



PRESIDENTS REPORT (VIC) | DR JACK GREEN

I'd like to start this report by acknowledging the tremendous contribution that Miriam Kuttner has made as head of our organisation for the last six years. During this time we've had successful mini-conferences in Geelong and Daylesford. There have been many lectures, film nights and combined events with other organisations. We've seen Israeli fellows and medical students awarded scholarships and grants. Miriam shot our organisation to fame after she sent a letter of complaint to the Ethics Committee of the Israel Medical Association (IMA) about the inexplicable behaviour of a district psychiatrist involved in the Malka Leifer extradition trial. This letter helped publicise the case in the press and led to a formal investigation of alleged political interference. In particular, allegations were directed against the Minister, Yaakov Litzman. Miriam's name and that of our organization was published on the front page of the Haaretz newspaper. And a week later, on the front of our own Australian Jewish News. So Miriam was displaying her star power all the while, whilst battling her own health issues. A truly remarkable woman. It's been nearly two years since Miriam wrote her letter to the IMA and as we go to press it has been announced that Yaakov Litzman will be leaving the Health Ministry and an Israeli Court has ruled that Malka Leifer is mentally fit to be extradited to Australia.

Now I don't pretend at all that I'll be able to follow Miriam's formidable act. But the AJMF does have some challenges that lie ahead. The Jewish medical workforce has been changing and there are significantly less members of our community studying medicine. As a consequence, there are more established and retired Jewish doctors amongst our members compared to younger graduates. Hearing from more senior members of the committee, such as Morry Brygel, there is the description of large conferences and large very well attended events. Apart from numbers, the other factor was that many members were second generation migrants, were less integrated into the wider community and so, as it were, stuck together more. But times have changed, and people interact socially and communicate in a different way. We need to attract young Jewish medical practitioners joining our ranks and to reverse the perception that this is only an organisation of older Jewish doctors. We need to be open to a new generation of communication by social media and I will endeavour to add these modern communication

formats to the regular emails and the, twice yearly, newsletter that is sent out.

There have been many general practitioners, psychiatrists and various other specialists that have headed this organization. I believe I am the first dermatologist in the history of this organisation to have the honour. I suppose you may want to know a little about who it is that has taken over this leadership role of the AJMF. I was born in Melbourne the youngest of three sons of Holocaust survivors. My parents came here in late 1949, my father from Belarus (he survived as a Partisan in the forests there) and mother from Warsaw (she escaped with her family to Russia for the duration of the war). The family profession was watchmaking including my father, grandfather, uncles and one brother. My father did have an older sister, Sonia, who completed medicine in Vilna and worked as a doctor in the Vilna ghetto but unfortunately her life was cut short in the Holocaust. I was educated at Yeshivah College and subsequently at Monash University, completing my MBBS in 1991. I was always keen on dermatology but found the 1st part exam (which one needed to pass to apply in those days) quite tough going and completed an FRACGP whilst attempting to do it. I then spent three years researching genetic hair disorders at St. Vincent's Hospital and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute before finally being accepted into dermatology training. I spent a year of my training program in Singapore which was quite fascinating and made me feel comfortable in managing non-Caucasian skin conditions. By this time I was married to Aviva Nathan who was training in obstetrics and gynaecology. That was the year our daughter, Gabrielle, was born (back in Melbourne). After obtaining Fellowship (by which time our son Aden had been born) I set up my main practice in Werribee but I also consult in Ballarat and Richmond. My public appointment is at St. Vincent's Hospital and also at the Skin Health Institute where I run a tertiary referral hair disorders clinic. I have served on the AJMF committee for a number of years and am honoured to have been elected in November of 2019.

When Miriam tapped me on the shoulder (before social distancing was a thing) I thought, well I've never really sought Jewish leadership positions but I think I could cope with this. She had her close and very capable and efficient friend, Annette, in an administrative role. The requirements included a committee meeting every two months, a couple newsletters, some group emails, giving out grants, some social functions e.g. a movie night and some medical talks and schmoozing at the odd community function. I thought – I can handle this.

Then Darren Katz started the Jewish Doctors of Melbourne (JDM) Whatsapp group and I got involved and then – BANG! It was COVID 19. In an instant the role changed. Suddenly I was the president of the AJMF in the middle of a once in a 100-year pandemic. I wanted to look back and take lessons learned from whom ever had been president of the AJMF at the time of the last pandemic in 1917. But the organization didn't exist, Israel didn't exist, we didn't have anti-biotics (or cosmetic laser machines) but I do think there were already some Jewish doctors in existence in this city – but we'll have to ask the historians to verify that for us.



