

# Ima Around The Globe



Israeli Medical Association

No. 34 | December 2020

## A word from the chairman

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a pleasure to present you with another edition of IMA Around the Globe.

Firstly, I must say that I hope that you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well at this difficult time. As you may be aware, a second wave hit Israel and on the 18th of September another lockdown began. We are now slowly easing the restrictions that were put in place.

Once again, our newsletter will update you on the work being done here in Israel in the fight against Covid-19. You will hear about research into vaccinations being conducted at the Institute for Biological Research in Ness Ziona. In addition, you can read about developments in the technological arena and how medical education is developing, with a new and unique degree in digital technologies in medicine being approved by the Council for Higher Education in Israel.

As you can imagine, we have not been able to host or attend international meetings or conferences in person;

however, we have still been very busy in the international arena. In this edition, you can read about the many virtual events that the Israeli Medical Association both hosted and participated in. One of these events was the first in a series of virtual oncological meetings on the management of advanced breast cancer. Prof Zion Hagay, IMA President, also attended the World Medical Association virtual General Assembly, while Leah Wapner, IMA Secretary General, participated in the Standing Committee of European Doctors General Assembly and the Annual Meeting of the European Forum of Medical Associations. With Israel's recent agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, the IMA has been trying to establish relations with the medical profession in these countries. Similarly, the Israeli biotechnology company Pluristem has signed a memorandum of understanding for a collaboration agreement with the Abu Dhabi Stem Cell Center.

Our Chapters have also been incredibly busy with many hosting virtual events,



and I hope that you enjoy reading about their activities in the Chapter Tidbits section.

Finally, I must once again say thank you to all healthcare workers around the world, who are on the frontlines battling this pandemic.

I wish you and your loved ones Hag Chanukah Sameach. May each candle bring light to life with love and laughter in your home.

> **Professor Arnon Afek**

Chairman, IMA World Fellowship

Associate Director General, Sheba Medical Center

The Israeli Medical Association  
wishes you, your family and your community

# A Very Happy Chanukah!



# IMA Domestic News and Activities

## Covid-19 Israel's Second Wave

### » Background

The first cases of Covid-19 were identified in Israel at the end of February and a 2-month lockdown was imposed in March. However, the lockdown was followed by a quick opening of schools and the economy. Today, Israel is in the midst of a second wave and the rate of morbidity is one of the highest in the world. As of the 10th of December, Israel had 15,716 active cases, and 2934 deaths; at its peak the daily number of new cases reached 9,000 . An additional one-month lockdown began on the 18th of September. Some of the measures included: the closure of schools, offices, restaurants and shops, other than those that provide vital services such as supermarkets, pharmacies, and banks. In addition, the law imposed a travel restriction of 1 kilometer from people's homes.

The government has planned a considerably slower easing of restrictions in this second round with a phased exit plan spanning over 4 months with 8 stages which will come into effect on Sunday the 18th of October. It began with the reopening of preschools, removal of the 1-kilometre distance restriction and allowing restaurants to offer take-aways.

The second stage of easing was introduced on the 1st of November, by which time the number of daily cases had reduced to below 1000. Among other things, schools opened grades 1-4 on alternate days or in capsules.

In addition to this, a traffic light

system divides cities into red, orange, and green by the severity of the pandemic. It is possible that the different locales could see different timelines according to their infection rates.

Opinion polls suggest only about a quarter of Israelis have confidence in government policies to contain the spread of the virus and many people are not abiding by the restrictions currently in place.

### Testing Protocol

In early March, the Israeli Ministry of Health initially claimed that extensive tests were not needed, but only in cases such as: those returning from abroad; contact with a verified patient and clear signs of a chest infection. Their assumption was that Covid-19 was not yet common in the community and therefore mass tests would produce extreme errors and not give a reliable picture. It should be noted that at that time there was a shortage of cell spreaders and reagents (the reactive material needed for testing). Therefore, it is possible that Israeli policy was also influenced by the actual situation.

Subsequently, there was a significant change in policy. The tests were gradually expanded to a large extent with the purchase of the necessary equipment and the increase in the rate of infection in the community. Today Israel's testing system is the backbone in the fight against the epidemic.

Two types of tests are used to detect the virus. The molecular tests (PCR)

identify the corona virus in the patient's body and serological tests (antibody tests) detect the presence of the virus several days after the onset of the disease. The main test used in Israel is the laboratory PCR test, with swabs sent to 40 laboratories across the country. The swabs are collected by Magen David Adom (MDA), at the examinee's home and at mobile drive and test facilities set up throughout the country. In addition, Covid-19 tests are performed at MDA and Health Fund Clinics.

The testing system has been criticized on issues including a lack of manpower, which endangered the collapse of the laboratories; tests not reflecting a representative sample of the population; inaccurate results; claims of hypersensitivity of the test and monitoring and surveillance which impinges upon the rights of the individual.

The testing system does not operate alone but as part of a whole system of coping. The test has no value without additional action: Maintaining physical distance, cutting off the chain of infection, monitoring carriers, caring for patients, informing and strengthening public trust in the leadership and professionals, and enforcing guidelines and their observance by the public.

### Health Workforce

The healthcare workforce has been extremely committed to treating patients from the beginning of the outbreak while being mindful of the need to preserve

energy and limit contact. In the first wave, the Israeli Medical Association held bargaining agreements, securing doctor's salaries even in times of quarantine or illness and adjusting their work schedules. Doctors worked in capsules and shifts and when not on shift they were instructed to stay out of the hospitals. Today, as we know more about how the virus is contracted, fewer physicians are put into isolation.

