



THE LEBANESE CENTER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE – BALSAM

المركز اللبناني للعناية
التلطيفية – بلسم

Annual Report - 2016

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are proud to share our continued growth and success with you in our 6th Annual Report. Our reach and patient load have continued to increase steadily since our establishment. With some restructuring, we have been able to increase our capacity and provide care to 215 patients in the past year. This is approximately a 35 % increase from 2015 with the same clinical staffing. Through our Distance Support program, we supported 29 patients living outside the Greater Beirut area. Our average daily census now ranges between 30 – 40 patients, a significant increase from past years.

With increasing awareness of the benefits of palliative care, requests for care have been growing. We had a total of 408 referrals in 2016 – nearly double the number of referrals in 2015. This was the first year that we were unable to accommodate all requests for care within a week. The demand for care has been so high that starting in March of 2016, we had to institute a waiting list and prioritize new patients based on need and urgency. Nearly 30 % of patients referred to Balsam in 2016 had to wait more than 6 days before we could enroll them in our program compared to 8 % in 2015.

It is estimated that approximately 15,000 people in Lebanon can benefit from palliative care every year. The demand for palliative care will continue to rise as people begin to recognize its value. The country is still not ready to meet the needs of the population but we are slowly moving in that direction. We at Balsam are proud to be playing an important role in that effort.

A National Palliative Care Program has been proposed in the Ministry of Public Health that would provide financial coverage for palliative care services in hospitals and at home. Health

insurance companies are also starting to consider covering palliative care services. Our research project with GlobeMed should provide valuable data that will inform this process. Achieving insurance coverage of services is a very important step that will provide the incentive for hospitals and health providers to start providing palliative care services.

The absence of skilled health care providers who have the necessary training has been another major barrier to improving access to palliative care. We at Balsam have been investing our effort in providing training opportunities for health providers and training trainers to build capacity in palliative care. Our Advanced Palliative Care Workshop attracted providers from different health institutions who are now sharing their knowledge and expertise. We are trying to create a community of providers who will learn from and support each other as we work together to build palliative care in Lebanon.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors and supporters. We are blessed with the support of many people who believe in what we are doing. Whether you are writing a check, donating medications and equipment, attending our events, or contributing your time – our work would not be possible without you!

Best Regards,
Hibah Osman, MD, MPH
Executive and Medical Director
April 15, 2017



**MISSION
VISION
VALUES**

OUR MISSION

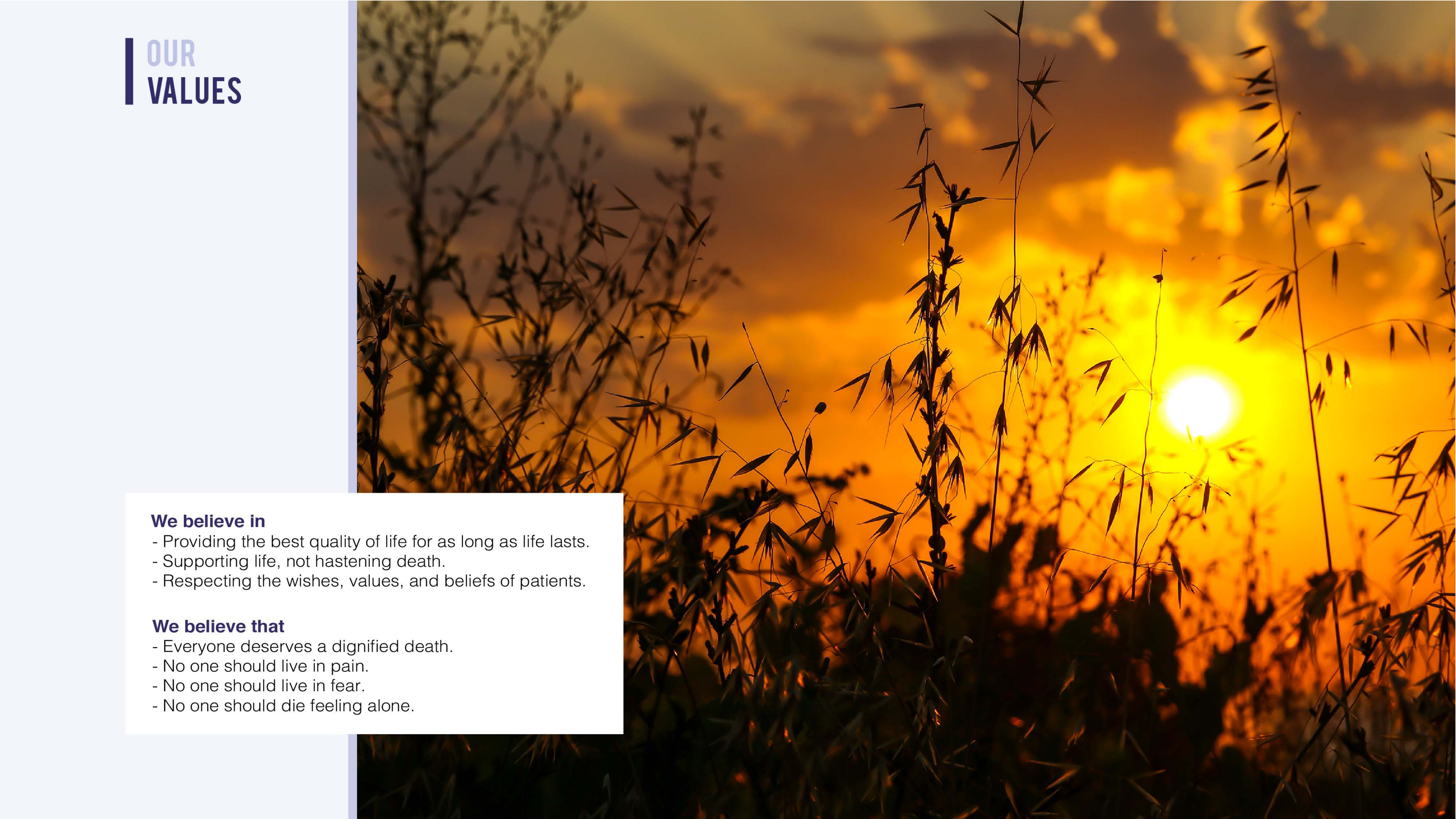


The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care – Balsam – is a non-governmental organization that aims to relieve suffering and improve the quality of life of patients with serious illness through patient care, advocacy, capacity building and research.

OUR VISION



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



OUR VALUES

We believe in

- Providing the best quality of life for as long as life lasts.
- Supporting life, not hastening death.
- Respecting the wishes, values, and beliefs of patients.

We believe that

- Everyone deserves a dignified death.
- No one should live in pain.
- No one should live in fear.
- No one should die feeling alone.



OUR TEAM

OUR TEAM

Missing: **Dania Ghaziri** Clinical Pharmacist



1st Row from left to right

Rebecca EL Asmar
Nurse

Karim Farah
Physician

Roula Alameddine Doughan
Operations Coordinator

Aline Zakhem
Physician

2nd Row from left to right

Janane Hanna
Nurse

Hiba Makke
Social Worker

Chadia Fayad
Nurse

Michael Khoury
Clinical Psychologist

Hibah Osman
Medical Director

Alison Skelton
Development Advisor

Alia Tabsh
Nurse

Our team continues to grow



Roula Alameddine Doughan

Joined Balsam in January 2016 as Human Resources Officer. Although she is only working at Balsam part-time, she quickly started to take on new responsibilities and soon took on the role of Operations Coordinator. Roula holds a Master's degree in Human Resources Management and has worked in both the public and private sectors. After joining Balsam, it didn't take Roula long to realize that working in an NGO is a very different experience, yet a very satisfying and fulfilling one. She especially enjoys working with the Balsam team, all of whom are passionate about their work and strongly committed to the Balsam mission. Roula's main focus is on supporting the necessary expansion of Balsam, planning fundraising events, improving the work environment, and setting the ground for the future recruitments. Most importantly, she works on maintaining the welfare of Balsam's team members - its most valuable assets.



Alison Skelton

started volunteering as a Development Advisor for Balsam in September 2016. Alison's background is in communications and fundraising for NGOs. She established and helped implement Balsam's new development strategy to ensure our growth and sustainability. She will be starting her Masters in Business Administration at Johns Hopkins University in the Fall of 2017.

INTERNAL CAPACITY BUILDING

We at Balsam remain committed to maintaining the highest standards and delivering excellent palliative care services. Team members continue to seek training opportunities at regional and international conferences and workshops to stay up to date on the latest developments in palliative care. Members of the Balsam team are also committed to spreading awareness by providing palliative care training to medical professionals in Lebanon and the region.



Rebecca El Asmar

Participated in and conducted a number of trainings and palliative care awareness activities. In May, she served as a moderator for the **Middle East Medical Assembly's "Lymphedema"** session and on the scientific committee of the **Hariri School of Nursing** symposium entitled "Celebrating Nursing Developments: Past and Present Achievements." Moreover, she and fellow Balsam nurse Janane Hanna gave a joint lecture to **Lebanese University** nursing students in the palliative care specialty in June. In August she aided in the scientific organization of the cancer awareness campaign at **ABC Ashrafieh** and co-presented a nursing Grand Round at **AUBMC** with Janane in November on "Early Palliative Care Referral."



Janane Hanna

Is a member of the **American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN)** and a co-author of the pain management manuscript that the **ASPMN Pain Outcome Task Force** will publish in Spring 2017. In September, she attended ASPMN's annual conference on safety and quality outcomes in pain management in Louisville, Kentucky. She also gave a series of lectures and discussions, including a training in November on the "Basics of Palliative Care" for the **AUB Bachelors of Science in Nursing** third year students. Moreover, she gave an orientation session to new anesthesia residents and third year medical students at AUB on "Communicating Pain Effectively," and discussed the "Basics of Pain Management" at a registered nurses orientation at **AUBMC**. She additionally provided a training in "Basics of Pain and Palliative Care" for Palestinian nurses through the **AUB Continuing Education Program**. She also participated in a panel discussion for NGOs that support breast cancer patients at the **Fourth Beirut Breast Cancer Conference**.



Dr. Hibah Osman

Balsam Founder and Medical Director gave frequent lectures in the community. In February, she gave the core curriculum lecture on palliative and end of life care to **AUB** residents. She did the same for **LAU** medical students and residents in May and November. In March, she was a guest speaker at the **Rotary Club of Beirut Cosmopolitan** on the topic of “Palliative Care: Dignity and Choice in Advanced Illness.” She also gave a lecture on palliative care along with Dr. Rana Yamout as part of the Continuing Medical Education program for **Clemenceau Medical Center** physicians in September 2016.



