred Annually (2012-2018)

Year	2018	
Admitted	213	161 Regular Support
		15 One Time Visit **
		37 Distance Support ***
Not Admitted	79	
Total	292	

Patients Stratified by Disease Category (2018)



Days from referral to admission (2018)



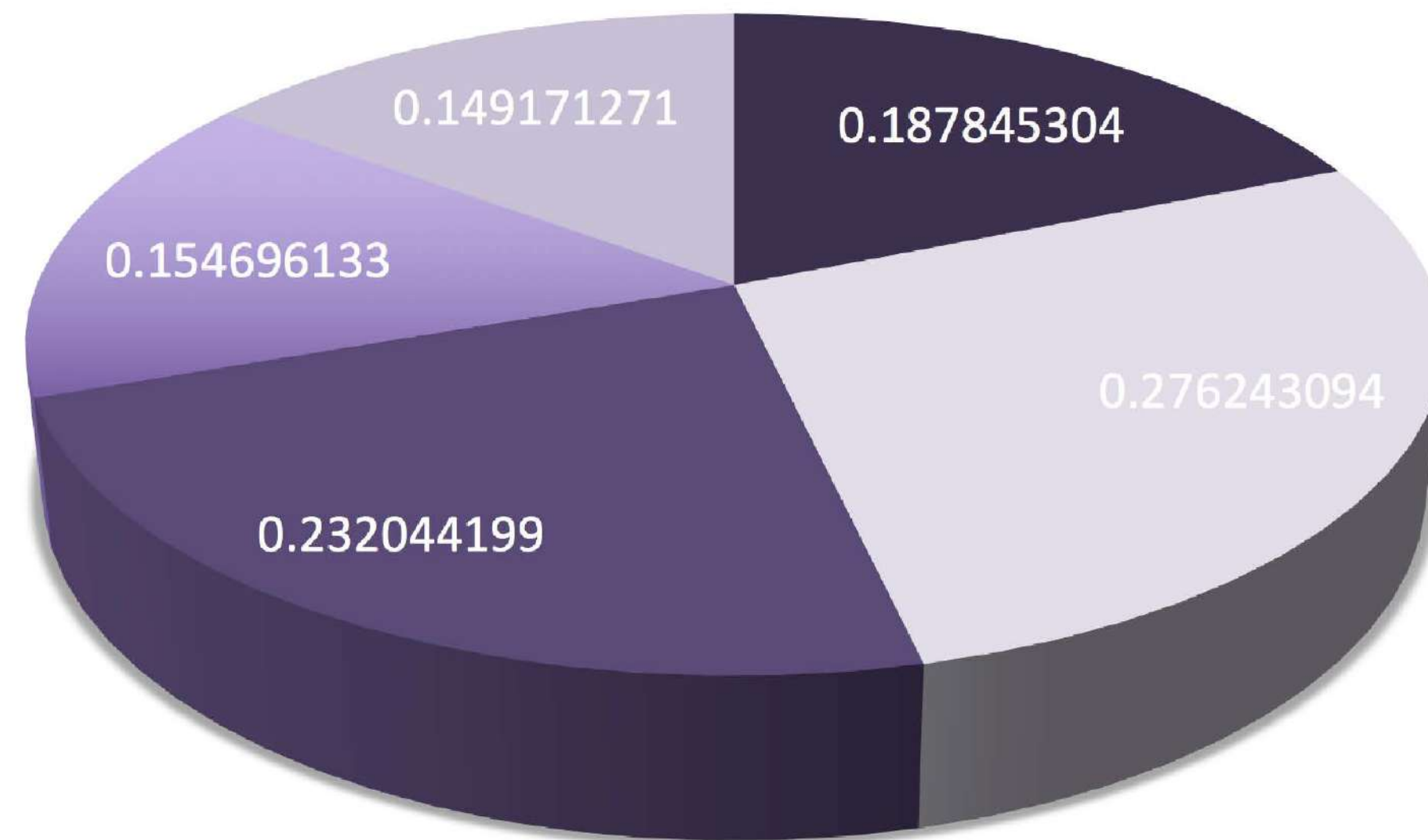
% Patients

■ ≤ 2 Days ■ 3 to 5 Days ■ ≥ 6 Days

Patients Stratified by Socio-Economic Status (2018)

