

Ibrahim Salti, MD, PhD (1941–2024), an Endocrinology Pioneer and Beloved Mentor

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Ibrahim Salti, Professor of Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB), passed away at the age of 83 years, leaving behind a legacy that has profoundly shaped the field of endocrinology in the Middle East and beyond.

A distinguished physician and scholar, Dr. Salti was a beacon of inspiration and mentorship, who touched the lives of so many people especially those of us in the field of endocrinology.

Born in Jerusalem, Palestine, Dr. Salti's journey in medicine began at AUB, where he earned his medical degree with distinction at the age of 22 years. His pursuit of excellence led him to the University of Toronto, where he completed his fellowship in endocrinology and obtained a PhD in Biochemistry in 1970. This marked the beginning of an illustrious career that would span over five decades.

Returning to his alma mater, Dr. Salti joined AUB's Department of Internal Medicine as an assistant professor in 1970. His expertise and dedication saw him rise through the ranks, achieving full professorship by 1981. For 24 consecutive years, he led the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism at AUB, establishing the region's first clinical endocrinology fellowship program. Under his guidance, this program grew to achieve international recognition and set the standard for endocrinology education in the Middle East.

Dr. Salti's contributions extended far beyond the walls of AUB. In 1999, he founded the Pan Arab Congress of Endocrinology and Diabetes, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among endocrinologists across the Arab world. His lifetime impactful work in diabetes care and education earned him the Novo-Nordisk Achievement Award in Diabetes in 2002. His excellence was also recognized with numerous prestigious honors, including the Lebanese National Medal



Ibrahim Salti, MD, PhD

of Merit, the Jordanian Medal of Honor, and the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists' International Clinician Award. Perhaps most importantly, he was a well-respected physician to his patients and a brilliant teacher of both medical students and postgraduate residents and fellows.

Dr. Salti's teaching style was characterized by its simplicity and effectiveness. He created an environment that encouraged critical thinking, self-reflection, and independent

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inquiry. His ability to stimulate intellectual curiosity and foster a love for learning left an indelible mark on generations of physicians. His impact was evident at international endocrinology meetings, where he was often surrounded by grateful mentees and colleagues, and the meeting would not be concluded without having a dinner gathering to celebrate his presence and company. Dr. Salti's commitment to education extended beyond formal settings; he regularly shared insights from international conferences with those unable to attend, ensuring the dissemination of the latest developments in endocrinology.

Dr. Salti's clinical acumen was legendary. Colleagues recall his ability to diagnose rare disorders with remarkable accuracy, providing invaluable learning opportunities for residents and fellows. I remember the day in 1987 when I was the internal medicine resident on call for admissions to the medical ward when I received a phone call from him to admit a 17-year-old adolescent girl for investigation of primary amenorrhea and hypertension. He knew that I was heading to Cleveland Ohio for further training in endocrinology (a career that he helped me get into) and said that he believed the girl had 17 α -hydroxyprogesterone deficiency, a rare disorder that I will probably not see even in Cleveland, Ohio. And he was correct on both counts. She was indeed diagnosed with that disorder, and I did not encounter any such case in my career (until lately when I encountered four

sisters with this disorder). His dedication to patient care and his keen diagnostic skills made him a respected figure among patients and peers alike.

While his professional achievements were numerous, Dr. Salti's greatest passions were AUB, Palestine, his family, patients, and mentees. In April 2024, at the ceremony celebrating Dr. Salti's over 50 years of outstanding service, AUB President Dr. Fadlo Khuri eloquently summed up Dr. Salti's impact: "He has given our institution every fiber of his devotion, remarkable intellect, humanism, dedication, and humility." Dr. Salti's personal life revolved around his wife, Dr. Nuha Nuwayri Salti, a prominent professor of histology, their children, Racha, Nisrine, and Dr. Haytham (an ophthalmologist currently working at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, UAE), and his grandchildren.

Dr. Ibrahim Salti's passing leaves a void in the world of endocrinology, but his legacy lives on through the countless lives he touched, the programs he established, and the knowledge he imparted. He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by colleagues, students, patients, and family alike.

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Conflict of Interest
None declared.