



CASE STUDY - ENHANCED A&G: TRANSFORMING ACCESS TO DERMATOLOGY CARE IN LEBANON

Consultant Connect's partnership with [Bridges2Health&Rights](#) and the [International League of Dermatological Societies](#) (ILDS) is **helping to transform care for patients with severe skin conditions** in Lebanon. Consultant Connect's secure app enables clinicians in Lebanon to **share images and clinical information with dermatology specialists in the UK and Europe**. This facilitates rapid expert advice on complex cases, **resulting in faster diagnoses and more effective treatment plans for patients** in areas where access to specialist care is severely limited.

We spoke with Dr Liliane Ibrahim, a GP working in North Lebanon, to understand how the service is supporting her practice and improving outcomes for her patients.

What was the medical situation like in Lebanon before the introduction of Consultant Connect?

Before Consultant Connect, **we faced many challenges that significantly impacted the quality and efficiency of patient care**, particularly in the Akkar region.

'There was a severe shortage of staff, especially in rural or under-resourced areas. **Most medical specialists are concentrated in Beirut and other major cities, leaving rural towns with minimal access to expert medical opinions.** This led to delays in diagnosis and treatment, because patients had to travel long distances to see a specialist. **Waiting times were long, the financial burden was high, and some patients gave up on follow-up altogether.**

'In addition, communication between primary care doctors and specialists was limited. Care was often fragmented, with repeated investigations or unclear follow-up plans. Clinicians were doing their best under challenging circumstances, but **morale was low** – we often felt overwhelmed, unsupported, and isolated in our clinical decision-making.

Continued:

'In many clinics, it felt like we were firefighting and always trying to do more with less. We knew what good care should look like, but **we didn't have the tools or system support to deliver it**. One of the most stressful aspects was the uncertainty in diagnosis, particularly when access to specialist input was limited. The risk of missing or delaying a diagnosis weighed heavily on us.'

What has changed now that you have access to Consultant Connect?

'The situation has improved drastically. General practitioners and frontline clinicians can now obtain rapid specialist advice, particularly from dermatology consultants. **One of the most remarkable benefits has been the speed of response – we often receive answers within minutes.** This allows us to manage dermatological – and other specific cases – immediately and effectively.

'This has had a significant impact on patient care. **Frontline doctors are now able to make faster, more confident decisions.** Collaboration between different levels of care has improved, resulting in a more connected and patient-centred approach. Continuity of care is better, with **advice documented and reviewed digitally, reducing duplication and conflicting management plans.**

'Most importantly, **access to specialty care in rural areas has improved significantly.** For communities where services are limited or unavailable, **this has been life-changing.**

'From a clinician's perspective, it has been incredibly empowering. **I feel more supported and confident in my management decisions,** especially when dealing with complex or unfamiliar presentations. It's no exaggeration to say that **Consultant Connect has significantly improved both the quality of care and the patient experience.'**



Patient example:

'Hussein*, a six-year-old patient, presented with a rash that developed after starting amoxicillin for streptococcus tonsillitis. I had initiated treatment based on a positive test, but a few days later, he returned with recurrent fever and a new widespread rash. I was concerned about a drug reaction or viral exanthem and needed specialist input.

'Using the Consultant Connect App, I sent photos of the rash and a clinical summary to a consultant dermatologist. **I received a same-day response** confirming it was most likely a delayed hypersensitivity reaction to amoxicillin. I safely changed the antibiotic, and later sought further guidance when Hussein developed a second recurrence of the rash accompanied by mouth ulcers.

'This timely advice allowed me to confidently manage the situation and avoid an unnecessary hospital referral. Hussein recovered well, and his family felt reassured by the prompt, specialist-supported care.

'This case clearly demonstrates how **Consultant Connect enables us to navigate complex paediatric presentations with accuracy** – especially when skin conditions can be difficult to interpret without dermatological expertise.'

A specialist's perspective:

We also spoke with Dr Valeska Padovese, Consultant Dermatologist and Co-Founder of Bridges2Health&Rights, who responded to Dr Ibrahim's advice request:

'I recall Hussein's case: he initially presented with a 10-day history of a rash following a febrile episode treated with antibiotics, resulting in a good outcome. However, one month later, he developed a recurrent rash accompanied by enanthema. Initially, this was suspected to be an allergic reaction to the antibiotic, and antihistamines were prescribed.

'Given the rash characteristics and delayed onset – unrelated to antibiotic use – we considered a viral aetiology and recommended serological testing for Epstein-Barr Virus (EBV), which returned positive. **We reassured Rana*, the patient's mother, that the rash was viral rather than allergic and advised symptomatic management only.**'

A parent's experience:

Hussein's mother, Rana, shared how Dr Ibrahim's use of Consultant Connect affected her son's care:

'Life in Lebanon has become increasingly difficult, and **access to reliable healthcare is one of the biggest challenges I face as a parent.** Shortages of medical care are a major concern. Whether it's the lack of specialists, delays in appointments, or the cost of private care, the system feels like it's on the verge of collapse – and it's terrifying.

'Because Dr Ibrahim used Consultant Connect to get the opinion of a dermatologist abroad, Hussein is now thankfully much better.

I'm incredibly grateful for this support. But at the same time, I feel sad that we must turn to specialists overseas for care that we should have access to at home. **Healthcare shouldn't be a privilege, especially for children.'**

* Pseudonyms have been assigned to maintain the anonymity of the patient and their family.



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