During the first wave, elective procedures were restricted, and the public were less likely to seek medical care. Advertisements encouraged people to seek care when needed. During the second wave, elective procedures have not limited, and all other services are open. We still see fewer people being treated, which is a concern.

The health system was called to a state of emergency due to lack of manpower. On the 21st of September "A Call for Action for Retired Physicians

to Join the Ranks and Reinforce the Hospitals" was made by Professor Zion Hagay, President of the Israeli Medical Association and Professor Chezi Levi, the Israeli Ministry of Health's Director General. Hospitals and community clinics are in great need of interns, intensive care specialists, to emergency medicine specialists, GPs and pediatricians.

Plans are also being put in place to prepare the healthcare system ahead of the winter. The coming winter will pose a very significant challenge to the health of Israeli citizens. For several weeks, a special committee has been preparing for the scenario of dual morbidity with influenza and coronavirus.

The Israeli health system continues to struggle to deal with the crisis. This is largely due to the neglect of the public health system for many years. Medical teams are extremely busy and burnt out, which is exacerbated by failure to cut

off chains of contagion due to a lack of manpower. In addition, there has been a lack of coordination and agreement on an action strategy among professionals and decision makers. Finally, the public's distrust in the leadership makes it difficult to enforce the guidelines and restrictions in place.

Nevertheless, after a month-long national lockdown, the second one in about half a year, signs of improvement can be found. Israel's COVID-19 R value is currently well below 1 (0.6). The number of daily confirmed cases per 1 million population has plunged in a month about 75%, from more than 400 in the middle of September to approximately 100 cases at the end of October. Similarly, the number of "red cities" has dropped sharply from 40 on the eve of the lockdown to 8. These encouraging data give hope for a successful continuation of the fight against the epidemic in Israel.

### The Israeli Medical Association World Fellowship Scholarships, 2020.

This year, 15 scholarships were awarded to outstanding Israeli physicians who are going to or have already begun fellowship programs around the world. The US\$4,000 (16,000 NIS) scholarships were funded by the Israeli Medical Association, the Organization of Clalit Physicians, the Organization of State Employee Physicians, Rambam Medical Center, Rambam Medical Center Physicians' Committee, Sheba Medical Center and Sheba Medical Center Physicians' Committee. The World Fellowship Grants Committee, consisting of Prof. Arnon Afek, Chairman of the Israeli Medical Association World Fellowship, Dr. Arie Bitterman, Dr. Alex

Levin and Dr. Boris Itzkovitz, convened to evaluate 63 exceptionally qualified candidates. The World Fellowship Grants Committee meeting was held in the presence of Adv. Sara Broker of the Israeli Medical Association who monitored the evaluation process.

After much deliberation, scholarships were granted to 15 doctors who have been accepted to fellowship positions in the US, Canada, Spain, Brazil and the UK.

The scholarship program gives physicians a unique opportunity to experience foreign medical systems, institutions, and practices hands-on and to serve as ambassadors of Israel and the Israeli medical field. Additionally, these scholarships strengthen the connection between World Fellowship members abroad and their Israeli colleagues.

Due to the understandable restrictions enforced upon us by the Corona Pandemic, the World Fellowship Grants Committee made the difficult decision to cancel the World Fellowship Scholarship Ceremony this year. However, as in previous years, the scholarships were awarded to the recipients in memory of a deceased physician, thereby maintaining this meaningful tradition.



## The Israeli Society for HealthTech

» The Israeli Society for HealthTech was founded under the auspices of the Israeli Medical Association and aims to create a dialogue between clinical medicine and the world of Health Tech, as well as to increase the involvement of doctors in this field. Chair Dr. Hedva Voliovitch along with fellow founding members Dr. Miri Mizrahi-Reuveni, Prof. Noah Liel Cohen and Prof. Eli Sprecher note the Society's work plan includes establishing a fellowship program for specialist physicians to be trained in the field, organizing conferences to promote Israeli Health Tech, encouraging entrepreneurship and ideas, promoting innovative regulation, and developing horizons in managing medical innovation in public health organizations. And this is just the beginning!

The idea of the Society was born as a project of the 8400 Health Network, after realizing the need to establish an organized physician training framework to enable physicians to lead technological innovation processes within healthcare organizations; at the same time, the organizations discussed the lack of physicians who understand the unique language of the entrepreneurial and high-tech worlds, and who would be able to participate in the development processes at start-up



■ Pictured from left to right: Prof. Eli Sprecher, Ms. Einat Meshorer, Mr. Dotan Simchovitz, Prof. Noah Liel Cohen, Dr. Hedva Voliovitch, Adv. Yael Baratz and Dr. Miri Mizrahi-Reuveni.

companies.

On July 31st, the Society held its inaugural conference, via Zoom, which included keynote lectures from Prof. Gidi Rechavi, 2020 Israel Prize for Medical Science winner and Head of Sheba Cancer Research Center on **Epitranscriptomics: From basic research to drug development**, and Dr. Daniel Kraft, Chair of Exponential Medicine, Singularity University on the **Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on Health Tech**. The conference ended with a panel on **Getting our priorities right** with panel members Adv. Yael Baratz, Senior Partner & Chair of the Corporate & Licensing Group, Pearl Cohen, Prof. Eugene Kandel, CEO, Start-Up Nation Central, Mr. Ziv Ofek, Founder & CEO MDClone and Prof. Karl Skorecki, Dean, The Azrieli Faculty of Medicine, Safed, Prof. Gidi Paret, Director, Dept. of Pediatric Intensive Care, Sheba Medical Center and Former Chairman of the Scientific Council and Dr. Itai Kela, Head of Healthtech Sector, Israel Innovation Authority.