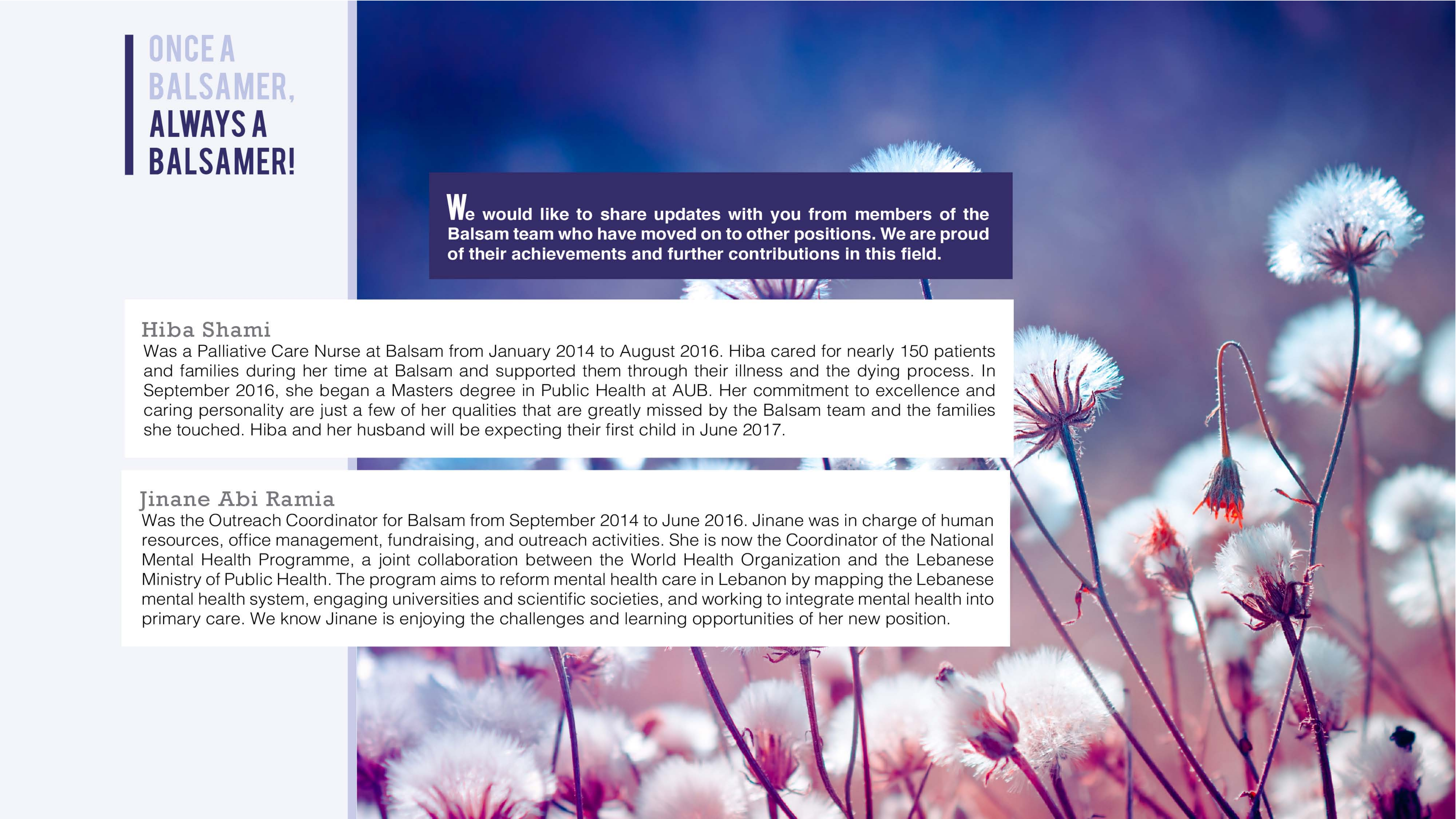
Dr. Aline Zakhem

began teaching the **Medicine 2 Palliative Module in the Physicians, Patients and Society** course at the **Faculty of Medicine at AUB**. This course was developed two years ago by Dr. Osman and has become a required course of all second year medical students. The course is highly rated among students, reporting that they find it to be transformational in changing their perspective around their role as physicians and caring for the seriously ill.



Dr. Michael Khoury

Balsam psychologist, participated in the **Palliative Care Symposium** at the Crowne Plaza in February. He also delivered a one-day training session to men caring for their wives with cancer organized by the NGO **One Wig Stand**. The session focused on developing communication skills and built group cohesion among participants.



ONCE A BALSAMER, ALWAYS A BALSAMER!

We would like to share updates with you from members of the Balsam team who have moved on to other positions. We are proud of their achievements and further contributions in this field.

Hiba Shami

Was a Palliative Care Nurse at Balsam from January 2014 to August 2016. Hiba cared for nearly 150 patients and families during her time at Balsam and supported them through their illness and the dying process. In September 2016, she began a Masters degree in Public Health at AUB. Her commitment to excellence and caring personality are just a few of her qualities that are greatly missed by the Balsam team and the families she touched. Hiba and her husband will be expecting their first child in June 2017.

Jinane Abi Ramia

Was the Outreach Coordinator for Balsam from September 2014 to June 2016. Jinane was in charge of human resources, office management, fundraising, and outreach activities. She is now the Coordinator of the National Mental Health Programme, a joint collaboration between the World Health Organization and the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health. The program aims to reform mental health care in Lebanon by mapping the Lebanese mental health system, engaging universities and scientific societies, and working to integrate mental health into primary care. We know Jinane is enjoying the challenges and learning opportunities of her new position.



**PATIENT
CARE**

PATIENT CARE

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. We help patients make informed decisions about their medical care that are in line with their values and beliefs. Our holistic and interdisciplinary team 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. 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 under the supervision of one of our physicians. The frequency of nurse visits depends on the needs of the patients and may vary during the course of the illness; however, we are available 24/7 for emergencies. Our clinical psychologist and clinical pharmacist offer support to the nurses and physicians on the team to provide optimal care. Our social worker provides additional support to some patients and families based on their psychosocial needs. The team continues to follow patients in cases of hospitalization, and medical management is coordinated with the patient's primary treating physician. If a patient passes away, the Balsam team continues to support the family during the bereavement period for at least one year.

Although our capacity to provide full services has been limited to the Greater Beirut area, we have been supporting patients and physicians outside of Beirut over the telephone since Balsam's inception. Over the years we have learned that these interventions have had an important and valuable impact on patients and families. In 2015, we decided to formalize this form of support as "Distance Support." Our Distance Support patients and caregivers can seek advice from a Balsam nurse 24/7 via telephone and find it to be a source of medical expertise and relief in moments of need.



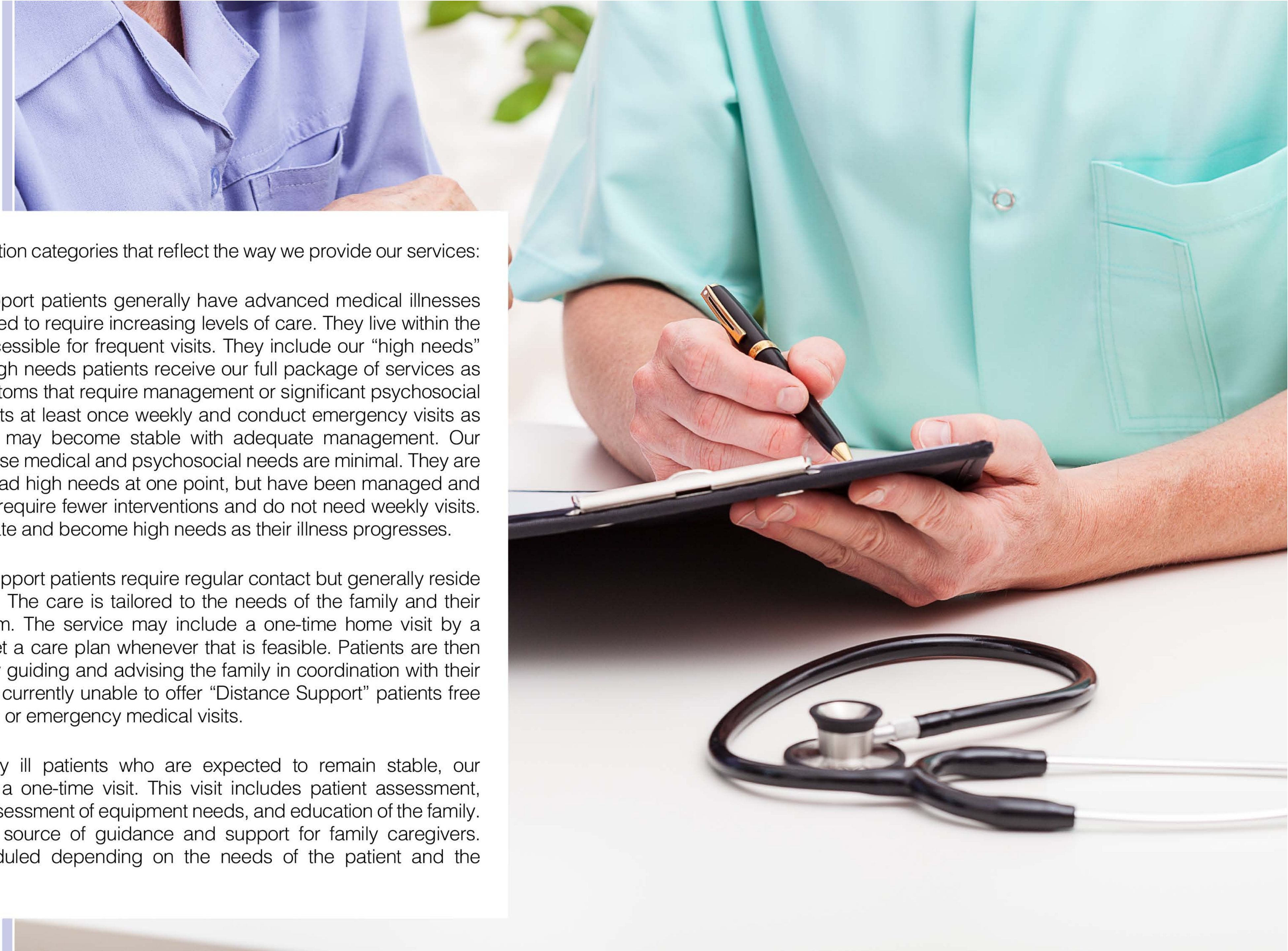
NEW PATIENT CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES

We have three patient classification categories that reflect the way we provide our services:

Regular Support: Regular support patients generally have advanced medical illnesses that are progressive and expected to require increasing levels of care. They live within the Greater Beirut area and are accessible for frequent visits. They include our “high needs” and “stabilized patients.” Our high needs patients receive our full package of services as these patients have active symptoms that require management or significant psychosocial needs. Nurses visit these patients at least once weekly and conduct emergency visits as needed. A high needs patient may become stable with adequate management. Our stabilized patients are those whose medical and psychosocial needs are minimal. They are mostly patients who may have had high needs at one point, but have been managed and stabilized under our care. They require fewer interventions and do not need weekly visits. Stabilized patients may deteriorate and become high needs as their illness progresses.

