



## A Word from the Chairman



### Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present you with another edition of IMA Around the Globe.

As the fight against Covid-19 is still very much at the forefront, we have included an article highlighting Israel's success with Covid vaccinations.

I am also pleased to provide updates about the Israeli Academy of Science, the Online School for Medical Professions, and the Israeli Society for HealthTech and, of course, to share some of the new technological innovations that are emerging from Israel.

As always, you will be able to read about the various domestic and international events, albeit virtual, that have taken place in the last few months and catch up with our Chapter Heads for news from around the world.

This edition's 'aliya interview' is with Dr. Alex Levin, friend, and fellow committee member of the IMA's World

Fellowship, who made aliya from Russia a number of years ago and who now enjoys a very successful career in Israel. We would also like to introduce you to a new regular feature where we provide a little history and facts & figures about an Israeli hospital and for this edition, we have included a feature about Soroka Medical Center in the Negev

We have also included an update about the IMA's Physicians' Exchange Program and news of this year's intake of nine Panamanian doctors who are scheduled to arrive in Israel at the end of April to participate in the 2021 program.

Finally, I would like to take a moment express my ongoing appreciation and gratitude to healthcare workers around the world who continue to battle the pandemic.

I wish you all a very happy, healthy, and safe Pesach.

**Prof. Arnon Afek**  
**Chairman**  
**IMA - World Fellowship**

The Israeli Medical Association  
wishes you, your family,  
and your community  
**a happy and  
healthy Passover**

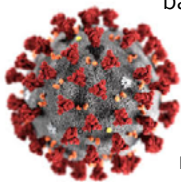




## IMA Domestic News and Activities

### Israel's Covid-19 Vaccination Update

Israel's response to the rollout of Covid-19 vaccinations has been swift, and while not without its problems, the initial phase has proved to be highly effective. By the end of 2020, Israel, with a population of 9.3 million, had administered more doses of the vaccine than all other countries except for China, the US, and the UK. In fact, Israel had administered almost 11.0 doses per 100 population, while the next highest rates were 3.5 in Bahrain and 1.4 in the UK. All other countries had administered less than 1 dose per 100 population. This early success could be attributed to several factors which include Israel's size, in terms of both area and population, the warm weather enjoyed in Israel in December 2020, and a well-developed infrastructure able to provide an immediate response to large-scale national emergencies. Key factors also included the logistical and IT capabilities of Israel's community-based health care providers, the provision of well-trained, salaried community-based nurses, and a history of effective cooperation between government, health plans, hospitals, and emergency care providers. Finally, Israel's mobilization of government funding for vaccine purchase enabled the purchase of a large number of vaccines, relative to Israel's population, and clear, implementable criteria were established to determine who had priority for receiving the vaccine in the early phase of the vaccination process. Credit, too, should be given to the logistical capability required to meet the cold storage requirements of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine and, of course, to the population of Israel who turned up to the vaccination centers to receive the vaccine.



#### Source:

Israel Journal of Health Policy Research, Israel's rapid rollout of vaccinations for Covid-19, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13584-021-00440-6>

### Israeli National Academy of Science "Regenerative Medicine" Webinar

On February 4, 2021, the Israeli National Academy of Science in Medicine by the Israeli Medical Association launched the first in a series of webinars held by leading physician researchers. The theme of the webinar was "Regenerative Medicine" and it featured Prof. George Q. Daley, Dean of the Harvard Medical School, and Prof. Benjamin Dekel, Director of the Pediatric Stem Cell Research Institute and the Chief of Pediatric Nephrology at the Chaim Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer, and a member of the Academy.

Prof. Daley, a physician-scientist and authority on stem cell science and cancer biology, addressed the nearly 100 participants with a lecture on "Blood from a petri dish." He was followed by Prof. Dekel's lecture on "Growing one's own kidney parts"

The Israeli National Academy of Science in Medicine was launched in October 2019 and seeks to promote biomedical research by physician researchers.

A link to this fascinating webinar can be found on the IMA/ Academy website at: <https://www.ima.org.il/mainsitenew/ViewCategory.aspx?CategoryId=14894>



Prof. Benjamin Dekel.



Prof. George Q. Daley





## The Online School for Medical Professions

While online learning is not a new concept, its integration with medical residency constitutes a significant change in the way knowledge can be acquired, especially when considering the busy lives of residents.

The wealth and scope of theoretical knowledge that the resident must acquire during his residency is vast. The multiplicity and variety of residency programs in the country's hospitals reinforce the need to make educational content accessible online, so that a resident will be exposed to content regardless of his place of residency and can acquire the knowledge in his or her free time.

With the need for online study clearly identified, the Israeli Medical Association established **The Online School for Medical Professions**. The purpose of the school is to provide additional tools to acquire knowledge and experience, interactively and conveniently, 24/7 from anywhere in Israel and around the world.