To view the virtual conference, please click onto the links below:

**Opening: Dr. Hedva Voliovitch and Prof. Zion Hagay, President of the Israeli Medical Association:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVP\\_GmLhBew&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVP_GmLhBew&feature=youtu.be)

**Keynote Lecture: Prof Gidi Rechavi:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=NlFSlLkVaDA&feature=youtu.be>

**Keynote Lecture: Dr. Daniel Kraft:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLUY2m3e40I&feature=youtu.be>

We invite you to join and become members of the Israeli Society for HealthTech, to be active in shaping it from the beginning and to participate in the dialogue. For more information please email: [healthtechsociety@ima.org.il](mailto:healthtechsociety@ima.org.il).

## IMA TV Campaign

» Highlighting some of the ‘myths’ surrounding Covid-19, the Israeli Medical Association has produced a new television campaign showing support and appreciation during the corona pandemic and encouraging people to protect themselves and others. The 40 second infomercial, debuted on October 14th and was filmed in Ichilov, Sheba and Laniado Hospitals.



# Medical Achievements

printed by courtesy of ISRAEL21c [www.israel21c.org](http://www.israel21c.org)

## Scientists find genes that can cause hearing loss

The genetic source of inherited hearing loss is better understood following a new multinational study led by Zippora Brownstein and Prof. Karen Avraham from the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University.

These results have immediate implications for genetic counseling for families with hearing loss and for care

of children with hearing loss.

The breakthrough research was published recently in *Clinical Genetics* by scientists from multiple Israeli universities and hospitals, the University of Washington, University of Maryland, US National Institutes of Health, Bethlehem University and the University of Iceland.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



■ A newborn receives a hearing test at Laniado Hospital in Israel. Photo by Chen Leopold/FLASH90

## Kidney tumors destroyed by outpatient cryoablation system

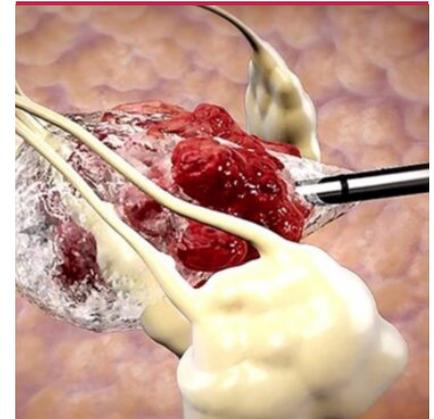
A non-surgical liquid nitrogen (LN2) cryoablation (freezing) technology to destroy benign and malignant tumors demonstrated 100 percent success in a trial with seven kidney cancer patients who's surgically removed tumors had reoccurred.

The outcome of the study, reported in *Journal of Molecular and Clinical*

Medicine, is another feather in the cap of Israeli company IceCure Medical, maker of the ProSense cryoablation system.

The company's primary focus is breast, kidney and lung cancer. The minimally invasive technology is an alternative to surgical tumor removal and is easily performed in a relatively short outpatient procedure, guided by computerized tomography.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



■ Photo courtesy of IceCure

## Scientists develop way to find tumors from blood tests 98% faster

Researchers at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have developed a new method for rapid, inexpensive analysis of blood samples. Its first application to be tested will be early detection of cancerous tumors.

The innovative technology, described in *Nature Communications*, was developed by

Prof. Tomer Shlomi and doctoral students Shoval Lagziel and Boris Sarvin based on a unique combination of mass spectrometry and computational methods.

A mass spectrometer determines the concentrations of molecules in biological samples. Usually, this requires a preliminary, time-consuming and expensive process called chromatography that separates the materials in the sample according to chemical properties.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



■ Photo by Rebecca Zeffert/Flash90

**The Biological Institute in Ness Ziona will begin Corona virus vaccination experiments on humans.**

» The Ministry of Defense and the Institute for Biological Research have announced that the Corona virus vaccine trial is expected to progress towards the human trials phase. The first phase, which will begin on November 1st, will include up to 80 healthy subjects between the ages of 18-55. In the second phase, the experiment is expected to expand to almost 1,000

more volunteers, depending on the success of the first phase. This phase is expected to begin in December and will take place at several medical centers across the country. The second phase is designed to allow researchers to pinpoint the dosage level of the vaccine given.

Director of the Institute for Biological Research, Prof. Shmuel Shapira: "The Institute for Biological Research is at the beginning of an important and crucial phase, the phase of experiments in humans. I am confident in our vaccine, I believe in it and in the ability of the

scientists of the Institute who developed it, and I am convinced that we bring a very good, effective, and safe vaccine. The vaccine has a trade name -"BriLife". We will continue to work for the health of Israeli citizens and for the Israeli economy and society. Our goal is 15 million doses, for the benefit of Israeli citizens and our close neighbors. "

Source: Courtesy of Maariv, 25.10

Link to full article:

<https://www.maariv.co.il/corona/corona-israel/Article-797914>

**Presentation of innovative Corona solutions to the Israeli Knesset.**

» The outbreak of the corona virus and the systemic difficulty of dealing with a large and rapid system of tests, have accelerated Israeli companies and scientists, some sponsored by the Ministry of Science, to develop projects and innovations that can offer global solutions to the virus. The companies presented their new solutions to the Knesset Science Committee in October 2020. Some of the developments presented to the committee included:

BD presented an innovative device developed together with a company from the US, that provides rapid corona detection.