Darren's JDM group became a hive of activity with lots of posts and arguments. Members starting breaking rules. Control had to be gained. But overall the discussion and support was amazing to see. We had the issues of obtaining PPE and supplies – people were hoarding, many items became scarce. But the Jewish network came in to its own and, after a group effort, we've managed to obtain sanitizer gel, masks, surgical scrubs and we're working on obtaining surgical gowns and sanitizer wipes. Thanks goes to many individuals who kindly assisted. This includes Brandon Carp for obtaining the masks and making sure they were TGA approved, and his son Brad who organised the invoicing, payments and delivery. Michael Rich who, through his brother, Alan, connected us with Raphael Geminder who kindly let us obtain a pallet of sanitizer. Special thanks to Michael Schwartz from Pascoe's who facilitated the sanitizer order and also Michael Boltman who allowed us to use his business as a destination point. Thanks also go to Sharon Hamilton from Fella Hamilton who consulted with some of our members and is now manufacturing scrubs and surgical gowns. I never thought this job would involve dealing in shmattes! Such Jewish tradition!

And as all this was happening, the COVID19 landscape was rapidly changing with members of our Jewish community becoming infected and public statements being made about rules being broken and secret minyanim against regulations. I was quoted on the front page of the Jewish News on a particularly intense week. The next week Josh Burns, our local Federal member, kindly sponsored a statement from the AJMF to the Jewish community encouraging compliance with social distancing and other government rules. I must thank George Braitberg, who co-wrote the community announcement and has been very helpful with information and guidance. He is a tremendous intellect and has a great heart for Jewish Community service.

AJMF (VIC) | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING | Nov 2019

Outgoing Victorian President, Dr Miriam Kuttner, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Branch of the AJMF prior to handing over the reins to Dr Jack Green

I have been the AJMF president for the past 6 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to hold this role and involve myself in issues that I am passionate about namely – Medicine, Judaism and Israel.



As I have grown up in Melbourne the child of Holocaust survivors I was and am immensely proud of the diverse Jewish community that we have here. My father in law, Max Zajac, was able to say at both his son's weddings; I am not losing a son, I am gaining a doctor.

I have chosen to specialise as a psychiatrist which is an endlessly interesting career path exploring the human psyche and trying to understand the mind.

What I have enjoyed about the AJMF is that it allows me to hear and learn about topics outside of Psychiatry. We have held a diverse range of topics from both local and international speakers both at private home as well as community forums. I am proud that we have co-sponsored multiple events as I felt that there is a multitude of events taking place within the Melbourne Jewish community and if we can cooperate with other organisations that

In this newsletter, we have an article about a past president of the Australian Friends of the IMA (AFIMA), Dr Gabby Reisner, who passed away in January. I also wish to acknowledge Dr Abe Dorevitch, a previous president, who passed away in October last year. He was a remarkable figure who, with an attention to high standards and high level professional and business ethics, founded a large and successful pathology provider. But he was also a great teacher who had a sub-specialist interest in dermatopathology and was responsible for teaching pathology to cohorts of dermatology trainees. I also wish to acknowledge Dr Eric Taft AM, a giant of Australian Dermatology, who passed away in November 2019. He was the first censor-in-chief of the College of Dermatologists and kept up a very active College involvement and private practice – working into his early 90s.

These remarkable individuals inspire participation and engagement with our medical colleagues.

While in lockdown, Morry Brygel has uncovered some historical information about the IMA, AFIMA and AJMF, which makes for some interesting reading about the role the organisation has played in the past.

Moving forward, I see our mission as not only connecting with the Israeli medical community but also as having a networking, social and support role for local Jewish medical practitioners. Please contact me with any suggestions you may have on how we can improve the AJMF.

I look forward to working with all of you.

it is a positive benefit for both groups. I am also proud that during this time, the Victorian branch of the AJMF has provided over 20 scholarships to Israeli doctors who have come to Melbourne to pursue further research and clinical work in their fields.

I think these scholarships reflect our willingness to support Israeli doctors who come here and encourage them to learn skills from their Australian medical experience which they can then take back to Israel. We also continue to provide scholarships for Australian medical students undertaking their elective in Israel. We had both Jewish and non-Jewish medical students experience for themselves the magic of the State of Israel and the amazing clinical diversity that is offered there.