The academic content is original and has been developed and created for the online school in accordance with the relevant scientific associations. The establishment of the Online School for Medical Professions is an important step in the IMA's Scientific Council's goal to change specialization to a system based on results and achievements. Each resident must acquire theoretical and practical knowledge, in a graded and controlled manner, and prove that he/she acquired the knowledge and is able to apply it in practice. The school will work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, HMOs, universities, and associations around the world. The online school is only an addition to existing study frameworks that all have one goal - improving knowledge and promoting health in Israel.



Website: <https://imaschool.org.il>  
 For more information about the online school and courses offered: [online-school@ima.org.il](mailto:online-school@ima.org.il)

## The first fellowship program in innovation and entrepreneurship by the Israeli Society for HealthTech

The healthtech ecosystem has been rapidly evolving over the past decade in Israel and worldwide, setting the stage for major transformations of the medical landscape, but also pointing at major gaps in the ability of health organizations to exploit disruptive opportunities. The pandemic crisis further emphasized the need for a comprehensive and efficient response to a broad range of related operational, technical but also more fundamental issues ranging from the integration of advanced technologies in disease diagnosis, treatment, and prevention up to reorganization and optimization of medical services. From a broader perspective, this unprecedented situation clearly calls for the emergence of a new professional setting.

To meet this challenge, the Israeli Society for HealthTech (ISHT) was founded last summer under the auspices of the Israeli Medical Association and with the support of the 8400 Health Network. The overarching mission of the new society is to lay the foundations of a new discipline aimed at integrating innovation and healthcare entrepreneurship into medical practice and across traditional health professions.

To implement its vision, the society is now launching a ground-breaking new training program due to start May 2021. The one year-long fellowship was approved by the Scientific Council of IMA and is aimed at introducing senior physicians to the Israeli healthtech ecosystem with the hope that they will form a steadily expanding number of bridges between healthcare organizations, academy, and industry.







The fellowship consists of a short formal training period provided by leaders in the Israeli Biomed, followed by two rounds of five months practical exposure in health tech companies (Israeli and subsidiaries of global companies). Each participant will be chaperoned by a dedicated mentor and will be exposed to the full spectrum of healthtech activities in Israel including entrepreneurship, medical devices, drug development, and digital health.

Apart from the new fellowship program, the Society is promoting the medical and scientific community engagement in healthtech and biomed activities through a series of monthly webinars (MEDabrim), which are covering most aspects of medical innovation.

To register with the Society: <https://www.ima.org.il/MainSiteNew/Forms/FormJoinUnion.aspx>

Link to last year's MEDabrim webinars  
<https://vimeo.com/469551952>  
<https://vimeo.com/482392661/6b34baf9d0>

<https://vimeo.com/499947753/929adf6405>  
<https://vimeo.com/510242603>

## Medicine and Morality: Lessons from the Holocaust and COVID-19

This year's Yom HaShoah affords us a special opportunity to connect virtually with colleagues from all over the world for a unique memorial service and tribute to physicians. On Wednesday April 7, 2021, the International March of the Living and the Maimonides Institute for Medicine, Ethics and the Holocaust will be presenting, **"Medicine and Morality: Lessons from the Holocaust and COVID-19."** This program, produced in collaboration with the USC Shoah Foundation and with the support of international medical associations including the World Medical Association and the **Israeli Medical Association**, will bring together world renowned scholars in the field of medical ethics and the Holocaust to explore the relevance of medicine, ethics, and the Holocaust for our past, present, and future. The program will be broadcast on JBS (Jewish Broadcast Service) TV at 7 pm EST and will



USC Shoah  
Foundation

be available online at [www.motl.org](http://www.motl.org) and [www.mimeh.org](http://www.mimeh.org). It will also be accredited for 1.5 hours of ACCME (Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education) credits.

It is often said that bioethics emerged out of the ashes of the Holocaust, as a reactive response to the abrogation of ethics and the abuse of power on the part of the medical profession. The systematic participation of physicians - those who took an oath to "First, do no harm" - in the labeling, persecution, and eventual mass murder of millions of those deemed "unfit" during the Holocaust represents one of the darkest periods not only in the history of medicine, but in the history of humankind. This cautionary tale of what not to do became the defining feature of modern bioethics.

Yet even in the darkest times, one can always find the light. Stories of physicians who remained dedicated to healing and saving lives in any way possible prove that ethics, virtues, values, and hope can prevail. These tales of Jewish physicians and righteous gentiles who risked their lives to save others inspire a positive view of medicine and bioethics in which the power of the profession is harnessed for good, even in the direst circumstances.



Berlin Hospital, date unknown.



Blue star of David on yellow circle badge as mandatorily worn by Jewish doctors during the Nazi regime in Germany.