NaNose Medical introduced their development for a contactless corona test using exhalation from the nose.

Analybex Therapeutics presented a drug to fight Corona. According to the company, a clinical trial of the drug will be expanded in the coming days and up to 24 critically ill patients with Corona across the country will be treated with the drug.

Clean Air presented the development of a system that generates constant air purification in an enclosed space, with proof of effective eradication of the corona virus by 99%, based on air sampling results in studies conducted in catering facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, synagogues, etc.

Medips presented a digital application for population monitoring and conducting epidemiological investigations - this unique technology enables identification of the location of every individual of the population at room resolution without infringing on citizens' privacy.

Sight Diagnostics presented a development that allows blood tests to be performed within 10 minutes, without laboratory processing.

Dr. Sharon Yagur-Kroll from the Ministry of Science presented the developments of Prof. Zeev Zalevsky from Bar-Ilan University, monitoring the level of blood oxygen saturation in Corona patients, by following the Microsaccade eye movements. "This is a simple and inexpensive method that can monitor the amount of oxygen saturated in the blood remotely without laser contact into the eye."

Source: Courtesy of Hayadan, 28.10

Link: [www.hayadan.org.il/חברות-סטרטאפ-הציגו-בדיקת-קורונה-ללא-מג](http://www.hayadan.org.il/חברות-סטרטאפ-הציגו-בדיקת-קורונה-ללא-מג)

**First commercial-medical cooperation between Israel and Abu Dhabi.**

» The Israeli biotechnology company Pluristem has signed a memorandum of understanding for a collaboration agreement with the Abu Dhabi Stem Cell Center.

The Abu Dhabi Stem Cell Center (ADSCC) was established in 2019 and is an expert medical center based in

Abu Dhabi that focuses on cell therapy as well as innovative research on stem cells in the region, and is developing a coronary cell-based treatment for Corona.

The parties will cooperate in the development of drugs for serious diseases, including Corona. They have agreed to exchange research results and samples, to make joint use of equipment and testing and to collaborate on other vital activities related to the

advancement of treatment and research in cellular drugs for a wide range of medical conditions.

Source: Courtesy of Israel Today, 17.08  
Link: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/791963>

**The connection between technology, medicine, and science.**

» Against the background of the Corona crisis and the urgent need to establish an innovative digital medical infrastructure, the Council for Higher Education in Israel has approved the first unique degree of its kind in digital technologies in medicine at the Holon Institute of Technology (HIT). Under the new curriculum, students will be able to study digital technologies in

areas such as artificial intelligence, big data, telemedicine, and robotics as part of a unique track developed in collaboration with leading medical centers in the country. Graduates of the track will be integrated into the bio-med and info-med industry, and some will be able to pursue a 4-year degree in medicine in accordance with the admission requirements at the academic institutions. The goal of the program is to create international Israeli progress in tackling the challenges of medicine. Within a few years, hundreds

of graduates with combined training in medicine and technology and familiarity with smart medical systems, remote medicine, data processing and development of groundbreaking medical technologies will be trained in response to evolving clinical needs.

Source: Courtesy of YNET, 09.06  
Link: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-5744524,00.html>



The Israeli Medical Association World Fellowship would like to ensure that our Around the Globe newsletter contains the best, most up-to-date and relevant information for you.

You will note that along with the latest edition of our newsletter, you received a copy of our Satisfaction Questionnaire. We would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and look forward to hearing from you.

# International Conferences

## The European Forum of Medical Associations Virtual Meeting

Unfortunately, the European Forum of Medical Associations (EFMA) annual meeting, which was due to be held in Lviv, Ukraine in June 2020, was postponed. The EFMA Liaison Committee decided that instead it would hold a virtual meeting on Covid-19. The virtual meeting was held on the 8th October and participants joined from across the WHO European Region. The meeting was held with simultaneous interpretation in English and Russian, as is normally the practice for the EFMA in-person meetings.

Leah Wapner, Secretary General of the Israeli Medical Association and the European Forum of Medical Associations successfully chaired the meeting, ensuring it ran smoothly. Leah opened the meeting by giving a presentation and general overview of the Covid-19 Pandemic in the WHO European Region. Leah analysed Covid-19 by breaking down different approaches which have been used to tackle it, including preventative measures such as social distancing, face masks and lockdown,

testing policy, patient care and social and economic policy.

Leah then introduced the topics which were to be discussed during the meeting:

- General Health Care During the Pandemic
- Mental Health of Health Professionals
- Medical Education in Times of Crisis

Professor Leonid Eidelman, Israeli Medical Association Past President, co-moderated the session on General Health Care During the Pandemic together with Dr. Jacques de Haller, Past President of the Standing Committee for European Doctors. Expert presentations were given by Dr. Natasha Azzopardi Muscat, the Director of the Division of Country Health Policies and Systems at the WHO Europe Office and Frederico Guanais, the Deputy Head of the OECD Health Division. Dr. Muscat began by highlighting the lack of preparedness of even the “best” health systems. In addition, Dr. Muscat noted that this is not a competition between health and the economy and explained how the WHO is re-defining their approach to ‘health in all policies’. Finally, Dr. Muscat described the need for a dual track approach: Track 1 – Health systems must remain ready to provide the full range of services needed to prevent, diagnose, isolate and treat Covid-19 patients. Track 2 – Health systems also need to address accumulated demand from services that may have been crowded out to provide Covid-19 care during outbreak

peaks. Frederico Guanais then took the floor, presenting on the need to build health system resilience. In particular, Frederico highlighted the importance of strengthening primary health care and stated that primary health care needs to address the surge in care needs in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