In the last AJMF newsletter, I outlined the other achievements of my term as president. So, as I am preparing to handover the job to Dr Jack Green, I am thinking about the challenges ahead. In my mind there are 2 big challenges. Firstly, whether we have capacity to recruit younger members. As anyone working in communal organisations realises, we need to recruit younger doctors to the AJMF committee to help attract the next generation. Secondly, I think we need to explore the possibilities of sending Australian doctors to Israel and supporting them to study and work there.

I look forward to the energy and enthusiasm that Dr Jack Green brings to AJMF.

ISRAELI FELLOWSHIP | LARYNOLOGY - AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Ariel Roitman received support from the VIC branch of AJMF

I moved to Auckland New Zealand from Israel with my wife, Carmit, and our four children Roni, Gal, Aviv and Noya, for an advanced fellowship in Laryngology in Auckland in July 2018.



I was born and raised in Israel, and graduated the prestigious medical school at The Technion, The Israel Institute of Technology in 2007. Following my rotating internship year at

the Rambam Health Campus, I joined Israel Defense Forces as an Air Force officer. First I had served as a battalion physician, and later as the Air Defense Array Head Medical Officer. Following my military duty, I commenced my Otorhinolaryngology (ORL), Head and Neck Surgery residency at Carmel Medical Center, Haifa, Israel.

I completed my training after 6 years and then decided to pursue a fellowship in Laryngology which is a field in ORL that focuses on Voice disorders, Airway conditions and Swallowing difficulties. The fellowship program at Auckland City Hospital under the supervision of Mr David Vokes is comprehensive one with a multidisciplinary overview of all aspects of Laryngology while incorporating clinical and surgical education on a daily basis. I was also fortunate to work closely under the supervision of Dr Jacqui Allen who is an international expert in disorders of voice and swallowing at North Shore Hospital – so, it was a straightforward decision to accept the offer to become the 2018 Laryngology fellow.

During my fellowship I have gained an unforgettable experience and vast knowledge in the fields of Voice, Airway and Swallowing. I have acquired knowledge about management of complex cases, decision making and integrated clinical judgment. I performed numerous surgeries and in-office procedures as well as participating in and leading bedside discussions, teaching sessions, national hands-on dissection course and many other activities.

One of the most pleasing aspects of working in New Zealand is the positive working environment and great relationship and cooperation between all staff members. From every perspective, this fellowship program entails everything I was looking for and has exceeded my expectations.

As a family, we settled in nicely and met new friends and neighbors in Mount Eden where we resided. My wife has been an extraordinary support to me during this time while continuing to work as a General Practitioner in a nearby clinic. Our children had a warm welcome to their school and daycare centre and quickly acquired the language and new classmates. It was an amazing opportunity to be in a new country on the other side of the globe which was very different from what we've known. We were eager to absorb the culture and experience as much as possible during our stay. We took numerous family trips all around New Zealand and even travelled to the nearby islands and to Australia as well.

We returned to Israel earlier this year and I immediately returned to work at my previous hospital, Carmel Medical Center in Haifa. My vision is to establish a Laryngology clinic which will provide services to Northern Israel and complex patients from across the country. This is a challenge that I have already started to pursue with presentations to the hospital's management delineating the necessary steps to achieve my goals, purchasing advanced equipment to better diagnose the patients and even surgical instruments that will allow us to treat our patients with great care.

Due to my interest in teaching, I am also affiliated with an academic center where I can teach medical students and residents. I would also like to continue in conducting clinical research. Obviously, the road is long and I may encounter obstacles; however, I feel confident and well equipped to provide the best care to our patients. One of the most exciting procedures that I learnt in NZ is scoping the esophagus trans-nasally under local anaesthetic. Transnasal esophagoscopy (TNE) is a relatively new diagnostic procedure in the evaluation of patients with numerous conditions and basically enables doctors to examine all of the upper aerodigestive system without the need for sedation. Examples of conditions that can be assessed with TNE are different swallowing difficulties, acid reflux, cough and it is also a powerful screening tool in patients with head and neck cancer. This office-based procedure is safe and well-tolerated which results in a reduced hospital stay and in a shorter procedure time (compared to esophagoscopy under sedation). To date, esophagoscopy under local anaesthetic hasn't been performed in Israel.

Our patients must undergo the procedure under sedation which is much more complex to both the patients and the physicians. This state-of-the-art technology costs 80,000 euro and we are seeking support to establish this treatment option.

The experience we had in the last year and a half in New Zealand, which was generously supported by the AJMF, and for which we are thankful, has allowed me to concentrate on my fellowship and get the required expertise in my field. Overall, this once-in-a-lifetime adventure has redefined us as a family and provided us all the knowledge and experiences which we will forever cherish.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS 2020



Congratulations to Professor Rachele Buchbinder AO who was recognized for distinguished service to medical education in the fields of epidemiology and rheumatology.