This past year we have all been faced with unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19. Those in the healthcare profession have been asked to put their own lives at risk to save others. They have also been tasked with determining equitable and just protocols for allocating scarce resources, ensuring that necessary and rapid human subject experimentation was performed ethically and with the full consent of those involved, and now they are charged with finding a way to distribute the resulting vaccines to the most vulnerable among us. The lessons of the Holocaust - how the power and privilege of medicine can be abused in times of crisis - have informed our current situation as we have struggled to meet this challenge in the most ethical manner possible.

This Yom HaShoah, while we cannot physically be together to commemorate the significance of this day, we look to medicine and morality to reflect on the past and protect the future while appreciating the miraculous work of our healthcare professionals during this global pandemic.

For more details about the IMA "Witness in White" seminar program please see this recent publication: <https://jme.bmj.com/content/early/2021/03/19/medethics-2020-107001>

**Stacy Gallin, D.M.H.**  
**Founding Director, Maimonides Institute for Medicine, Ethics and the Holocaust**

**Matthew Fox, MD MHA**  
**Academic Director, IMA "Witness in White" Seminar program**

## Physician's Exchange Program, Panama Update

In October 2019, the Israeli Medical Association welcomed five physicians from Panama as part of the Physicians' Exchange Program. Four of the physicians are now coming to the end of their first year of residency at their respective hospitals in Israel, while the fifth, Dr. Sergio Silva has completed his fellowship in Cardiac Surgery Anesthesia at Beilinson Hospital, under the guidance of Professor Leonid Eidelman, former president of the Israeli Medical Association and World Medical Association.

On January 28th 2021, her Excellency Adis Urieta Vega, Ambassador to Panama in Israel held a small, socially distanced ceremony at the Panamanian Embassy in Dr. Silva's honor. Dr. Shimshon Erdman, Director of the IMA Physician's Exchange Program presented Dr. Silva with his Fellowship Certificate. Dr. Silva has now returned to

Panama to take up a position as Senior Anesthesiologist in Cardiac Surgery.

Following the success of the 2019 Physicians' Exchange Program from Panama, this year we are set to welcome a new group of Panamanian doctors into the program. In January, the doctors began a 3-month Hebrew study course via Skype which will enable them to obtain a basic grasp of Hebrew. The doctors are due to arrive in Israel towards the end of April, where they will then participate in an intensive 3-month Hebrew Ulpan at the Israeli Medical Association's offices in Ramat Gan, before taking up their residencies and/or fellowships at their respective hospitals throughout Israel.

We would like to extend a warm welcome Dr. Priscila Acevedo (Radiotherapy), Dr. Jorge Mendez (Pediatrics), Dr. Jose Baruco (Cardiac Surgery), Dr. Isaias Caballero (Urology), Dr. Jose Obaldia (Neurology), Dr. Joseph Shasho (Urology), Dr. Henry Quintero (Neurosurgery), Dr. Jose Asprilla (Neurosurgery) and Dr. Alberto Moran (Coloproctology) to the 2021 Physicians' Exchange Program with Panama.



(from left to right) Dr. Sergio Silva, Dr. Shimshon Erdman



(from right to left) Ms. Genesis Ramirez- Cultural and Tourism Attaché, Mr. Alejandro SILVERA , Third Secretary, Dr. Sergio Silva and HE Adis Ureita Vega, Ambassador of Panama in Israel.





## Focus on Soroka

**Soroka University Medical Center** is the second largest hospital in Israel and the only hospital situated in the Negev, which covers around 60% of the geographical area of the country. Situated in the southern city of Beer Sheva, Soroka provides medical services to over one million residents in the Negev region. The Faculty of Health Sciences of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, including the School of Medicine, is located on the Soroka campus, where collaboration with the University provides fertile ground for research and teaching. Belonging to the Clalit Health Fund, Soroka University Medical Center is the largest employer in the Negev, with 4,200 employees including 800 physicians and approximately 2,000 nurses.

With over 1,000 hospital beds, every year around 6.5 million people pass through Soroka with an impressive 500,000 ambulatory visits, 200,000 emergency room visits, 38,000 CT examinations, 32,000 surgeries, 14,000 births, 10,000 MRI tests and 2,500 cardiac catheterizations and interventional electro-physiology procedures.

The history of Soroka goes back to the 1940's when Beer Sheva was liberated by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Soon after, the Israeli Army Medical Corps established a temporary military hospital that provided hospitalization and first aid to soldiers and civilians living in the area. In

1949, this hospital became part of the Hadassah Medical Organization and around the same time, the Clalit Sick Fund Clinic was opened in the city.