The second session on Mental Health of Health Professionals was moderated by Dr. Tsvi Fischel, the Chairman of the Israeli Psychiatric Association. Dr. Fischel expertly guided this session, leading the experts and moderating effectively. Margrieta Langins, a policy advisor to the WHO Regional Office for Europe, opened the session. Margrieta highlighted the WHO’s plans to scale up efforts in the area of mental health. She explained how stress and burn out were already high among health professionals prior to the pandemic. Margrieta reviewed the current WHO plans in implementing sustainable policy on mental health for health professionals. Dr. Manal Azzi, a Senior Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO), followed by presenting on managing work-related psychosocial risks during the Covid-19 pandemic. Dr. Azzi explained that psychosocial risks emerged during the period of the rapid spread of the virus and strict isolation measures, and still persist or increase over time as the pandemic continues. For healthcare workers, a risk of contagion coupled with increased workload, distress and working hours,



European Forum of Medical Associations virtual meeting.

can impact mental health. She then explained the ILO's proposed areas for action.

The final session on Medical Education in Times of Crisis was moderated by Dr. Otmar Kloiber, Secretary General of the World Medical Association (WMA). In this session presentations were given from three different perspectives. Eglė Janušonytė, the Vice President for External Affairs of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA) began the session by providing the students' perspective. Eglė Janušonytė presented a study conducted by IFMSA to track the adaptation of medical school curricula during the pandemic and also to assess the students' attitude and involvement in healthcare at such a time. This

led well into the presentation by Dr. Yassen Tcholakov, the Interim Chair of the WMA Junior Doctors Network. Dr. Tcholakov presented on post-graduate medical education in times of crisis and highlighted both the professional and mental health impacts. Finally, Prof. David Gordon, the President of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), presented on medical education during the pandemic. Prof. Gordon highlighted the the importance and value of medical education during a pandemic or crisis.

Each session was followed by brief country reports from EFMA members relating to the topics of the session. In these reports, they provided the perspective of the medical professional association and the medical profession.



■ Dr. Tsvi Fischel, Chairman of the Israeli Psychiatric Association

The meeting was a great success, with interesting discussions from the participants and experts. The EFMA Liaison Committee is now planning a follow up meeting to explore other areas affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Management of Advanced Breast Cancer Seminar Israel/Mexico

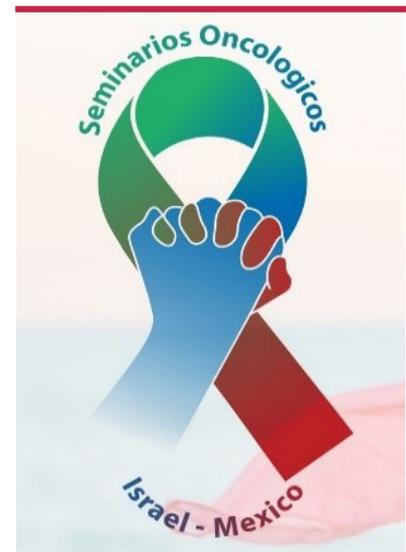
» On October 29th, the Israeli Medical Association held the first in a series of virtual oncological meetings in association with Colegio Medico de Mexico A.C. Fenacomé, CONFEMEL, Confederación de Entidades Médicas Latin-Americanas y del Caribe and IECAN – Instituto Estatal de Cancerología.

The Israeli moderators comprised Dr. Shimshon Erdman, Director of Relations with Latin America and Physicians' Exchange Program and Dr. Jacobo Mattout Tache, Radiotherapist Oncologist at Sheba Medical Center.

The Mexican moderators comprised Dr. Mirian Lopez Basilio - Colegio Medico de Mexico & CONFEMEL and Dr. Marco A Jimenez Lopez – Director General of IECAN.

Focusing on advanced breast cancer T3,T4 and metastasis, Dr. Shira Glaper, Radiotherapist and Dr. Opher Globus, Breast Oncologist at Sheba Medical Center presented a review of a number of clinical cases.

Prof. Salomon Stemmer, Professor of Oncology at the Davidoff Center for the Treatment and Research of Cancer joined and participated in the debate.



ההסתדרות  
הרפואית בישראל  
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Association



## Resilient Health Systems 2020

» A digital congress of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KBV) was held on the 1st October, as part of Germany’s Presidency of the EU Council. The conference focused on the experiences throughout Europe in the health systems’ fights against the Covid-19 pandemic. The digital congress asked the following questions:

- Which healthcare concepts have proven effective?
- What difficulties do the systems have to cope with?
- What are the consequences?

There were 2 panel debates and 9 different sessions held in parallel. Adv.

Leah Wapner, Secretary General of the Israel Medical Association, was invited to present in the session on testing strategies and presented on “What testing strategies is Israel pursuing?”

The session was chaired by Dr. Andreas Bobrowski, the Chairman of the Professional Association of German Laboratory Doctors. Other expert presentations were given by Dr. Tim Eckmanns, the Head of the Department of Nosocomial Infections, Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance; Dr. Michael Müller, the Chairman of the Association of Accredited Laboratories; and Dr. Ralf Ignatius, a Member of the Advisory Board of the Professional Association of Doctors for Microbiology, Virology and

Infection Epidemiology.