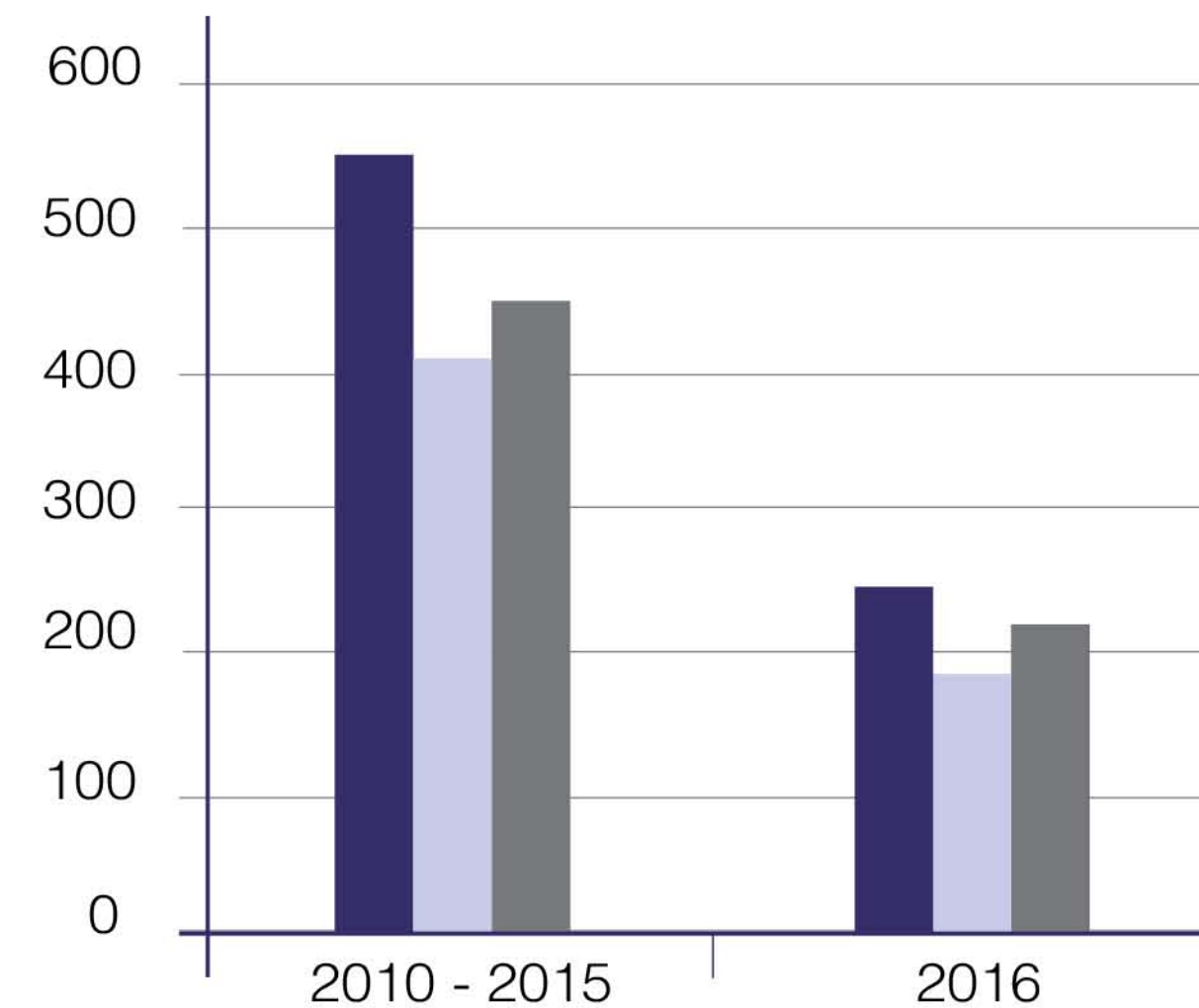
Distance Support: Distance support patients require regular contact but generally reside outside the Greater Beirut Area. The care is tailored to the needs of the family and their accessibility to the Balsam team. The service may include a one-time home visit by a Balsam physician or nurse to set a care plan whenever that is feasible. Patients are then managed using telemedicine by guiding and advising the family in coordination with their local treating physician. We are currently unable to offer “Distance Support” patients free medical equipment from Balsam or emergency medical visits.

One-time visit: For chronically ill patients who are expected to remain stable, our intervention might only include a one-time visit. This visit includes patient assessment, management of medications, assessment of equipment needs, and education of the family. This visit 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.



Patient Load 2010 - 2016:

Total # Patients

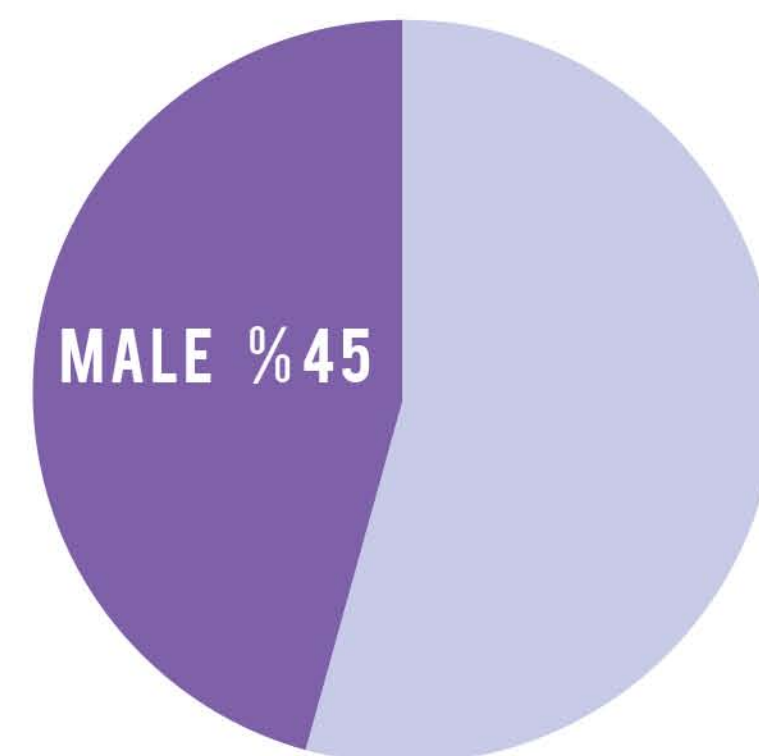


- Total number of patients admitted
- Total number of patients referred
- Total number of patients treated *

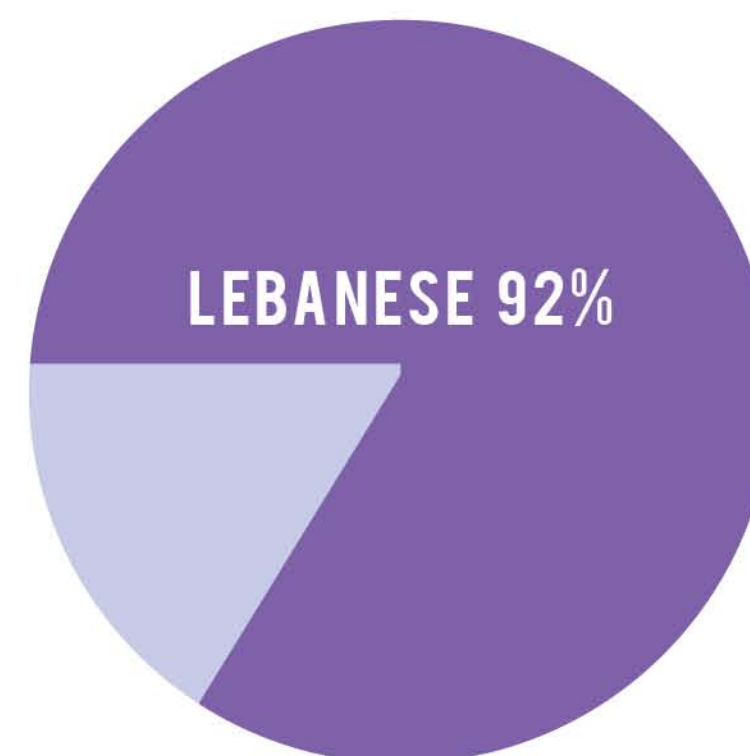
*Includes patients carried over from previous year

By the end of 2016 we had cared for a total of 633 patients

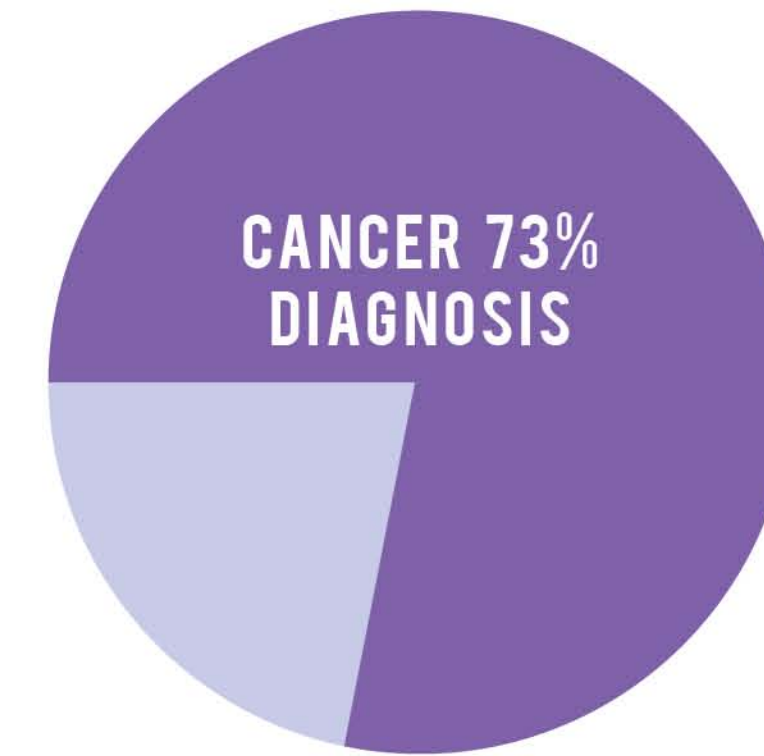
Demographic Characteristics (2016):