In the 1950's the population of Beer Sheva dramatically increased with an influx of new immigrants and this presented a significant challenge to the city's medical services. The then, Administrative Director of Clalit Health Services, Moshe Soroka had the foresight to see that the Negev region was on the verge of rapid growth and development and he became the guiding force behind the establishment of this hospital, which opened to the public in 1959.

Today, Soroka is a pioneering and preeminent teaching hospital that services a diverse population of Israelis in the south of Israel and is proud to offer among its many departments a Cardiothoracic Surgery Department, National Pediatric Infectious Disease Unit, Unit for Infection Control, Burns Unit, Intensive Care Units (General, Internal Medicine and Pediatric), the largest trauma center in the country (with eight treatment stations, including a special station for children), Bariatric Treatment Department, Simulation Center and Medical Air Transport Station.



<https://hospitals.clalit.co.il/soroka/en/Pages/default.aspx>



Soroka University Medical Center





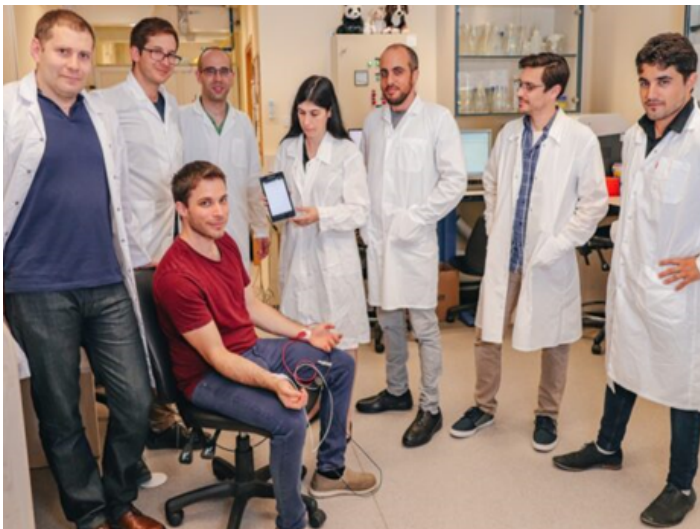


## Medical Achievements

### Automated analysis of routine ECG detects cardiac problems.

ECG is the most common test of heart function. The noninvasive exam measures the electrical signals generated by the heart muscle tissue through electrodes placed in 12 locations on the skin.

However, ECG results must be interpreted by a



cardiologist, making analysis subjective. Even with the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), analysis is done one printout at a time and is not highly accurate.

The researchers say their new technology “demonstrates unprecedented accuracy in the interpretation of numerous ECG results and delivers a diagnosis of different cardiac disorders simultaneously.”



Courtesy of Israel21c.org, for link to full article: <https://www.israel21c.org/automated-analysis-of-routine-ecg-detects-cardiac-problems/>


### Doctors use AR and 3D tech in eye-socket surgery.

In a first-of-its-kind surgery, doctors in northern Israel recently used augmented reality and 3D technology to repair a fracture in the floor of the eye socket of a young patient with optimal clinical results.



The 31-year-old patient's severe injury was causing double vision and impaired the symmetry and aesthetics of his eyes.

Prior to the surgery at the Galilee Medical Center, doctors created a 3D model of the patient's skull and designed and printed out a titanium plate made according to his CT imaging.

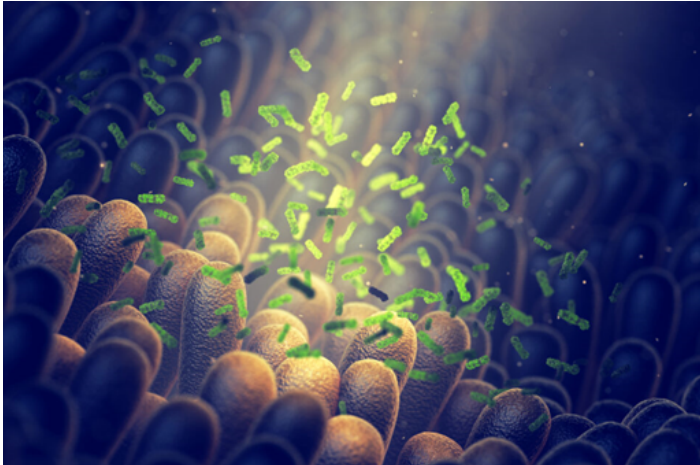
Courtesy of Israel21c.org, for full link to article: <https://www.israel21c.org/in-first-doctors-use-ar-and-3d-tech-in-eye-socket-surgery/> 

### Microbiome transplants can reprogram immune system to attack tumors.

Changing the gut microbiome can reprogram the immune system to attack malignant tumors, according to results of a unique clinical trial at Sheba Medical Center in Israel.

The results were published in the peer-reviewed journal Science by a research team led by senior GI oncologist Dr.





Ben Boursi, senior oncologist Dr. Gal Markel and MD-PhD student Erez Baruch.