Congratulations to Professor Jeffrey Zajac AO who was recognized for distinguished service to medical research and education, particularly in the field of endocrinology.

Our thanks to Maurice Brygel and the family of Gabby Reisner for this contribution



Gabriel Samson Reisner was born in Bratislava, Slovakia on December 17, 1938, first-born son to Stephanie and Louis Reisner. He passed away January 26th, 2020 on Australia day.

Gabby lived in Bratislava until 1948 and attended school for only a single year over the first ten years of his life. In Bratislava during 1944, his father met a gentile who informed Louis to take his family and immediately hide. Louis arranged their first hiding place by renting a tiny room together with another family of four. Gabby had to remain quiet at all times. He remembered spending his days transcribing and translating German newspapers and drawing pictures. A second hiding spot was at the rear of this house in a dug out potato cave with a small air vent which Gabby's family also hid in from time to time. After blackmail threats they moved to their third hiding place, a bunker in a hayloft. On April 1st 1945, they came out of hiding. At this time, the communists were in control so his father Louis arranged false documents from a Jewish organisation called Bricha. This allowed the family to escape by night to Vienna where they remained for 6 months. Then they received a permit to Australia, arriving by ship on February 17, 1949.

Gabby attended Mt Scopus College in St Kilda Road completing four-year levels in two and a half years and later attended Melbourne High School. He studied medicine at Melbourne University graduating in 1962 with honours. He worked at Prince Henry's hospital where he completed his residency, became a registrar and completed his primary fellowship in surgery. A senior lecturer position at the Alfred Hospital followed. It was during this time that he married Sandra Birch. Gabby then ventured to the USA as a research fellow on staff at Harvard University in Boston doing experimental surgery on monkeys. Gabby then decided to become a urologist, completing his residency at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. His first and only child Natasha was born during this period in 1971. Upon returning to Melbourne in 1972, Gabby was appointed to Prince

Henry's hospital as a urologist whilst simultaneously opening up private practices in Greensborough, Moorabbin and Cabrini hospital in Malvern. He became a consultant at the Alfred also. He later based his private practice almost exclusively at Cabrini.

It was during this early period he joined the Australian Fellowship of the Israel Medical Association (AFIMA) where he made a significant contribution as a committee member and then President. He showed his usual initiative in this role being responsible for increasing the mailing list by about 600. On bumping into Dr Matt Cohen at the hospital, he asked him to join the committee. He and Matt Cohen, then secretary, combed the yellow pages phone book to get details adding anyone who had a Jewish sounding name. Gabby also took part and assisted at our biannual conference where he was a keen contributor - one of his topics being the surgery of erectile dysfunction. During this time, Gabby and Sandra were generous in hosting committee meetings and functions.

Gabby had a thirst for knowledge and a worldly outlook. His patience was perhaps one of his best qualities. He had an ability to listen, absorb and then offer a quiet non-judgmental point of view, which was valued by many including myself as he often tutored and mentored. He was admired for his treatment of others - his ability to connect with people from all walks of life and communicate with many nationalities. He had a gift for languages and could speak at least 6 fluently. He was admired for his sense of humour and comments, which were always a bit on the quirky side. Unfortunately, Gabby was forced into early retirement because of Parkinson's disease. A fall in 2016 and ensuing complications made his last three years very difficult but he bore them with dignity and a strong will to survive.

Many people knew Gabby Reisner in different ways – perhaps as their doctor, colleague, friend or relative – a quiet, kind, gentle, loving and humble person who demanded little from those around him, an excellent surgeon and valued friend to many. Gabby is survived by his loving wife Sandra, beloved daughter Natasha, her husband Mark, grandsons Jesse and Riley and his younger brother Robert.

MEDICINE-ASSISTED PSYCHOTHERAPIES

Our thanks to Mind Medicine Australia for this article

Members of the Jewish community all over the globe are leading the development of medicine-assisted psychotherapies, which are research-backed and regulatory-approved psychotherapies using psilocybin, a natural compound derived from magic mushrooms, for depression and anxiety, and MDMA for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Israel was the first country in the world to begin a compassionate use scheme for MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, after being one of the leading countries to start clinical trials of the treatment years earlier. Medicine-assisted psychotherapies have so been granted "Breakthrough Therapy Status" by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States and in January, an expanded access program was established, permitting the use of these treatments ahead of the clinical trials conclusion.