Gender



Nationality

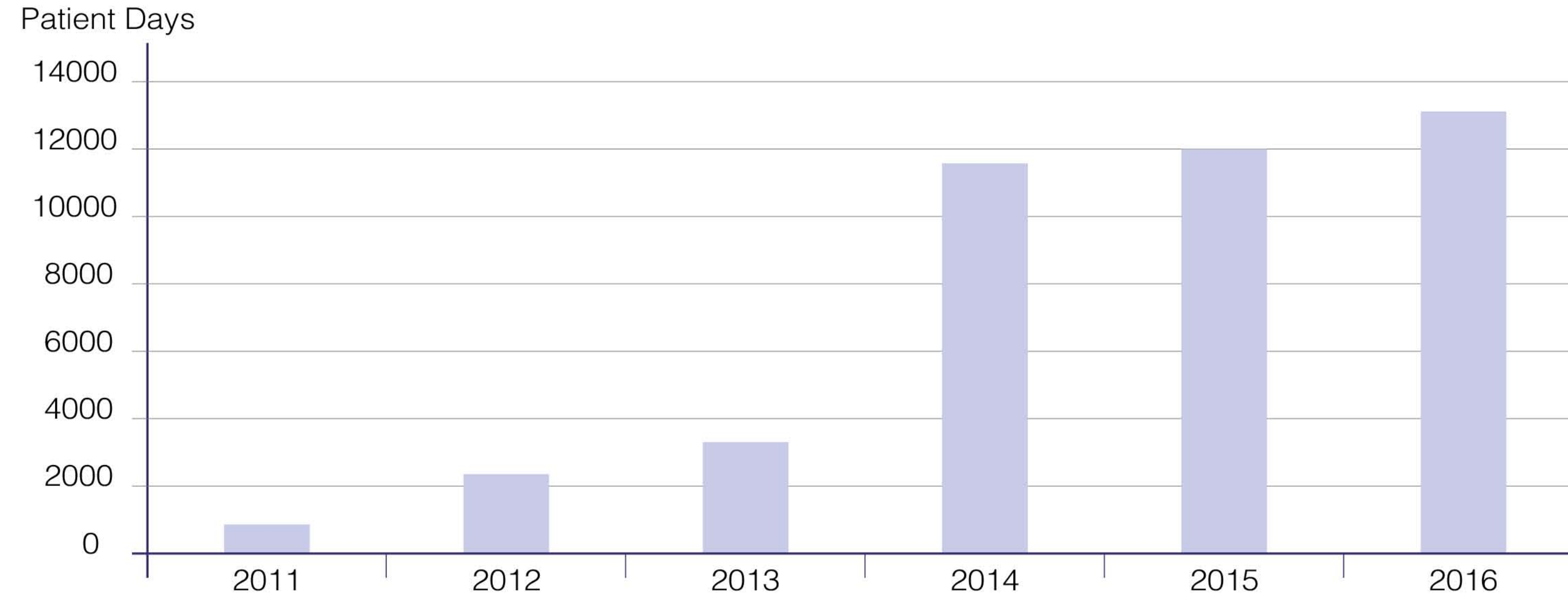


Diagnosis

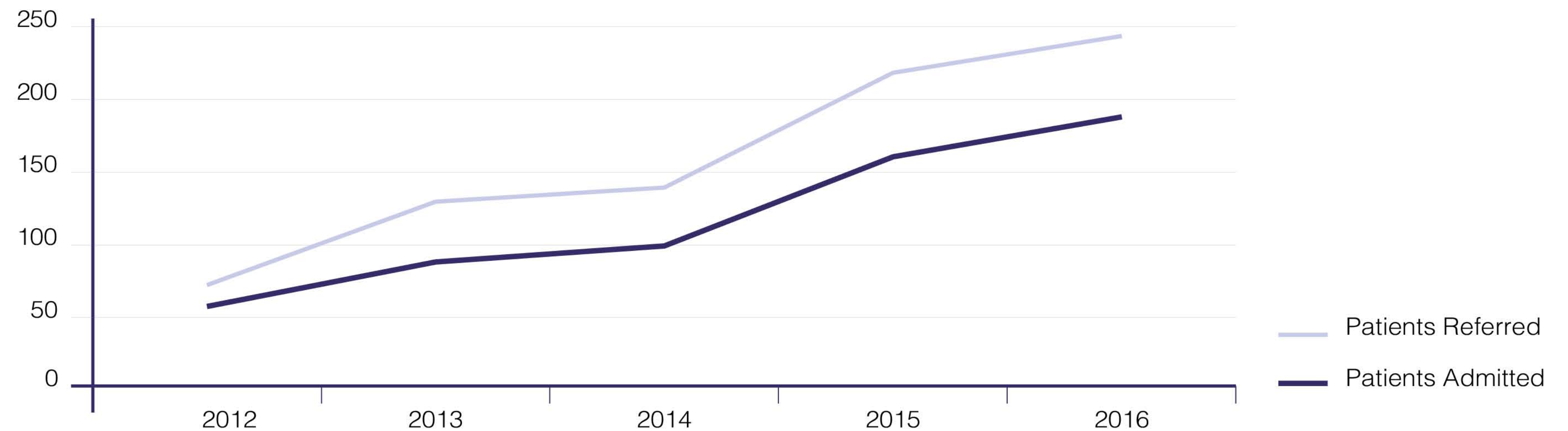


Age

Total Care Provided (in Patient - Days) 2011 – 2016



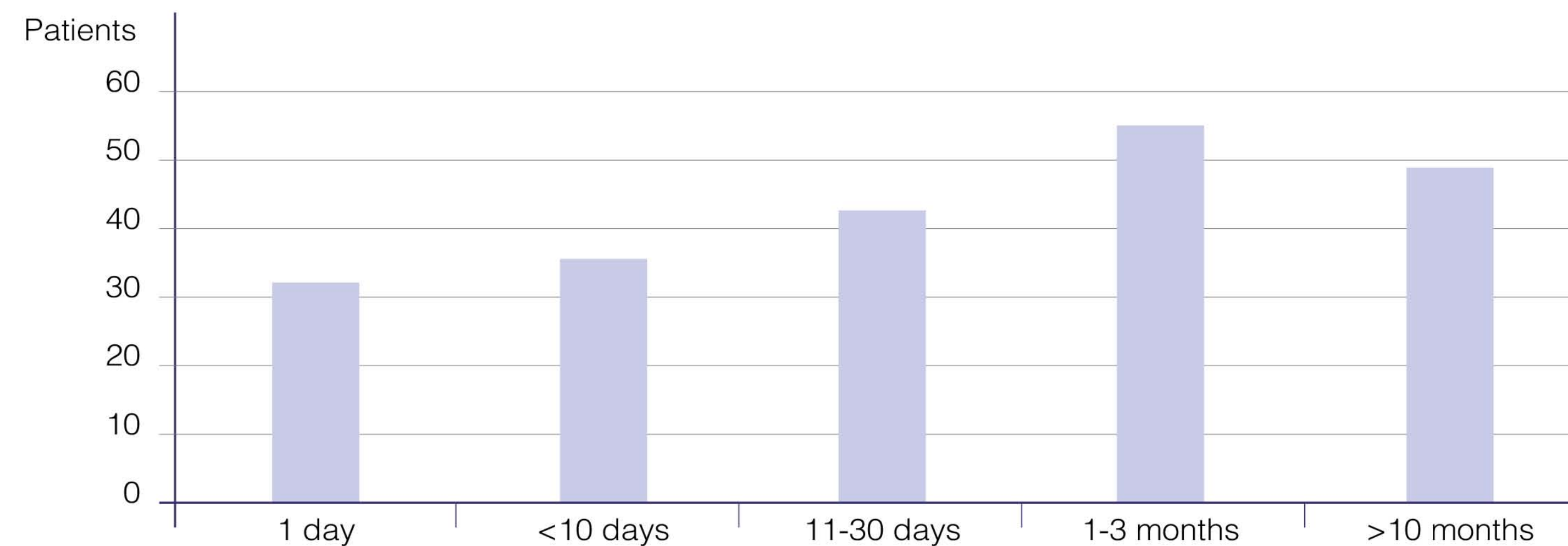
Admitted and Referred Patient Trends 2012 - 2016



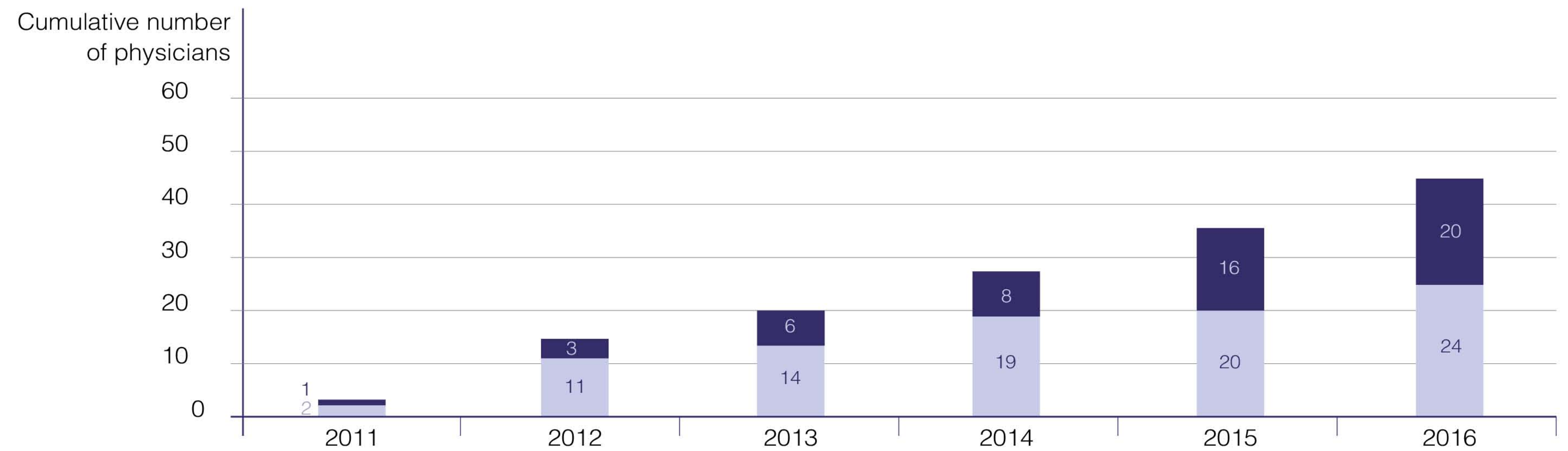
Total Number of Patients in 2016

Years	Continuing from 2015		Admitted in 2016		2016 Total
Patients	28	26 Regular Support	187	142 Regular Support	169 High Needs
		1 Distance Support*		28 Distance Support*	29 Distance Support*
				17 One Time Visits	17 One Time Visits
* Patients who live outside Greater Beirut Area and receive Distance support					215 Patients

Days in Care for Patients (2016)



Number of Physicians Referring Patients to Balsam 2011 – 2016



To date, a total of 92 physicians have referred patients to Balsam care

For more statistics on patient care please refer to Appendix I. For trends in Balsam's advocacy and online presence please refer to Appendix II.