“For the first time in the world, we have successfully fought cancerous tumors by changing the gut microbiome,” Boursi said.

Courtesy of Israel21c.org, for full link to article:  
<https://www.israel21c.org/microbiome-transplants-can-reprogram-immune-system-to-attack-tumors/>



## Bloomberg's Global Innovation Ranking: Israel in 7th place

From government efforts to contain the virus, to the technological infrastructure needed to support economies during the epidemic, to the race to develop vaccines, “In the year of Covid and in the face of the climate crisis, the importance of innovation is only growing.” So said a senior global economist at Citigroup. “Innovation is usually measured by new ideas, new products and new services, but the level of their integration and adoption is the real measure of success”.

The Bloomberg Index analyzes dozens of criteria using seven equivalent metrics, including research and development spending, manufacturing capacity, and concentration of high-tech companies. The 2021 ranking reflects a world in which the war against the Corona virus has brought innovation to the forefront and found Israel ranked in seventh place - a decrease of one stage compared to last year.



Courtesy of the Calcalist, Link for full article: <https://www.calcalist.co.il/world/articles/0,7340,L-3891210,00.html>

## Israeli Innovation, Corona and the Cooperation between High-Tech and Medicine.

Dr. Eyal Zimlichman, Deputy Director of the Medical Center for Medicine and Innovation, Haim Sheba Medical Center.

Israel, like the rest of the world, has faced one of the greatest challenges of the modern age. Not only in terms of health, but also financially. Within this challenging reality, pharmaceutical companies have been working to find a vaccine while policymakers were trying to navigate between facts on the ground and political considerations.

There is no doubt that innovation and entrepreneurship must play a major role at such a time, and as a start-up nation and potential source of solutions, the focus was on Israel.

This critical period recorded accelerated activity characterized by the combined forces of the private, public, and academic sectors, from small start-ups, large industry and even the defense industry.

The strengths of Israeli industry in the high-tech and digital world have focused most of their efforts on solutions in areas such as rapid diagnostics and telemedicine solutions. Hospitals were at the forefront of innovation and in doing so, worked with organizations such as Mapat, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), Mossad and GSS, as well as defense industries such as IAI, Elbit and Rafael.

An example of an existing infrastructure of initiative and innovation together with the creation of collaborations, can be seen at Sheba Medical Center with the innovative program, ARC (Accelerate Redesign and Collaborate). ARC is in fact a global ecosystem, which is currently working to correct the design of the future of medicine in Israel and around the world.

There is no doubt that an entrepreneurial and innovative infrastructure that existed even before the outbreak of the pandemic, has greatly helped many organizations in the country. In the worlds of high-tech and digital, we are leading the way at a global level.



Courtesy of Ynet, 20.12.20

For link to full article:

<https://www.ynet.co.il/health/article/r1ezPP22D>







## International Conferences/ Webinars

### CEREMONY TO HONOUR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

On the 20th of February, Israeli Medical Association President, Prof Zion Hagay, attended a ceremony to honour health professionals who lost their lives due to Covid-19. The ceremony was hosted by the Federazione Nazionale degli Ordini dei Medici Chirurghi e degli Odontoiatri (FNOMCeO).

The ceremony began with a beautiful song entitled: “Ogni vita conta” “Every life counts” by tenor Francesco Zingariello, accompanied by a string quartet. President of the Italian Senate Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati then spoke, followed by a welcome from Filippo Anelli, President



of FNOMCeO and a speech by, Dr. Frank Montgomery, President of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME). Finally, a commemorative plaque from FNOMCeO and CPME, which pays tribute to the health professionals, was unveiled at Codogno Hospital.

The moving ceremony was attended by physicians and health professionals from across the European region.

### WHO CONSULTATION ON EUROPEAN IMMUNIZATION AGENDA 2030

On the 9th of February, Israeli Medical Association CEO Leah Wapner represented the European Forum of Medical Associations at the WHO Consultation Meeting on European Immunization Agenda 2030 with a consortium of non-state actors in the WHO European Region.

This meeting was held so that the WHO could present to Non-State Actors their immunization agenda for the European Region. It was attended by many different European organisations, including physicians, nurses, and patient representatives.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Nino Berdzuli, the Director of Country Health Programmes at the WHO European Regional Office. Siddhartha Datta, the regional advisor on vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization at the WHO regional office for Europe, then gave a detailed overview of the 2030 European Immunization agenda, together with an outline of how the COVID-19 vaccination will set the stage for immunization in the next decade. Participants were invited to discuss the WHO plans and comment on their own experiences and ideas.



World Health Organization

This was followed by an exchange of views and reflections on how Non-state Actors can work with the WHO and by examples of good practices from the field, as well as lessons learned. Leah Wapner reported on the vaccine success in Israel, including its efficient coordination. Leah noted that while Israel was quick to begin their vaccination programme, they are now facing some resistance from the younger population and the anti-vaccine movement.