Adv. Wapner began by giving an overview of the how the pandemic began in Israel and initial steps that were taken. She provided a review of the Israeli testing system, including testing requirements, testing sites, and change in the Israeli policy with regards to testing. Adv. Wapner continued by critiquing the system, noting the importance of trust and transparency and highlighting the challenges beyond the testing system. Finally, the presentation concluded that a functional testing system has a central role in the fight against the pandemic; however optimal functioning is only possible as part of an overall strategy at the national level. In addition, the fundamental weaknesses of the Israeli health system directly affect the testing and are reflected in the field.

The session concluded with a round table with active participants and questions sent in by the audience. There was a lengthy discussion, with presentations of perspectives and experiences from across Europe.



## Virtual Meeting on COVID-19 Health Professionals of Israel and Panama

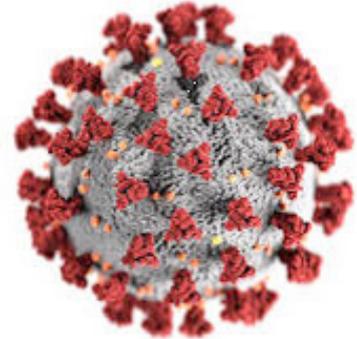
» On July 21st, 2020, the Israeli Medical Association held a virtual meeting of Health professionals from Israel and Panama on the topic of Covid 19. Issues discussed included diagnostic testing, isolation policy and treatment protocols.

Prof. Zion Hagay, President of the Israeli Medical Association, and Adv. Leah Wapner, Secretary General of the Israeli Medical Association, welcomed the participants to this important meeting.

Prof. Shlomo Maayan, Barzilai Medical Center and Prof. Gadi Segal, Head of Internal Medicine, Sheba Medical Center discussed Covid in depth and provided a unique insight into Israel's response to this pandemic.

H.E. Dr Reda Mansour, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Panama and H.E. Ambassador Adis Urieta Vega, Ambassador of Panama in Israel and Ambassador Shmulik Bass, Director, Department of South America, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also in attendance.

The Panamanian participants were headed by Dr Luis Francisco Sucre, Minister of Health for Panama, Dr. Jorge Medrano, Senior Advisor to the Minister, past Minister of Health and Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the Universidad Latina; Dr Enrique Mendoza, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Panama University and Senior Advisor to the Minister of Health; Lic. Thais Noriega; Dr Camilo Alleyne,



Senior Advisor to the Minister and Past Minister of Health; Dr. Francisco Sanchez Cardenas; Prof. Alessandro Gaucci, Senior Epidemiology Advisor; Dra. Guadalupe Castillo Abrego among many others. The meeting extended over two hours, due to the active participation of the Panamanian participants.

Dr. Shimshon Erdman, Director of the Physicians Exchange Program hosted the COVID-19, Health Professionals of Israel and Panama virtual meeting and was the meeting moderator and translator, assisted by Tracey Hyman – IMA International Relations Officer and the IMA Secretariat.



# INTERVIEW with Dr. Simon Wein

**Full Name:** Dr. Simon Wein  
**Occupation:** Oncologist  
**Date of Aliyah:** 2008

**Originally from:** Australia  
**Made aliyah with:** wife Lena and 5 children

## Personal/Professional Background

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

I went to a Jewish day school from woe to go, in Melbourne, Australia. We were brought up in a Zionistic family, regularly travelling to visit Israel and supporting it politically, although we did not belong to Zionist movements per se.

Then I went out into the world to the University of Melbourne and studied medicine. I specialized in Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology. Interspersed, I spent a couple of years working in Israel as a junior doctor in oncology. It was not the time for us to stay in Israel, so we returned to Australia, I completed my training, and then went on to Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York to practice Psycho-oncology.

After two years we tried life again in Israel, in Jerusalem Palliative Medicine – but it was a little before its time. We returned to Australia. I did a fellowship in Palliative Medicine and several years later we returned to Israel, for what was effectively our third try. And it has been a resounding success – professionally, for our children and personally.

I first obtained recognition as a general doctor some 20 years ago and later on during my second visit, as a

specialist in Internal Medicine. The second time was not without challenges in terms of delay, although eventually I was recognized in Internal Medicine. Back then, oncology was a combined radiotherapy and medical oncology degree. So I did not obtain medical oncology recognition but in view of my subsequent career choice that did not make any difference.

I think the bottom line for us for making Aliyah is that this is the Jewish country and that Jewish life in the diaspora – which I am certain will continue alongside Israel – is a more muted, constrained and limited lifestyle. This is because of the need to live in a particular and enclosed community in order to encourage and preserve marrying in the faith. Hence the career choices of children and their lifestyles are limited. Or else they will assimilate and intermarry – if not them, then their grandchildren. As well we wanted to live a religious lifestyle and in Israel the opportunities are so much broader and deeper.

I would like to think that our story of ‘making aliyah’ on the third attempt would offer some sort of encouragement not to despair or give up. Having said that I do think that the earlier one makes Aliyah in one’s life the better it is for absorption.

And having said that – having come from an Anglo country at an older age, we will always be a little outside the mainstream Israeli life – but not prohibitively so. Not at all. We are invited to weddings and functions. Once one is in a workplace or a shul, people accept you as an individual. It is true, though, that one’s interests and way of thinking is forever influence by one’s country of birth. It is up to you.

## Life in Israel

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

We live in a small town in the Shomron – about 15 minutes from Ariel. Our reason for choosing this place was that we consider it part of Israel – it is 25 kilometers due east of the beach at Tel Aviv. It is a Hebrew speaking village and we thought that would enable a quicker and deeper acclimatization for



our children. And indeed, it has – most of them took Israeli spouses and have thus settled with roots deeply implanted including their extended Israeli families. We like the small village and even though we do not have a large social circle we are very settled and feel at home.