In 2019, Tania de Jong AM and her husband Peter Hunt, AM, launched the registered charity Mind Medicine Australia, to ensure the accessibility and availability of medicine-assisted psychotherapies and to reduce unnecessary delays in implementing this treatment approach in Australia. Our country is currently far behind the US, UK, Canada, Israel, and much of Europe in research and regulatory support for medicine-assisted psychotherapies.

In her role as Executive Director of Mind Medicine Australia, de Jong has made significant progress in bringing medicine-assisted psychotherapies closer as treatment options for mental illness in this country. The organisation co-funded Australia's first clinical trial of medicine-assisted psychotherapy, using psilocybin for end-of-life anxiety and depression at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne.

In November, it will host Australia's inaugural International Summit on Psychedelic Therapies for Mental Illness in Melbourne, and it will run the country's first-ever medicine-assisted psychotherapy training program for health professionals. Planning for an Asia-Pacific Centre of Psychedelic Medicine based in Australia has also begun.

One core motivation for the many Jewish people worldwide who are driving the development of medicine-assisted psychotherapies is that they will help end the suffering of Holocaust survivors and their descendants who suffer from PTSD. Many of them have had symptoms for their entire lives because of the lack of effective treatment options. Those who have developed PTSD may experience ongoing feelings of panic or extreme fear. The condition can act as a catalyst for depression, substance abuse and suicide. PTSD is also linked to unemployment, homelessness, and family violence. Some studies indicate that the prevalence of PTSD within the Holocaust survivor community is between 46% and 55%. In addition, studies indicate that the children and grandchildren of survivors also share PTSD symptoms due to the phenomenon of intergenerational trauma, a psychological theory suggesting that trauma can be transferred between generations.

Doctors typically treat people who have PTSD with psychotherapy and pharmaceutical medicines, but the medications often produce unpleasant side effects and show a mere 20–30% success rate among patients. Exposure therapy is more successful, providing relief from PTSD in around half of the cases. However, the treatment process can be long and grueling, which causes many patients to drop out.

In contrast, recent clinical trials of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy in the United States have been shown to relieve PTSD immediately after just three active dose sessions for 54% of participants. A 2018 study showed that patients improved

further at a 12-month follow-up, with 67% of them in remission. The results of a separate study showed that an astounding 76% of participants did not meet the clinical diagnostic criteria for PTSD a year after the conclusion of treatment. MDMA decreases activity in the amygdala, the part of the brain associated with traumatic memory. Moreover, it reduces fear and defensiveness while increasing empathy, trust and safety, and it acts as a facilitator for the therapeutic process. Unlike antidepressant treatments that usually require daily medications, only two or three active-dose sessions are needed combined with psychotherapy

Likewise, in a clinical trial, psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy substantially reduced depressive symptoms in over 65% of the participants who failed to respond to several drug and talk therapies. Several theories have been put forward to account for the therapeutic effects of psilocybin. The most prominent ones are based on recent brain-imaging data. One way in which this medicine may help with issues like depressive, addictive and obsessive disorders is by temporarily altering brain activity and increasing the connectivity between neural networks, potentially breaking patients out of pathological and rigid patterns of thought and habit.

Mind Medicine Australia is holding a two-day International Summit on Psychedelic Therapies for Mental Illness (18-19 November), which will be facilitated by leading international and local practitioners. This will be preceded by a 2-day workshop program (16-17 November) for those who are eager to gain a detailed understanding of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy for the treatment of mental illness.

More information can be found on the Summit website at <https://summit.mindmedicineaustralia.org> or the Mind Medicine Australia website mindmedicineaustralia.org



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STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP | HADASSAH EIN KEREM

Rebecca Metzger received a student scholarship from the NSW Branch of AJMF

I recently had the privilege of attending Hadassah hospital in Ein Kerem for a 4-week elective placement with the generous assistance of the AJMF. Over the 4 weeks at the Hospital, I had a diverse and rich set of experiences in the General surgery/Trauma team as well as the emergency department.

Israel has always been special to me and during this trip I was hoping to gain an appreciation of how cultural differences influence medical practice and how universal treatment of patients in a complex political landscape was achieved. I also looked forward to a unique opportunity to experience trauma medicine, given my passion for emergency and retrieval medicine. The entire experience exceeded my expectations and Hadassah hospital provided me wonderful opportunities to experience world leading medical technology and procedures that I couldn't experience in Australia. The hands-on approach of the teaching hospital provided wonderful firsthand experience and I was able to gain both practical lessons and cultural experiences in leading areas of medicine.