The meeting was concluded with reflections from the meeting chair and ideas for future work.

### WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION – VIRTUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The World Medical Association continued their October 2020 General Assembly, with a final Social Medical Affairs Committee Meeting, held on January 12th this year. The Israeli Medical Association (IMA) was represented at the meeting by the President of the Association, Prof. Zion Hagay and CEO Leah Wapner.

Issues such as Photoprotection; Availability, Quality and Safety of Medicines; Disaster/pandemic preparedness and ethics; and Plain packaging of cigarettes were all discussed at the meeting. In addition, the Association revised the WMA Resolution in support of Taiwan’s participation in all WHO Health Programs and inclusion in the International Health Regulations (IHR) mechanism.



WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Finally, it was agreed to set up a workgroup on Medical Technology, and the Israeli Medical Association was appointed as the workgroup chair.





## Management of Uterine Cervix Cancer Seminar Israel/Mexico

On November 26th 2020, the Israeli Medical Association held the second in a series of virtual oncological meetings in association with **Colegio Medico de Mexico** A.C. Fenacome, **CONFEMEL**, Confederacion de Entidades Medicas Latin-Americanas y del Caribe and **IECAN** – Instituto Estatal de Cancerologia.



The moderators comprised Dr. Shimshon Erdman, Director of Relations with Latin America and Physicians' Exchange Program, Dr. Jacobo Mattout Tache, Radiotherapist Oncologist at Sheba Medical Center and Dr. Mirian Lopez Basilio - Colegio Medico de Mexico & CONFEMEL

Focusing on uterine cervix cancer, Dr. Shira Felder, Head of Gynecological Oncological Service at the Radiation Oncology Department, Sheba Medical Center and Dr. Akram Saad from the Cervical Brachytherapy, Radiation Oncology Department at Sheba Medical Center, presented a review of a number of clinical cases.

## ‘Family’ Month at IMA

Offering continuous support during this challenging period, the IMA, together with the Adler Institute, prepared a series of online lectures throughout February 2021 in honor of ‘Family Day’.

The first lecture addressed the development of social skills in young children up to the age of 9. This lecture

looked at children’s social status and the many dilemmas such as what makes a child sociable, is it right to intervene in the social life of the child and how do parents influence the relationship our children develop with their peer group. The lecture was given by Ruth Dafni, Educational Counselor, Certified Parent Instructor and Community Director at the Adler Institute.

The second lecture focused on positive parenting and developing the tools for positive and optimistic thinking in parenting and in general, and was given by Dalia Eilat, Parent Facilitator, and lecturer at the Adler Institute.

The final lecture in the series, “Familiarity with the world and the challenges of our parents” focused on parents caring for their own adult parents, especially during the pandemic, and was given by Hadas Zimmerman, Individual & Group Facilitator specializing in the elderly at the Adler Institute.



## Israeli Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Joint Conference

On, December 29th, 2020 the Israeli Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation held a joint online conference with the Russian Association of Regenerative Medicine and Medical Rehabilitation Specialists. This is the fifth year that the two organizations have collaborated. Each year four invited lecturers from each of the two countries participate in this annual conference, which is given in Russian and held alternately in Moscow and Tel Aviv. This year the conference “Rehabilitation after Corona” was held virtually as part of the 70th conference of the Israeli Association.

To view the conference in full (in Russian): <https://physicalandrehabilitationmedicine70years.b2b-wizard.com/expo/russia>





# Aliya Interview with Dr. Alex Levin

## Personal/Professional Background

### Could you tell us a little bit about your education and past work experiences?

I finished high school as an outstanding student and was accepted to the Medical University of St Petersburg in 1971, graduating in 1976 and completing my residency in 1977. After deciding on a specialty, I started working as a pathologist in a local, suburban hospital. In 1980, I completed my second specialization in ENT and worked in a clinic in St. Petersburg and afterwards in a Pediatric Hospital until 1987, where I completed my residency as an ENT.

### How did you decide to make Aliyah? What were your reasons for making Aliyah?

I decided to move to Israel because I did not see any future for my family or myself in the Soviet Union. I felt that as Jew, I wanted a better future for my children. During the Gorbachev period, there began a change called 'Perestroika', and it was finally possible to leave the USSR after a long period when it was impossible to do so. At the time, Jews discussed how they could move to Israel and one of the ways was to be invited by a family member. I began to search for someone who could send me an invitation, because I did not have any relatives in Israel. I remember that it was very difficult to obtain plane tickets because so many Jews wanted to move to Israel. I waited in the freezing cold until there was an available flight and finally found myself en route to Israel with the assistance of the Jewish Agency. This was the first time that I had left Russia.

