

### **WCM-Q student teams up with alumnus for research success**

**Doha – November 15, 2017:** The research of a first-year medical student at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) has been published in a leading scientific journal thanks in part to the mentorship of a WCM-Q graduate who is now on the faculty at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York.

Aya Tabbalat's research project on the fertility of women in the Arabian Peninsula was published in the Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics following a summer of research at Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) in New York, where she was mentored by Dr. Nigel Pereira, who graduated from WCM-Q with academic distinction in 2010.

Aya, who joined WCM-Q's Premedical Program in 2014, is the first author on the paper, titled 'Arabian Peninsula ethnicity is associated with lower ovarian reserve and ovarian response in women undergoing fresh ICSI cycles'. The Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics is an official publication of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine.

Aya said: "I am very happy to see my research published and extremely grateful to Dr. Nigel Pereira for being such a proactive and encouraging mentor. His guidance, knowledge and passion for his work was so beneficial and inspiring, and it was great to be able to work with a fellow member of the WCM-Q community."

The research paper studied the cases of 763 female patients; 217 of Arab Peninsula ethnicity and 546 Caucasians, and used a statistical modeling technique to compare the success of assisted reproductive techniques (ART) between the two groups. The study found that women of Arabian Peninsula heritage responded less well to ART than the Caucasian Group. The study also found that Qatari women in the Arab group responded more positively to ART than women from other parts of the region. All data used in the study was anonymized.

Aya added: "In the context of the opportunities presented by the emergence of personalized medicine, understanding the genetic or ethnic basis of responses to ART is an area of research we feel is very worthwhile. I am pleased that this paper provides insight into an important health issue for our region."

WCM-Q's six-year medical curriculum is designed to give students multiple opportunities to conduct their own research in order to produce physician-scientists who not only provide excellent care but also drive progress in medical science. Aya's research at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York was supported by the Medical Student Research Award, an initiative that facilitates research experiences for students who demonstrate an aptitude for scientific enquiry.

Dr. Pereira, who now holds the position of Assistant Professor of Reproductive Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Ronald O. Perelman and Claudia Cohen Center for Reproductive Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine-New York, provided mentorship to Aya throughout her research experience. He said: "It has been a great privilege to have the opportunity to offer mentorship to such a diligent and focused student as Aya. I am incredibly pleased that her exemplary attitude has been rewarded with the publication of an original research paper."



“Aya is my first research mentee from WCM-Q and she was extremely professional and also, most importantly, an active learner. Our research forms the basis for ethnicity-based variations in IVF outcomes, which is an important topic that has not been explored in the Arabian Middle East. Her publication is a fantastic achievement and one that Aya thoroughly deserves.”

Dr. Nayef Mazloum, Assistant Dean for Student Research at WCM-Q, said: “To be published in a prestigious journal at such an early stage in one’s career is a rare and extremely significant achievement.

“We are very pleased that Aya’s hard work has been rewarded and we are delighted that her research was supported by one of our own WCM-Q alumni, Dr. Nigel Pereira, who is one of our most talented and dedicated former students.”

The research paper can be read in full at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29063502>

- Ends -

#### **Photos Captions:**

Photo1: First-year WCM-Q medical student Aya Tabbalat, who has already published her first research paper, with Dr. Nayef Mazloum, Assistant Dean for Student Research at WCM-Q.

Photo2: WCM-Q graduate Dr. Nigel Pereira, now Assistant Professor of Reproductive Medicine and Obstetrics at Weill Cornell Medicine-New York, provided mentorship to current WCM-Q student Aya Tabbalat to help her on her way to an early publishing success.

#### **About Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar**

Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers a comprehensive six-year medical program leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital, the Primary Health Care Corporation, the Feto Maternal Center, and Sidra Medicine, who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCM-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCM-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

#### **For more info, please contact:**

Hanan Lakkis  
Senior Media Manager  
Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar  
Mobile: +974 55536564  
Direct Line: +974 44928661  
hyl2004@qatar-med.cornell.edu