Left to right: Kristina (UNSW), Dr Waseem (Emergency consultant, Hadassah), Rebecca Metzger

With my Zionist upbringing I had been a tourist in Israel many times, but this journey was truly different and eye opening for me, especially being able to experience this with four non-Jewish university friends, none of whom had visited Israel before. I was able to live amongst Israelis, experiencing the local culture and gaining a

greater understanding of the complexities and beauties of the country and its many diverse people. I was able to work amongst doctors of different faiths, beliefs and languages, sharing different skills and cultures. The sense of unified purpose, the strong bonds and sense of community that was formed, emphasised the incredible cultural melting pot that exists within Israel, in contrast to how it is sometimes portrayed in the media. I was left with a strong sense of hope for the future.

KHAP ARAYN | SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY | כאפ-אראיין

Literally - Khap means "grab or catch" and Arayn means "in or inside".

Khap Arayn is a Yiddish expression suggesting that you should enjoy or indulge while you can. That we should seek pleasures and opportunities today, rather than wait till a future date when we may have aged and would no longer be healthy enough to enjoy life's luxuries. It means don't spare the expense, indulge yourself. Why bother saving or waiting for another day? The good life would endure for eternity. Everyone was cruising till the Corona Cruise came along to beach us. We are no longer able to Khap Arayn.

The main Khap we now enjoy is to Khap a Dreml (to take a nap), which used to be a relaxing afternoon snooze after the shabbat cholent lunch on the weekend, but is now any day of the week as we seniors while away the time in isolation. We were considered the lucky generation post Holocaust. We have benefited from advances in medical technology that extended our healthy life – but no longer. This Yiddish expression which was all too familiar just a few weeks ago has now lost its glitter and relevance. The expression could fall by the wayside and into disuse. How the world has changed.

I was given the opportunity to improve my clinical skills under the guidance of top surgeons and emergency doctors, assisting in surgeries, stapling wounds, assisting with chest drains and improving my bedside ultrasound skills. The Hadassah doctors were very accommodating to non-Hebrew speakers and ran many emergency simulations and teachings in English.

I was fortunate enough to be exposed to a wide variety of surgeries including; embolization of a rectal sheath haemangioma, laparoscopic abdomino-perineal rectum resection, emergency surgery for to fix a mistake during an ablation of a carcinoid tumour of the head of the pancreas, sigmoidectomy, roux-en-y transposition and total gastrectomy for gastric carcinoma, hepatectomy, nephrectomy, colostomy creation, sleeve gastrectomies, lumpectomies and mastectomies.

Whilst at Hadassah I was able to experience surgeries that are seldom performed in Australia. For example, the Per oral endoscopic oesophageal myotomy (POEM) procedure, which is rarely if ever performed in the Australian public hospital system. I was also able to gain a unique experience working alongside highly trained and experienced trauma doctors.

An incident that stood out to me during my rotation was seeing a soldier from the Golani brigade, brought in due to a car ramming incident within the Old City. Whilst this was a difficult time for doctors and visitors, his unit flag and the Israeli flag were proudly placed on the wall next to him and a regular stream of visitors were at his bedside.

I am very appreciative of the AJMF's assistance provided to me in attending Hadassah hospital and would highly recommend the experience to people of all faiths and language backgrounds. The hospital is world leading and committed to teaching and training health professionals from all backgrounds. Jerusalem offers unbelievable cultural and travel experiences. I would welcome the opportunity to speak to any students considering this experience at Hadassah Ein Kerem.

This lucky generation is now anxiously at home, isolated from grandchildren and friends fearful they are the target.

Though they grew up expecting more, their future plans are unclear and clouded, they wonder how long this will last and what the "new normal" will entail. But it is nothing compared to the Holocaust or war.

In April we remembered the Holocaust with Yom Hashoa. It is followed by Yom Hazikaron, Remembrance Day for all those who have fallen in combat for the State of Israel. Then comes Yom Haatzmaut, Independence Day, which erupts like an Isis - the Egyptian goddess of fertility and rebirth. Will we have our post corona Isis? Hopefully this will be soon.

May you avoid the COVID, your coronaries stay clear and you stay out of the Coroner's Court.

A/Prof Morry Brygel

HISTORY OF THE IMA | WORLD FELLOWSHIP

This article is based on a report by the then Victorian President, Joe Reich, which appeared in an AFIMA newsletter circa 1993.