■ ADVOCACY

■ ADVOCACY



Balsam's efforts to promote palliative care remain necessary at all levels: in the community, among healthcare providers, and at the policy level. Interest in palliative care has clearly been growing since we started our work in 2010. However, we are still far from achieving a culture and healthcare system that adequately address the needs of people with serious and advanced illnesses. We aim to increase awareness about the philosophy and practice of palliative care through traditional mass media, social media, and community outreach activities. Highlights of Balsam's 2016 advocacy activities include:

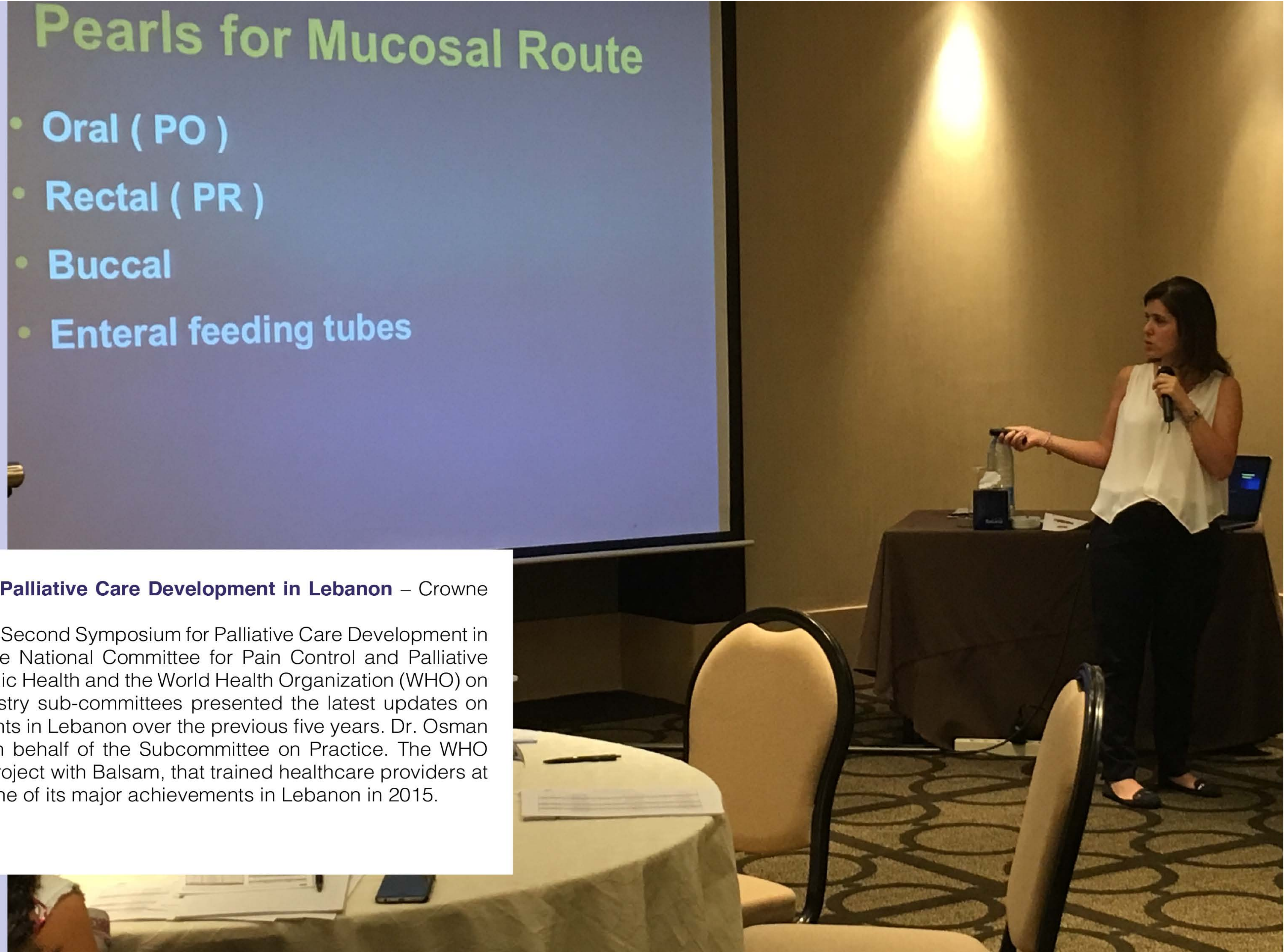
■ ADVOCACY

Pearls for Mucosal Route

- Oral (PO)
- Rectal (PR)
- Buccal
- Enteral feeding tubes

Second Symposium for Palliative Care Development in Lebanon – Crowne Plaza - February 2016

Balsam participated in the Second Symposium for Palliative Care Development in Lebanon organized by the National Committee for Pain Control and Palliative Care of the Ministry of Public Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) on February 19 and 20. Ministry sub-committees presented the latest updates on palliative care developments in Lebanon over the previous five years. Dr. Osman presented the updates on behalf of the Subcommittee on Practice. The WHO recognized its joint pilot project with Balsam, that trained healthcare providers at Ain WaZein Hospital, as one of its major achievements in Lebanon in 2015.



■ ADVOCACY



Knowledge to Policy (K2P) and Issam Fares Institute Workshop –

American University of Beirut – April 2016

The workshop informed civil society organizations (CSOs) in Lebanon working on non-communicable diseases about the policy cycle, specifically on defining and framing problems, and providing evidence-based policy options. Balsam presented on the Lebanese population's restrictive access to palliative care due to the lack of financial coverage for this type of medical service. Participants were asked to develop policy options to address this problem and came up with three possibilities: 1) Integrate early palliative care within the bundles of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF); 2) Integrate early palliative care in the coverage package of insurance providers; and 3) Provide financial reimbursement by the government to centers that provide palliative care services. Dr. Osman and Jinane Abi Ramia attended on behalf of Balsam.

ADVOCACY



Lebanon Lantern Festival -- “We Survived” – Ramlet al Bayda – August 2016

The third annual Lebanese Lantern Festival aimed at honoring loved ones who have passed or are fighting a serious illness. 800 attendees released hundreds of Chinese lanterns that lit up the night sky along the Ramlet al Bayda beach. The event was hosted by Deeds, a group committed to the well-being of society that works to help others one good deed at a time. “We Survived” was organized to prove that hardships make individuals stronger. Proceeds of the festival benefitted Balsam and the Barbara Nassar Foundation for Cancer Patient Support.



ADVOCACY



International Day for Older Population – Renee Mouawad Garden – September 2016

This annual exposition in Renee Mouawad Garden aims at introducing people to the concept of healthy aging and spreads awareness of senior citizen services that are available to the Beirut community. Balsam participated for the second year in the event. The exposition gave Balsam the opportunity to share with members of the community the concept of palliative care as well as a description of our services. The Rotary Club of Beirut in association with the Municipality of Beirut and the Ministry of Social Affairs sponsored the event.

Members of the Balsam team have also been involved in other advocacy activities. For details please refer to Appendix II.





RESEARCH

RESEARCH



Atlas of Palliative Care in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

This mapping of palliative care activity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region is a collaborative effort between Balsam, the ATLANTES Research Program in the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain, and the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care with the support of the World Health Organization regional office in Cairo. The study has been ongoing since 2014 and provides quantitative and qualitative data on the status of palliative care in the 22 countries in the region. The final document will be launched in May 2017 at the 15th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care in Madrid. The country reports will provide valuable information to help guide the development of palliative care in the region.

RESEARCH



Balsam is committed to generating research that can contribute to the advancement of palliative care and improve the way people with serious illness live and die. Over the past few years, our contribution has been restricted to sharing our experience and disseminating our findings at palliative care conferences. However, we have been involved in several larger research initiatives that we hope will provide valuable information to help integrate palliative care into the healthcare system in Lebanon and other countries of the region.

ImPaCT Study: This project was launched in 2015 in collaboration with GlobeMed to assess the impact of home-based palliative care on patients with advanced illness in Lebanon. The study is a clinical trial comparing patients with advance cancer, cardiac or lung disease receiving palliative care to those receiving routine medical care. Factors being compared include cost of care, quality of life, and satisfaction of patients, family caregivers, and primary treating physicians. The ultimate aim of the study is to generate local data that would encourage the integration of palliative care services into health insurance plans. This study continued throughout 2016 and will be completed in 2017. It has been generously supported by GlobeMed and the study team includes researchers from the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University.

■ FUNDRAISING

FAMILY DAY OUT



A Family Day Out with Balsam – November 2016

76 Balsam supporters joined us for a day of outdoor hiking in Lebanon's mountains. The trip included a visit to the scenic Cedars of Tannourine, the Balou'a of Balaa, and the Annaya village. Families relaxed and enjoyed each other's company surrounded by the beauty of Lebanon's natural reserves. A special thanks to Beyond Learning for organizing and guiding this trip.

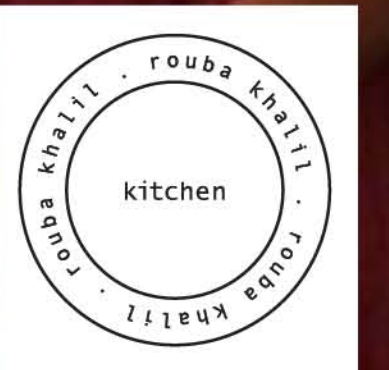


I DINNER



Chef Rouba Khalil Dinner at Prune – May 2016

Acclaimed Lebanese chef Rouba Khalil prepared a feast for 120 guests at a Balsam fundraising dinner held at Prune in Mar Mikhael. Attendees enjoyed Khalil's culinary creations while supporting the Balsam cause of improving the quality of life for those with life-threatening or life-limiting illnesses. A big thank you to Chef Rouba for her generous support and to Prune for providing in-kind venue space.