*Data does not include patients carried over from 2018

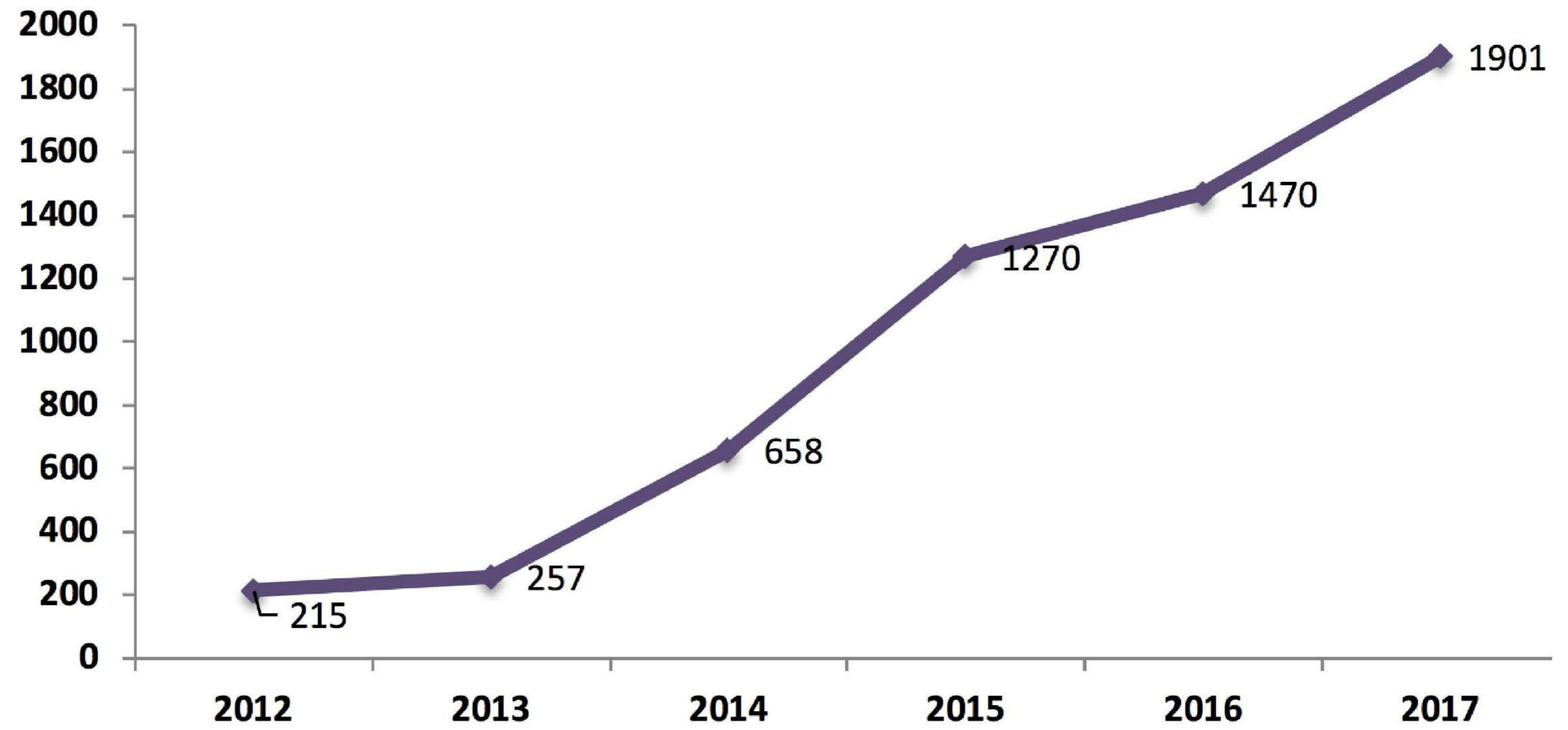
**From Wikipedia " Social Class", "Social class in the United States"



■ Lower ■ Working ■ Middle ■ Upper ■ Missing data

Facebook (FB) Likes (2018)

Facebook Likes (2012-2018)



THANK YOU

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Facebook: Balsam-The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care

YouTube: BalsamLCPC