## The Aliyah Process

### Could you briefly describe the initial period after making Aliyah?

After our arrival, we settled in Beer Sheva where I completed a 3-month Hebrew Ulpan for doctors, after which I completed a preparation course for receiving a license to practice medicine in Israel which I undertook in Hebrew. After passing the exam and receiving my license, I worked as an ENT Physician at Soroka Hospital in Beer Sheva. Since there was no place for an ENT specialization, I began working at Clalit Medical Services, at first as a replacement and then in September 1991 as Head of the Unit in Netivot.



**Full Name:** Alexander Levin  
**Occupation:** Chairman of the Community Division, Clalit Medical Services, Vice President of the Israeli Medical Association  
**Date of Aliyah:** 1990  
**Originally from:** Soviet Union  
**Made Aliyah with:** family

## Life in Israel

### Where do you live and work in Israel? Can you describe your job?

In 1993, I was accepted as resident in family medicine at the Medical University of Ben Gurion. In 1998, I completed this residency and eventually received an M.S. in Hospital Management. Today, I live in Tel Aviv and I am Head of the clinic in Tel Nordau in Tel Aviv. In 1999, I was chosen to be on the Physicians' Committee, Southern Region. In 2014, I was selected to be the Head of the Physicians' Supervisory Committee in the Clalit Organization and became the Vice-President of the Israeli Medical Association.

## World Fellowship and SEEMF

### Please tell us about your activities with the World Fellowship and with SEEMF.

I volunteer with the Israeli Medical Association and I am a committee member of the World Fellowship. In 2019, I was invited to join SEEMF (Southeast European Medical Forum) as a representative. This organization was created to unite doctors who worked in Eastern Europe after communism.

### What do you enjoy most about life in Israel? What are some of the challenges you have faced?

I love Israel very much and have a strong sense of belonging here. This is my home. I know many fine people who have helped me along the way. I have met many devoted people who are also very compassionate. Of course, like any move to a new country, there are difficulties with the language and adapting to the Israeli way of life. It was not easy for me to change profession from E.N.T to family physician, but eventually I became to enjoy this field as I love the interaction between people and the clinical work with the patients and I believe that family medicine is the base for all medical fields.

### Compare working in your home country to working in Israel. Describe any professional culture shocks you have experienced in Israel.

I must admit that there is a huge difference between the Soviet Union and Israel with regards to the qualifications required for a medical specialty. Only a short period of time is necessary to get qualified in the former USSR, sometimes this is a few months, or it can be a couple of years. Initially it was hard for me to adjust to being a student once again and to be dependent upon supervision, but I quickly understood that this is the best way for young doctors to qualify.







# Chapter Updates



## Canadian Chapter Update

On Wednesday, February 10th, the Israeli Medical Association's Canadian Chapter in collaboration with the Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University hosted a Zoom webinar 'Medical Ethical Decision Making During Pandemics'. Welcome speeches were given by Mark Mendelson, CEO of the Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University and Dr. Rose Geist, President of the Israeli Medical Association's Canadian

Chapter. Speakers included Dr. Yoram Singer, Director of the Negev Home Palliative Care Unit at Ben-Gurion University, Dr. Elliot Malamet, Lecturer on Jewish ethics and philosophy at the Hebrew University and Dr. Sandy Buchman, Freeman Family Chair in Palliative Care and Medical Director of the Freeman Centre for the Advancement of Palliative Care at New York General Hospital. The webinar was extremely well attended with over 180 participants.

**Dr. Rose Geist, President, Canadian (Toronto) Chapter.**



Dr. Sandy Buchman

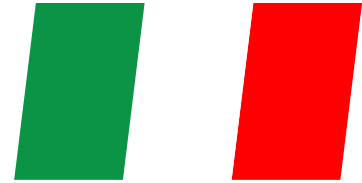


Dr. Yoram Singer



Dr. Elliot Malamet

## Italian Chapter Update



Due to the increasing number of immigrants of different religions and ethnic origins, the working group 'Insieme per prenderci cura' (Taking care together) decided to publish a vademecum for medical doctors and nurses and all the working people in contact with patients, to help them to develop a good relationship with patients. The vademecum is called "How to have a relationship with patients of different cultures and religions"

Nowadays, doctors and medical staff are increasingly facing new ethical and professional challenges. These have been brought about by the different ethnic backgrounds of patients who speak different languages and have different cultures and religions. So, it is essential that the healthcare sector responds to the demands for integration of multi-ethnic societies and that it promotes new forms of solidarity and mutual responsibility. The purpose of this advisory guide is to contribute to meeting such demands by giving suggestions on how to relate to patients from different cultures and religions. This guide is in the form of an easy-to-read reference booklet that can be used by healthcare staff, social workers, volunteers, patients, and their families, to promote patient-centred care which respects diverse religions and cultural sensibilities, thus ensuring the patient's dignity.