My wife worked as an art therapist in a Jerusalem cancer unit and was successful there. I have worked in palliative medicine in a large hospital in the center of the country and slowly but surely, we have introduced palliative care to the Israeli system. I am now able to pass it over to the next generation – Israeli!

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

We enjoy practically everything here

in Israel compared with from whence we came. We enjoy the normality of a Jewish country; the kosher foods; complaining about the insane driving; becoming stressed about paying bills over Hebrew-only automated telephone services; the restaurants; the reward of looking after people from the diaspora and comparing Polish gefilte fish to Yemenite schug; the casualness of life – many secretaries for reasons I cannot fathom address me by my surname only.

The trick is to let go of any irritations by the evening and to just think of the next 2000 years here.

### Covid-19

**How has the Covid-19 outbreak affected you?**

As medicos we have been protected

from the economic and work impact of the COVID virus outbreak. We have tried to contribute palliative care skills to the hospitalized Covid-19 patients, but the nature of the disease and the skills of treating doctors mean our medical skills are not in demand. However, some of us have been able to contribute by speaking with relatives and explaining and supporting.

The Government's role is unenviable – to strike the balance between protecting the lives versus the livelihood of the population – without placing an unacceptable financial burden on the next generation.

A good decision for us, in short.

## Chapter Tidbits



CANADA

» I am pleased to announce that we have appointed a new Executive Committee in the Canadian Branch of the International Federation of the IMA. We are continuing to partner with organizations to bring health care providers together in webinar discussions about relevant health care issues. At the present time we

are focusing on COVID 19, and we are planning a discussion on the ethical dimensions of decision making in this pandemic.

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



**AUSTRALIA**

» **Australasian Jewish Medical Federation (VIC)**

I was elected president in November 2019 and so have almost had one year in this position. I thank the outgoing President, Dr. Miriam Kuttner, for her strong leadership and dedication to our organisation for over five years. I am a Dermatologist working in both private and public practice. I have long had connections with Israel including visiting family members on many occasions (my eldest brother made Aliyah in the 70s) and have previously had a research collaboration with the Dermatology Unit at Hadassah Hospital. All was uneventful in my new role until the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. Since then it has been a testing time.

An online Jewish doctors’ chat group was set up, which has been very helpful in connecting Jewish doctors here in Melbourne during lockdown. There has been robust discussion

about the pandemic, the science, and the management of it. This forum also facilitated our organisation’s efforts in sourcing PPE and sanitizer when supplies were difficult to obtain.

In Australia, our governments placed us in an early conservative lockdown which has proven to be successful and led to a significant reduction in virus numbers (and elimination in some Australian states). Unfortunately, in Melbourne where I am based and where most of our members are located, we experienced a much more significant second wave, after failures in our quarantine system. Victoria was effectively cut off from the rest of Australia and for three months we were subjected to one of the strictest lockdowns in the world. As I write this report, restrictions are slowly being eased, elective surgery is recommencing, and economic activity is starting up again.

While we have not had any face to face functions this year, there have been some online educational events, including an interesting presentation by historian David Solomon on the significant contributions of some 16th Century Jewish physicians. More recently, we were fortunate to have a zoom presentation with Professor Mark



■ Dr. Jack Green, President AJMF (VIC)

Spigelman, a surgeon and world renown palaeoepidemiologist, who shared his interesting research studying ancient DNA and diseases found on mummified bodies in Korea.

Since the last chapter report, we provided a grant to visiting Israeli ophthalmologist, Dr. Elad Ben-Artzi, who has been undertaking an oculoplastics fellowship at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital. As our coronavirus numbers go down (and hopefully a successful vaccine will be available next year) we look forward to a normalisation of travel restrictions and hosting more Israeli medical practitioners in local fellowship positions again.





## ITALY

### » Italian Chapter Update.

Dr. Rosanna Supino, President of the AME (Associazione Medica Ebraica Italia) presented a project enabling the telemonitoring of chronic patients or recovering covid patients, to the UCEI (Unione Comunità Ebraiche Italiane). The goal of the AME was to provide information about Israeli technology and in particular information about telemonitoring to the Italian medical community at large.

The AME and UCEI raised over 17,000 Euros during a joint fundraising campaign in April and May of this year. The UCEI also awarded the AME an additional 8,000 Euros resulting from their application to the 8x1000 project.

The AME decided to commit these funds to a home monitoring project for recovering covid patients who require frequent checks of their vital parameters. This home monitoring device could also be used for other patients with chronic diseases such as post-operational patients, oncological, pneumopathic,

hypertensive, diabetics and so on.

The objective of home telemonitoring is to keep the patient at home (reducing the inconvenience and social costs incurred by hospitalization) while being able to detect and report any acute episodes, fibrillations, falls or exacerbations of pathologies to the doctor or emergency room. The telemonitoring system is also able to process the detected data, providing valuable support for diagnosis.

The device will record the parameters that the doctor will consider adequate, such as O2 saturation, ECG trace, blood pressure, temperature, drop risk prevention, etc. These parameters must be sent via LTE network (long term evolution) to the Reference Monitoring Center and analyzed with artificial intelligence.

AME Italia proposes an experimental pilot project to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the system; at the moment the AME plans to purchase 8-10 devices (watches) to be delivered to critical patients who, for better control of the experimentation, will initially be connected to an operations center

formed by AME associated doctors. Later, the AME will consider forming an organized network, which will consist of general practitioners, a reference hospital, a structured monitoring center or other bodies to be identified based on the experience gained.