The internal organisation of doctors in Israel came about by the formation of the Kupat Cholim Ha-Clalit (or the General Sick Fund), which was founded in 1911 by a small group of agricultural workers in response to the illnesses endemic and epidemic in the undeveloped country at that time. In the early 1920s the Kupat Cholim was taken over by the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor). Its role was to provide medical assistance to its members, their families and parents, extend financial assistance to its members in times of illness, organize the workers' health matters, and serve as social-medical insurance for the working public in Israel.

From that time the involvement of Jewish doctors in the diaspora to assist was mooted, but it wasn't until 1936 that the First World Congress of Jewish Physicians took place in Tel Aviv. This was organised by physicians from Poland, Lithuania, Rumania and Austria. Tragically, many perished in the Holocaust and it wasn't until 16 years later, in August 1952, the Second World Congress took place in Jerusalem with hundreds of doctors attending from a range of countries, including Australia, South Africa, England, USA, Canada, France, Turkey, Greece, Brazil and Mexico.

The Israel Medical Association (IMA) had by then been formed and an invitation extended to the Jewish doctors of the world to become members. From a practical point of view, it was decided that each country would form its own group and that each individual member of that group would automatically become a non-resident member of the IMA. The declared aim was to bring together Jewish doctors around the world and use their tremendous force and expertise to help support their Jewish medical colleagues in Israel. Thirty-six countries, including a group of Victorian doctors took up this offer and the World Fellowship of the IMA was created.

The Israeli doctors emphasized that they were not seeking charity but would welcome cooperation in dealing with the medical and health problems of Israel. At its inception, every 3 years there has been a World congress with an intermingling of

doctors from the diaspora with their Israeli colleagues. At its peak, the World Fellowship of the IMA enjoyed a full-time secretariat, the ability to fund visits by its executives to many countries and a quarterly journal delivered to every non-resident member. This was funded by contributions on behalf of the members by the individual countries.

At the eleventh congress in 1970 a crisis occurred when the American Chapter withdrew from the World Fellowship and became a separate organisation known as the American Physicians Fellowship for the Israel Medical Association. This left the World Fellowship with insufficient funds to continue and cover its debts and was on the brink of dissolution. The IMA stepped in and settled these debts on the basis that it saw the importance of a continued link with doctors of the diaspora and has continued to be the prime funding source for the activities of the World Fellowship. Times were now tough. The quarterly journal ceased and the World fellowship rented a small office in the IMA building to be run solely by a part-time secretary.

The 3 yearly congresses still continued. The 12th congress coincided with the war in Lebanon with a small overseas attendance. A change in format with multidisciplinary meetings to be held in conjunction with the World Congress was successful in 1985 but in 1991 there were more Israelis in attendance than overseas doctors due to the Intifada.

An important innovation over the last 20 years has been the awarding of scholarships to Israelis wishing to study abroad by the IMA. These have been greatly appreciated in Israel although they are not of a high monetary value. The British Fellowship of the IMA and other world fellowships, ceased paying a subscription to the World Fellowship on behalf of each of its members and instead offered their own scholarships for visiting Israeli doctors. Similarly, the Australian Fellowship of the Israel Medical Association (as it was known before becoming the AJMF) also set up their own scholarship program to support Israeli doctors.

HISTORY OF FEDERAL AJMF

This article is based on the opening address by the Federal President of the AJMF, Ivan Goldberg, following a very successful and well attended Federal Conference at Coffs Harbour in 1994



The AJMF is an umbrella organisation composed of State groups – there are no individual members. The Fellowship of Jewish Doctors of New South Wales started as a loose association of mainly immigrant Polish doctors who had survived the Holocaust. They congregated in Sydney in the late 1940s as the road to medical registration was easiest in that state. They had to return to the University of Sydney for the final three years of medical school. Many had variable English skills and often young families. Their wives found whatever work they could, and the doctors worked part-time at anything and everything – ward orderlies, nurses' assistants and so on. It was a real struggle.

The Fellowship was an association through which they could meet and support one another. When they graduated, the University would not confer its degree on them (they had not been right through the course, had they?!), and the Medical Board

of New South Wales would only register them in small numbers over several years – they had to draw straws to determine, who amongst them could be registered, and who would have to wait another year. More details can be found in Suzanne Rutland's excellent book, *Take Heart Again* – the story of a Fellowship of Jewish Doctors. During the 1950s the Fellowship was structured with a constitution, and continued its assistance of immigrant and refugee doctors, Jewish and non-Jewish. It also began to play a role in the local Jewish community, and in creating dialogue with the emerging Israel Medical Association.