SUPPORT BALSAM

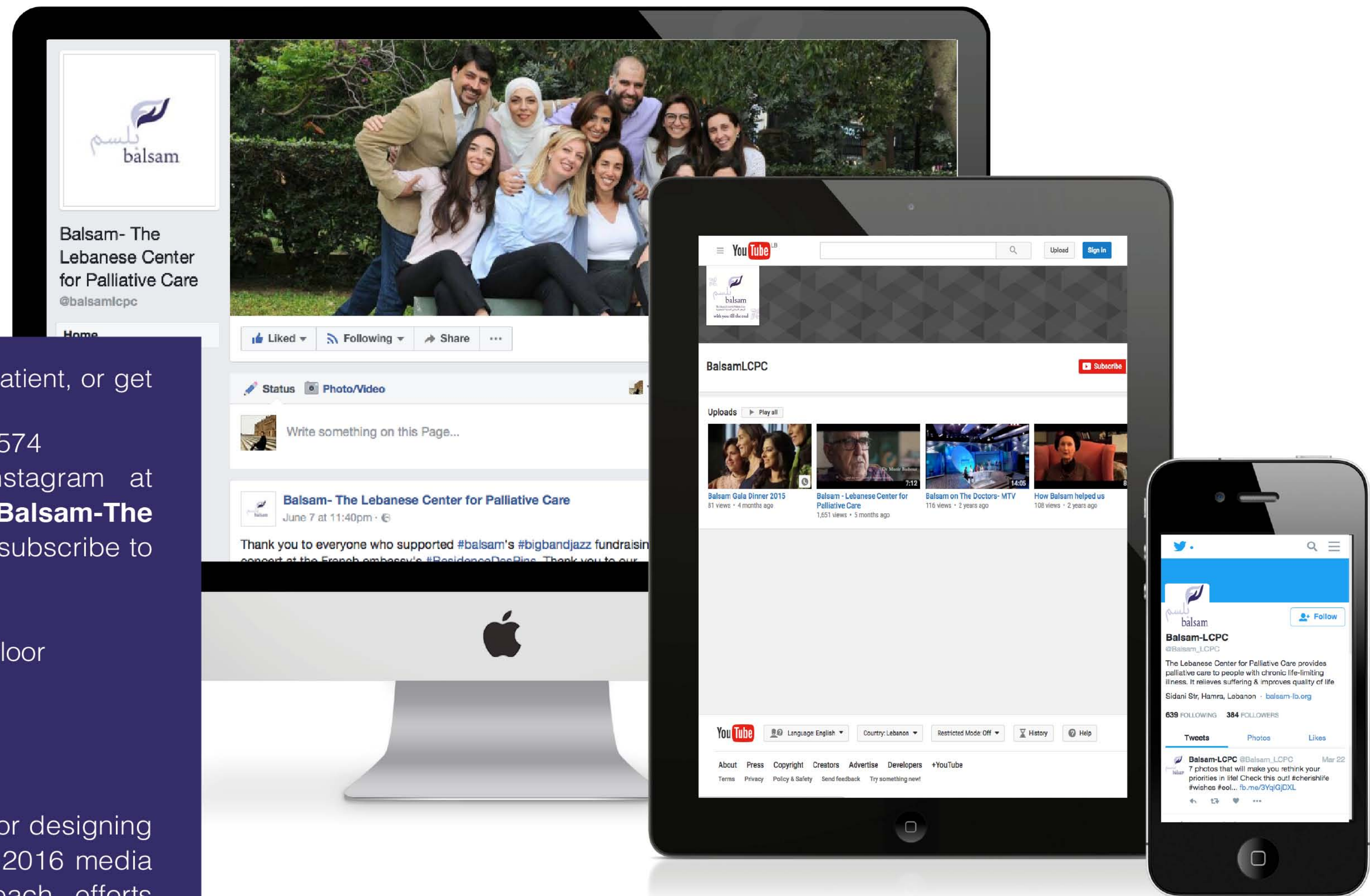
If you would like to support Balsam, refer a patient, or get additional information visit our website:

www.balsam-lb.org or contact us on: 01-748574

You can follow us on Twitter and Instagram at **BalsamLCPC**, like us on Facebook at **Balsam-The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care**, and subscribe to our Youtube channel **BalsamLCPC**

Address: Chafic Haddad Building, Ground floor
Sidani Street – Hamra
P.O Box: 113- 6656
Beirut, Lebanon

We would like to thank Colorcode Agency for designing our Annual Report as well as creating our 2016 media and communication graphics. Our outreach efforts would not have been possible without their generous in-kind support.





APPENDIX I

PATIENT

CARE

APPENDIX I: PATIENT CARE

Number of patients referred annually (2013 - 2016)

* Includes patients carried over from previous year

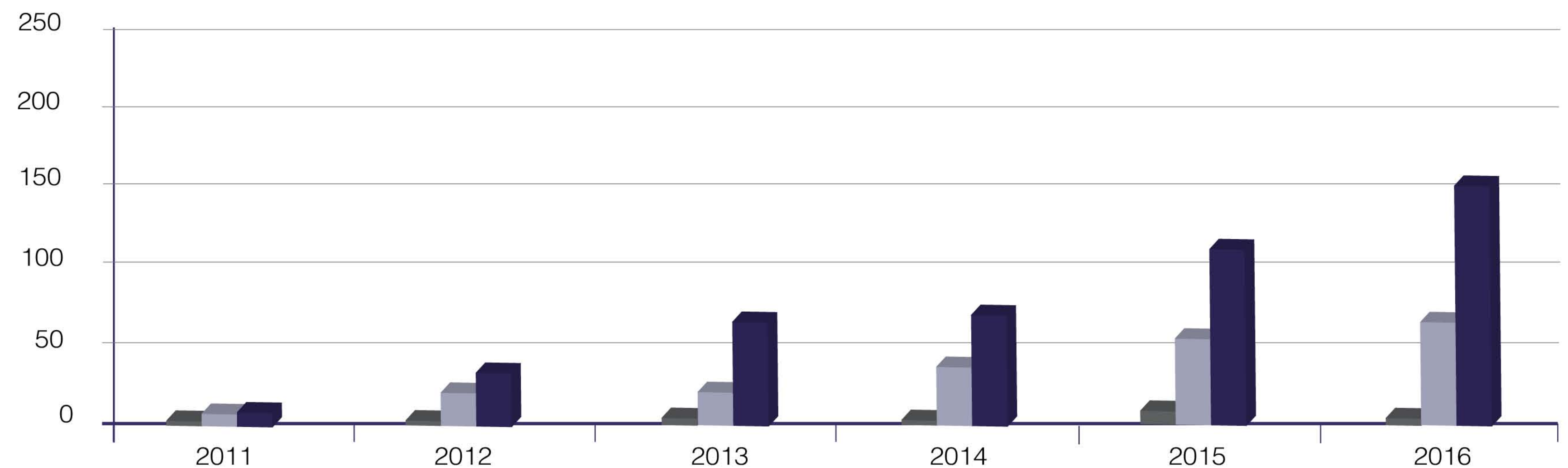
** Patients who are assessed not to need palliative care

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

Years	2013		2014		2015		2016	
Admitted	79	88 reg support	104	100 reg support	157	130 reg support	187	169 reg support
				9 One time visit		27 One time visit		17 One time visit
						16 Distance Support		29 Distance Support
Not Admitted	35		39		49		56	
Total	123		148		222		271	

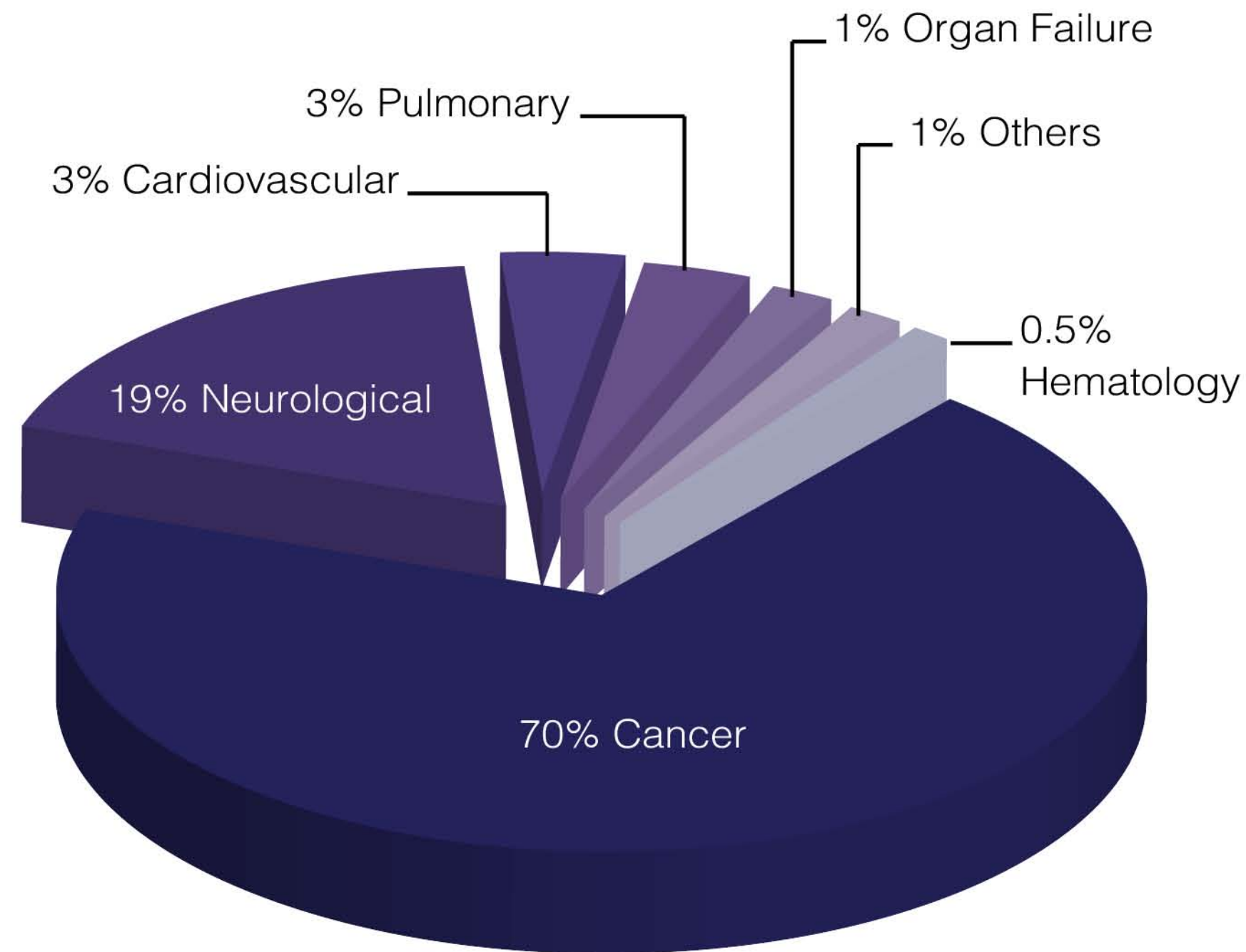
Patient distribution by age (2014-2016)