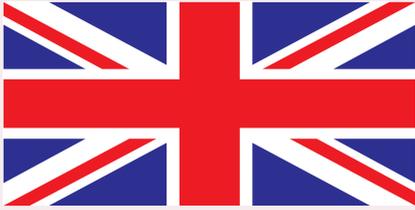
This initiative will be of great national interest, as the AME will be the first or among the first in Italy to adopt these devices. This initiative will also advertise Israeli technology, highlighting the level of absolute excellence in comparison to various competitors on the market.

The AME, in collaboration with Galeazzi Hospital in Milan, the Israeli manufacturer and the university, plans to present the initiative to the "XIX Bando" for the collection of Joint Research Projects for the year 2021 based on the cooperation agreement in the field of Research and Industrial Development, Scientific and Technological between Italy and Israel ("Industrial Bando") which could assign up to 200,000 euros to the project.

**Rosanna Supino, President of AME, Italy.**



*Associazione Medica Ebraica*



**UK**



**Covid-19: Experiences, Effects and Expectations.**

In the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic the pressures were such that the Association held off communication. In early June we began to deliberate the best way to reflect, learn, and evolve (rather than mutate!) into the future and the first step was to gain insights into the ideas and thoughts of our members and their patients.

To achieve this, the plunge was taken into the Zoom era on the - rather self-evident - theme of Covid-19: Experiences, Effects and Expectations. This programme has been successful as judged by attendance and feedback. Technical glitches at the start have gradually been overcome. It has been made possible by the hard work of our Administrative Secretary, Hilary Cane, and by the supportive staff of Creative & Commercial.

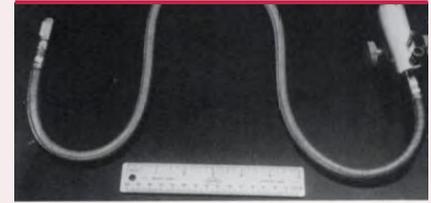
Speakers thus far are Dr Ellis

Friedman (Public Health), Mr Lawrence Wiseman (Patient), Dr Karyn Moshal (Paediatrics), Prof Marcel Levi, (Chief Executive, UCLH), Prof Mervyn Singer (ICU, UCLH), Dr Mike Groszmann (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry), Dr Daniel Staetsky (Demography and Statistics), Prof Ora Paltiel (Israel), Dr Ian Goodman (General Practice), Prof Alan Salama (Nephrology), Dr Suzanne Joels (Psychogeriatrics) and Dr Adrian Tookman (Palliative Care).

*Jewish Medical Association UK  
Newsletter, September 2020*

**London Presidential Lecture**

In her lecture Prof Maralyn Druce spoke about “Endocrine Medicine – Just two skills but it takes guts to develop them”. She said that the two skills are thinking and explaining – the gut endocrine system is intrinsically important; thinking about it, and trying to explain the various interactions and their effects not only biochemically but also on clinical and behavioural patterns, has been her continuing research challenge.



**Israeli Colorectal Surgeons Visit**

Prof Alex Deutsch brought 12 Israeli Colorectal Surgeons to the UK in the week before the pandemic struck. At the meeting they presented two Israeli neuroendocrine tumour patients, and this was followed by a panel discussion led by Prof Martin Caplin and Prof Druce on the theme of Gut Neuroendocrine Tumours – “NET: for any surgeon or not?”

*Jewish Medical Association UK  
Newsletter, September 2020*

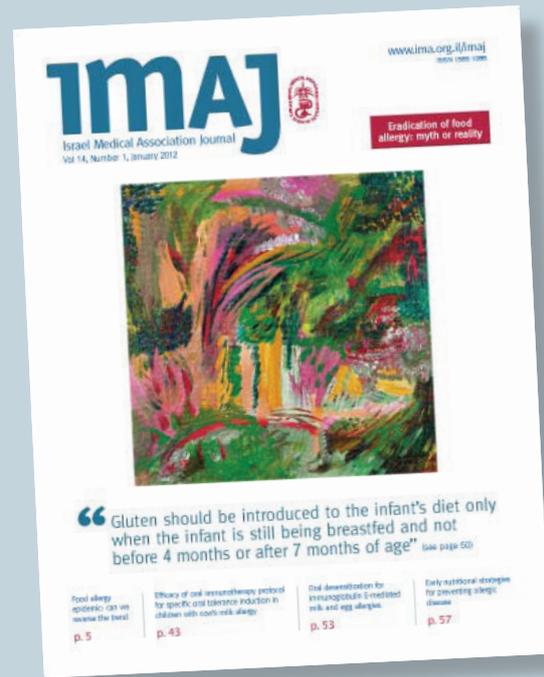


■ Prof. Maralyn Druce

## Israeli Medical Association Journal - IMAJ

We are happy to inform you that the Israeli Medical Association Journal (IMAJ) is available online for all IMA World Fellowship members. IMAJ publishes original articles and reviews, editorials, case reports and other feature columns. Unique is IMAJ's coverage of specific regional issues - infectious and parasitic diseases, effects of the local environment on morbidity and mortality, Jewish genetic diseases, epidemiology of subpopulations - relevant to medical practice in distant countries with similar biopsychosocial problems.

> [www.ima.org.il/imag](http://www.ima.org.il/imag)



## Personal Connections

In this section you will have the opportunity to extend personal messages, either for professional or personal purposes. You may wish to find a placement, a place to stay or seek other advice or services from any of our IMA World Fellowship members around the globe or offer yourself as a friendly face to other physicians.

If so, please send your message to [international@ima.org.il](mailto:international@ima.org.il) for our next edition.

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