For hospital management of inpatient and outpatient services which aspire to guarantee increasingly



Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University and the Israel Medical Association Canada Chapter presents

### Medical Ethical Decision Making During Pandemics

*A discussion of the medical ethical and societal values which impact a broad range of challenging medical decision making.*

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

7:30P.M. EASTERN | 6:30 P.M. CENTRAL | 4:30 PM PACIFIC



Scientific Committee of Insieme per prenderci cura (Taking care together)

efficient and speedy diagnosis and treatment, it is essential to draw on the values and meanings that secular thinking and different monotheistic traditions attribute to the infirm and their caregivers within their family, in society, in healthcare and care facilities.

The ethical dimension and the deepest consideration that underlie any choice of treatment (be it active or passive), together with the patient's psychological, religious and cultural background and clinical experience, all lead to a holistic approach centred on the patient's wellbeing, while holding dear the greatest respect for their dignity and their most intimate convictions.

The booklet is the outcome of a debate among experts from various sectors – health, religious, and juridical – on those topics that characterise our pluralistic society, which has been influenced by

global mass migration and is today facing the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. The drafting of the guide was carried out by the Scientific Committee of the Insieme per prenderci cura (Taking care together) group based in Milan, founded in 2015. It is made up of doctors, allied health professionals, university professors, legal experts, community and religious representatives of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Catholic, Waldensian, Protestant and Muslim faiths who promote seminars in hospitals and universities. All participants of the group have had as their agreed baseline for the coming together and setting up of the healthcare staff training programmes the ethics of responsibility, respect for different spiritual identities and for the religious values of the patient.

Dialogue with the patient, right from the first consultation, is the

recommended way forward to achieve holistic care which is respectful of both the physical and spiritual dimensions of each human being.

The main practices and rituals of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions, that would be relevant to hospital settings are outlined in this guide.

The same approach is also reiterated in the “Charter of good practice and spiritual care in healthcare facilities”, found in the appendix of this guide. It is stressed that it is everyone's responsibility – hospital trust, healthcare professionals and patients – to guarantee that due attention and spiritual care is practised in all healthcare facilities, in the context of religious pluralism.

**Rosanna Supino**  
President Associazione Medica Ebraica





A banner for the 2021 APF's Virtual Course. The background is a dark red map of Israel with a white outline. In the top left corner is the APF logo, which includes a caduceus and the text 'American Healthcare Professionals & Friends for Medicine in Israel' and 'Est. 1958'. To the right of the logo is the text 'American Healthcare Professionals and Friends for Medicine in Israel'. The main title '2021 APF's Virtual Course' is in large white font. To its right, the subtitle 'Disaster Management: 2021 and beyond Lessons learned from Israeli, Canadian and US experience' is in smaller white font. At the bottom right, the dates and times are listed: 'Sunday, April 25 11-3pm EST' and 'Sunday, May 2 11-3pm EST'.

The healthcare community faces serious new challenges in the emergency and disaster arena. This online program offers physicians, nurses, first responders and other healthcare professionals training from North American and Israel's foremost experts. CME's available!

If you have any questions, contact Amir Goldshtein at [amir@apfmed.org](mailto:amir@apfmed.org) or call 617-232-5382.

<http://apfmed.org/programs/disaster-management-online-course/>

A banner for the Fall 2021 Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Course in Israel. The top left has an orange box with the text 'Fall 2021' in white. To the right is the APF logo and the text 'American Healthcare Professionals and Friends for Medicine in Israel'. The main title 'Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Course in Israel' is in large white font on a blue background. Below the title is a collage of three images: a group of people in a training room, a person in a full-body protective suit, and a person at a computer workstation. At the bottom right, the dates and times are listed: 'November 13\* - 18, 2021 \*After Shabbat'.

APF's 22nd Emergency & Disaster Preparedness Course in Israel will take place from November 13 to 18, 2021.

Created in conjunction with Israel's Ministry of Health and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), this one-of-a-kind program offers healthcare professionals firsthand training from some of the world's foremost experts.

If you have any questions, contact Amir Goldshtein at [amir@apfmed.org](mailto:amir@apfmed.org) or call 617-232-5382.

<http://apfmed.org/programs/emergency-disaster-course/>





# IMA

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## ISRAELI MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL – IMAJ

We are happy to inform you that the Israeli Medical Association Journal (IMAJ) is available online to all IMA World Fellowship members.

IMAJ publishes original articles and reviews, editorials, case reports and other feature columns and includes unique coverage of specific regional issues such as infectious and parasitic diseases, effects of the local environment on morbidity and mortality and Jewish genetic diseases, that are relevant to medical practice in distant countries with similar biopsychosocial problems.

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