■ < 18 ■ 18 - 65 ■ > 65



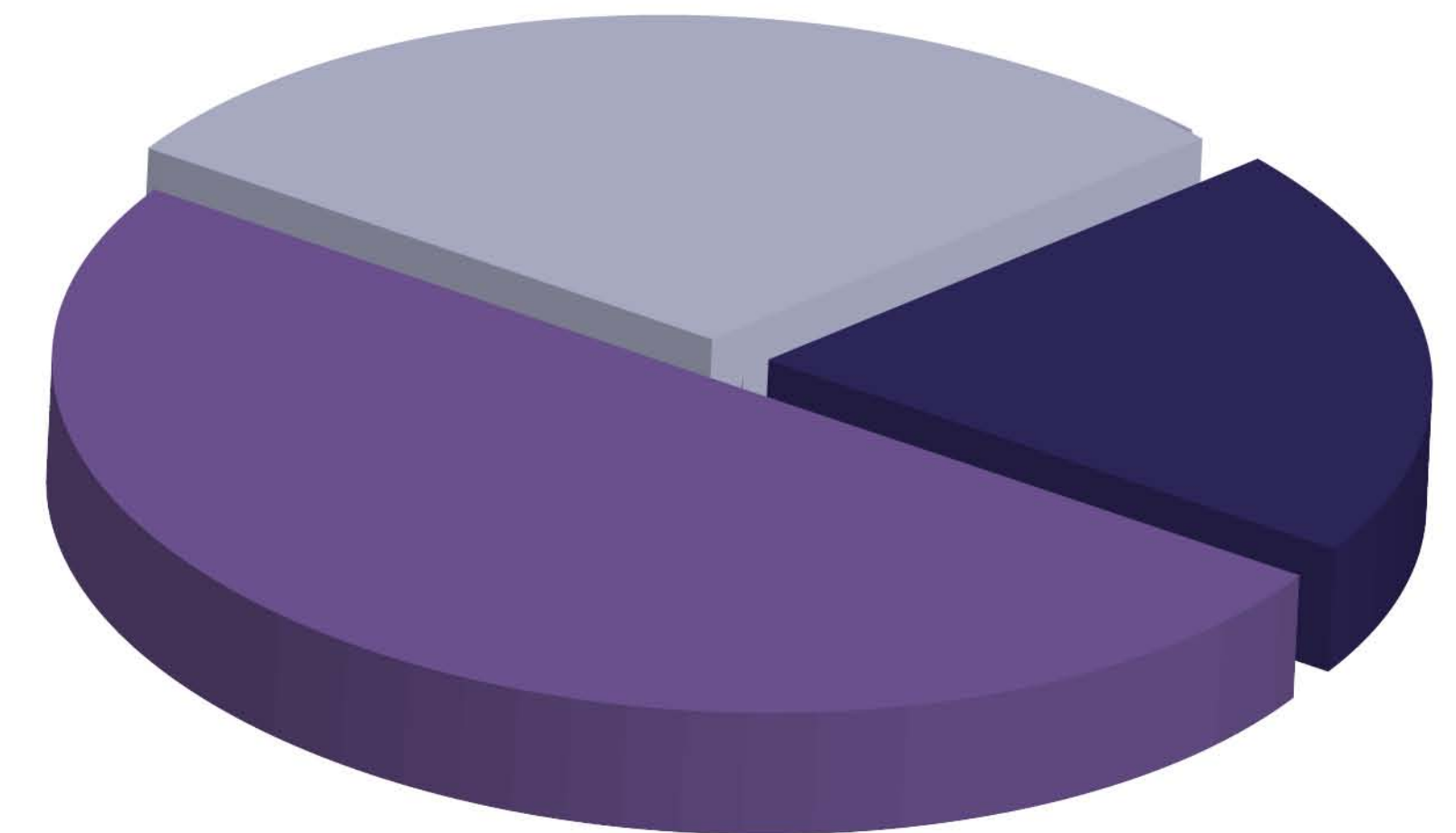
APPENDIX I: PATIENT CARE

Patients Stratified by Disease Category 2016



Days from referral to admission (2016)

* For referrals from hospitals, the number of days was calculated from date of hospital discharge to the date of home visit



% Patients

■ ≤ 2 Days ■ 3 to 5 Days ■ ≥ 6 Days

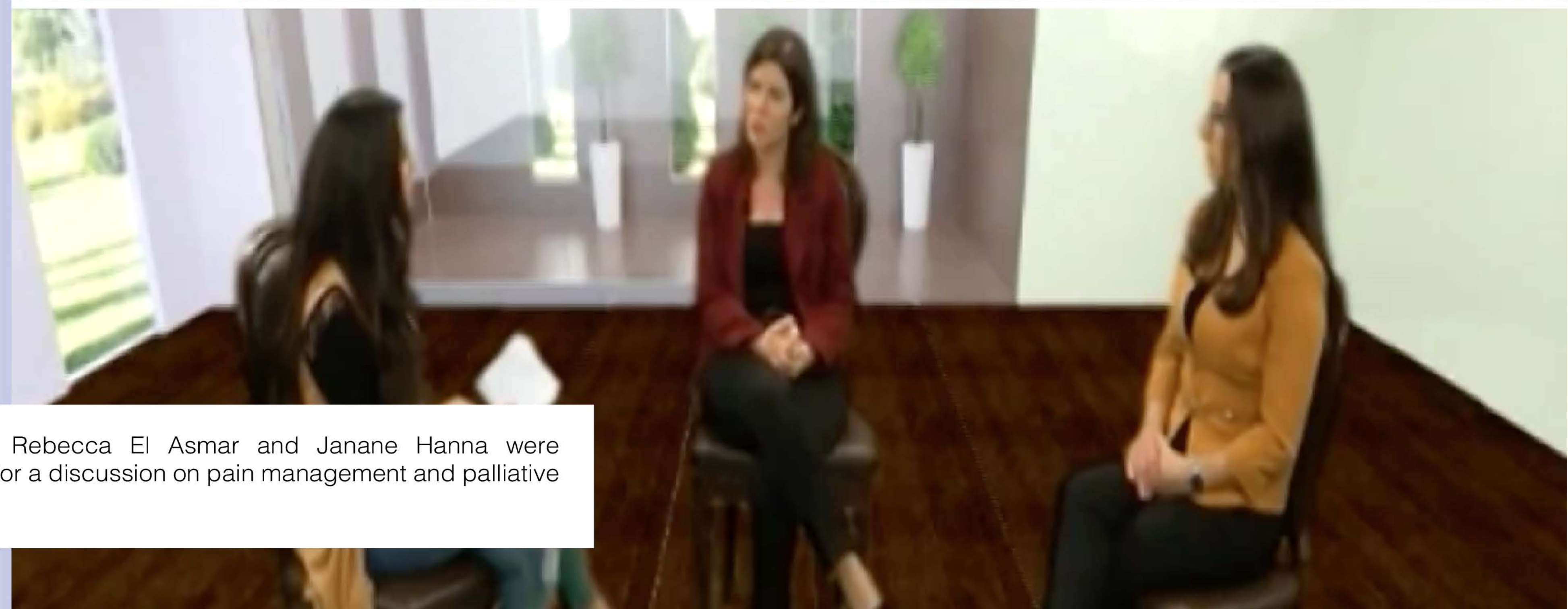


APPENDIX II: ADVOCACY

MEDIA COVERAGE



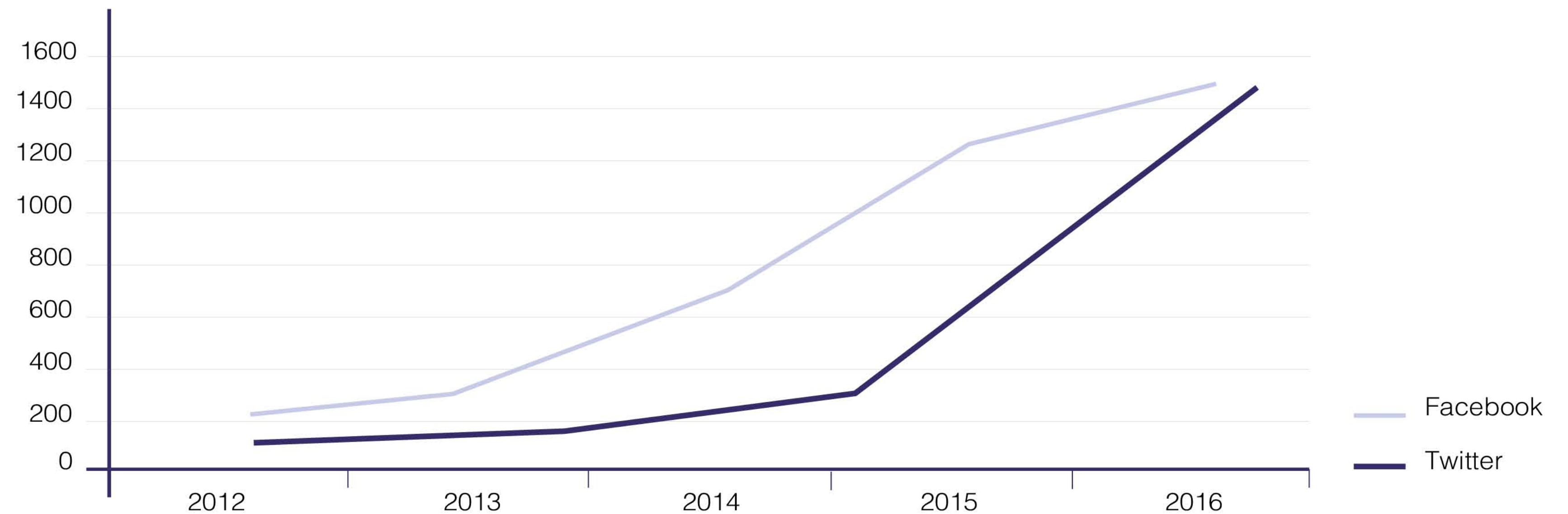
Dr. Osman appeared on the BBC Arabic Show Dunyana in April to discuss the benefits of palliative care.



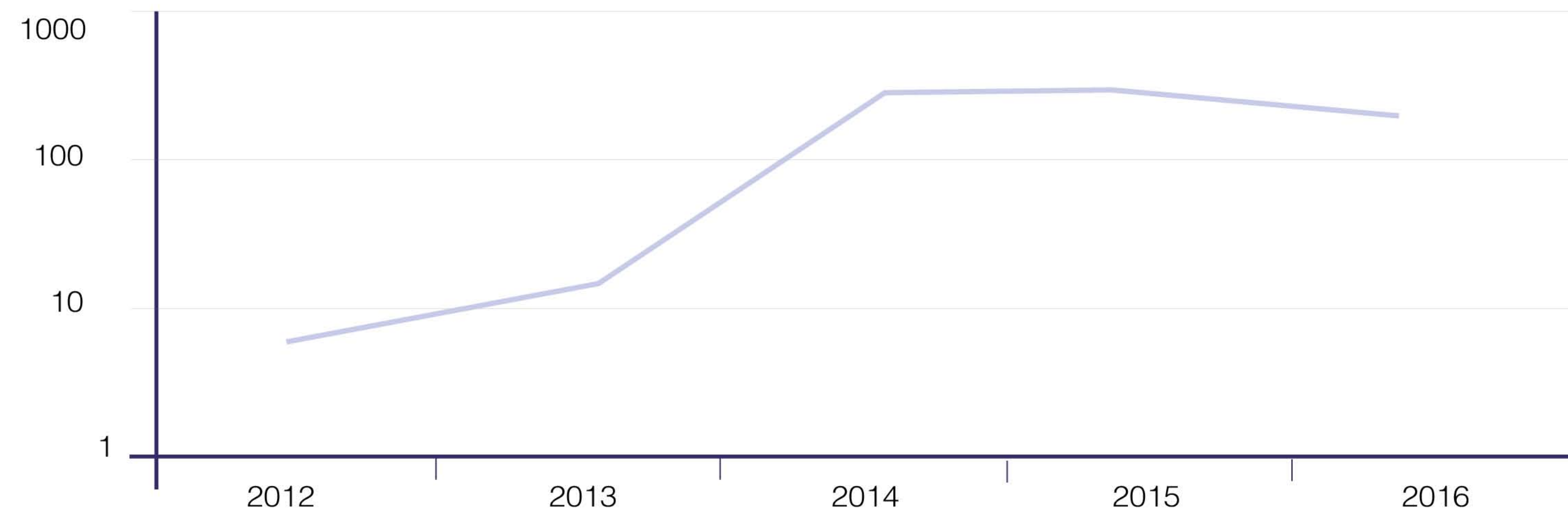
In May, Balsam nurses Rebecca El Asmar and Janane Hanna were interviewed on Miriam TV for a discussion on pain management and palliative care.