In 1953 three Jewish doctors from Melbourne attended an early meeting of the Israel Medical Association. They returned home enthused, and formed the Australian Fellowship of the Israel Medical Association (AFIMA). Its activities paralleled those of the Sydney group with respect to the local community and to participation in Israeli medical activities. In January 1984 the Victorian committee organised a scientific meeting in Thredbo, and invited the NSW Fellowship to attend.

Over a series of breakfast meetings, the idea of a federal umbrella body was discussed in detail, an infrastructure outlined, and co-operation begun. At the Hamilton Island Conference in August 1985, organised by the NSW Fellowship, a constitution was adopted, with membership consisting of the newly formed Fellowship of Jewish Doctors of South Australia along with AFIMA and the NSW Fellowship.

Fellowships subsequently formed in Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand, and joined. As we start 1994, we also have the Alpha Omega (Jewish Dental) societies of NSW and Victoria as members.

The AJMF sponsors scholarships for Australian and New Zealand medical students to Israeli teaching hospitals for their elective terms, thus building positive bridges between Israeli and future Australian doctors. This program is coordinated through the offices of the Dean at each medical school, and has proved popular and successful. Each scholarship winner reports back not only to the Dean but also to the AJMF. By means of a Maimonides Travelling Scholar Program, the AJMF has brought to Australia eminent Israeli medical teachers and researchers,

who address Jewish and general medical and lay audiences – once again building bridges of respect between Israeli and Australian medical establishments. With the financial support of Bnai Brith and the Israeli Department of Health, the AJMF has organised a super-fellowship for a relatively senior Israeli doctor to study in Australia for an extended period. By taking home skills thus acquired, and with the infrastructure support from within Israel, the Fellow returns home to apply those skills and to teach colleagues and students in Israel, thereby creating a ripple effect for the ongoing benefit of the Israeli community.

The sixth national AJMF conference at Coffs Harbour in 1994 was a resounding success, with 125 families (over 400 participants) from the AJMF and the Alpha Omega Society. The large range of social activities included tennis, golf and four-wheel drives into the rainforest, with the week rounded off by an eagerly awaited and enjoyable debate between the dentists from Sydney and the Doctors on the “The Tooth is the Hole Truth and nothing but the Truth”. We are an organisation growing in size, resources and ambition. We have much good to do here and in Israel. We are at an exciting point in our development.

HISTORY OF THE JEWISH DOCTORS OF MELBOURNE (JDM) WHATSAPP TO TELEGRAM GROUP

In late 2019, Darren Katz started a Whatsapp group to share information about Jewish medical ethics with his colleagues. This group quickly expanded in numbers in the wake of COVID-19.

Many people have asked me what was the catalyst for starting the Jewish Doctors of Melbourne forum. For those of you that were not part of the original Whatsapp group a few months ago, I had wanted to let people know about this amazing Jewish doctor and world-renowned medical ethicist Rabbi and Dr Akiva Tatz. He is currently doing an interactive webinar series on Jewish medical ethics which is exceptionally broad ranging and is accessed by hundreds of doctors from around the world. I



wanted to let people know about a forthcoming seminar series, so I started a Whatsapp group. Once COVID hit, this became the

focus of the forum and membership numbers kept growing until we outgrew the maximum limit on WhatsApp and the group then transitioned to the cloud based Telegram messaging service. Jack Green, as President of the Victorian Branch of the AJMF, has now taken over as administrator-in-chief and is doing a brilliant job – Thanks so much Jack.

A more detailed bio of Rabbi Tatz is available on Wikipedia. He has lectured and written extensively on Jewish Medical Ethics and a chapter on Triage from one of his books was posted to the Telegram group on 3 May. A link to this chapter has also been added to the home page of the AJMF website.

With his permission, Rabbi Tatz has allowed me to share the audios from his webinars, including one he released recently which addresses COVID -19 resource allocation and triage ethical dilemmas. The webinar deals with principles, both non-Jewish and Jewish, and is a case-based discussion. He brings in ethical examples from mass casualty incidents (such as terrorist attacks in Israel) and as well as his work as a medical officer in the South African Army. He quotes up-to-date Journal articles such as NEJM and JAMA - and,



very interestingly, goes through some of the differences/similarities between the Jewish and non-Jewish approaches. He discusses relevant COVID issues as well, including how to ration ventilators. I believe that almost everyone will find this thought provoking, no matter where you sit on the Jewish spectrum. If you want more details about the webinar audios or how to download the Jewish Medical Ethics seminars, email me at dkatz@menshealthmelborne.com.au

For more information about the JDM forum, email vicajmf@gmail.com with your full name, medical speciality and mobile number.

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