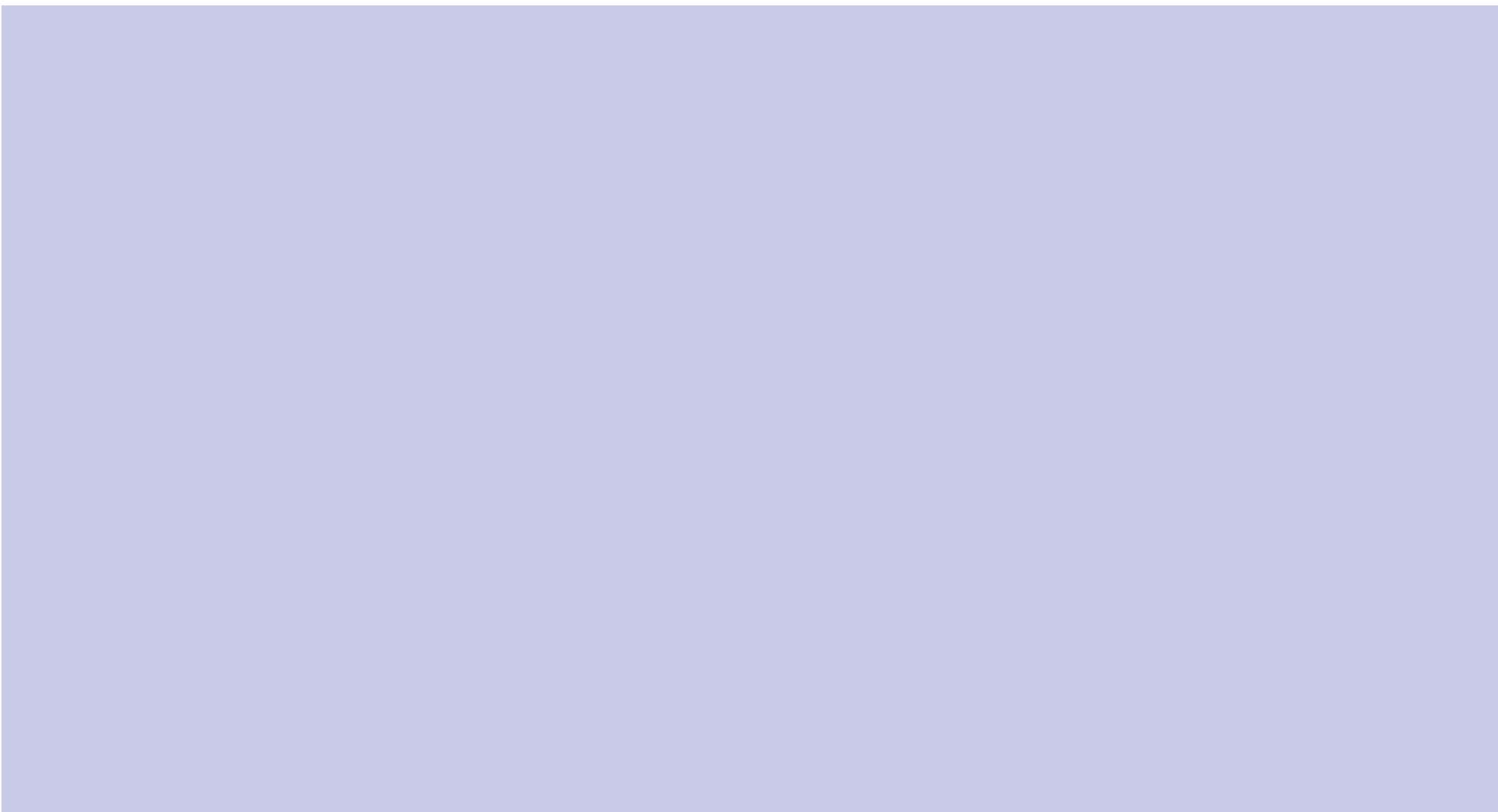
We have also been increasing our activity on social media. We have 279 followers of our Instagram account @Balsamlcpc, 409 followers of our Twitter account @Balsamlcpc, and Facebook likes for Balsam have been increasing steadily since 2012. We are in the process of updating our website to be re-launched in 2017.

Facebook (FB) likes 2012 - 2016



Website visits 2012 to 2016





APPENDIX III: CAPACITY BUILDING

BALSAM TRAININGS AND COURSES



Members of Balsam have been building capacity in palliative care among healthcare professionals by training physicians, nurses, public health professionals, social workers and medical students in Lebanon and the region since 2009

Advanced Palliative Care Course – Gefinor Rotana - August 2016

Balsam hosted a three-day palliative care training for 36 medical professionals from American University of Beirut Medical Center, Hotel Dieu de France, Lebanese American University Rizk Hospital, St. George Hospital, Johns Hopkins University, Ain Wa Zein Hospital, Sanad Home Hospice Association and more. The training covered the management of pain and other common symptoms that accompany serious illness, and the final hours of life. In addition to management techniques, sessions included how to conduct a family meeting, plan goals of care, communicate with colleagues, manage conflict, and avoid burn out and compassion fatigue. Participants reported that they found the course extremely helpful, providing both practical skills and a deeper understanding of the concepts and practices of palliative care. Several stated that they felt more confident adjusting prescription and dosage of medication. Participants also reported that they had acquired the skills needed to address the spiritual dimension of care with more comfort. The course was supported by the World Health Organization and Mundipharma.





Obstruction

mg or more SC / IV q 8 hrs

infusion

mg/hr SC infusion

+ mg/hr SC infusion

Above Neck

Masses - Dura
- Hematoma

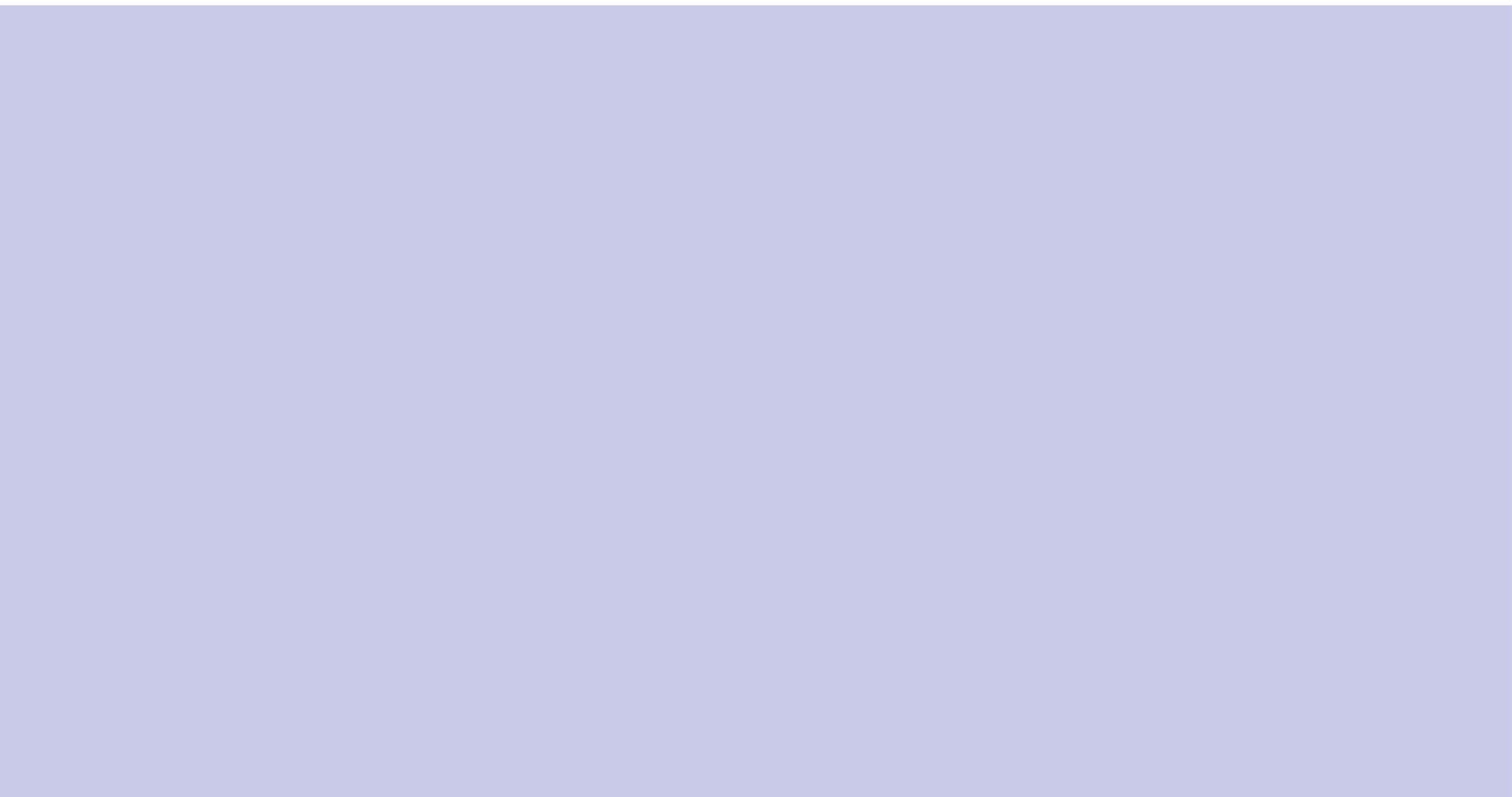
Migraine - Vasospasm
- Analgesics

Meningitis - Abscess
- CT/XRT

Movement - Stop

Balsam Medical Staff Training with Dr. Frank Ferris – Balsam Center - February 2016

Dr. Frank Ferris, Executive Director for Palliative Care Research and Education at Ohio Health, visited Balsam for one week to work on capacity building for the Balsam medical team. Dr. Ferris conducted home visits with the team, participated in the weekly interdisciplinary team meeting, and conducted workshops on self care. His visit had a vast impact on the development of the team, the advancement of the quality of care provided, and the process and work flow of the team.



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue in 2016

Private Contributions	Institutional / Corporate Contributions	Special events	Interest	Total Revenue
237,500	47,970	3,040	2,336	290,846

Expenses in 2016

Patient Care	Salaries & Expenses	187,054
	NSSF	10,959
Other Activities	Capacity Building and Outreach	58,584
Overhead Expenses	Rent, Utilities, Supplies, and Support Services.	88,899
* Amounts in USD		TOTAL: 345,496

THANK YOU

Address: Chafic Haddad Building, Ground floor
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