



## Presidents Report AJMF (VIC)

Spring has sprung and the blossoms are on the trees as I write this report. Reflecting back over the past six months we have had several successful educational functions both with other organisations and on our own.

At the end of May, together with Hadassah Australia, the Victorian and NSW branches of the AJMF co-hosted functions with Professor Michael Weintraub, Director of Paediatric Haematology-Oncology, Hadassah Hospital, who spoke about the complexity and challenges when treating cases in the region. Professor Weintraub noted that while Israel has one of the most advanced systems in the world for supporting bereaved families who have lost loved ones in war and terror, there has not been the same focus on families who have lost a child to medical illness. In addition to introducing a program to support these families at Hadassah Hospital, he is also involved in lobbying government to change legislation so parents don't continue to fall through loopholes and can receive financial support.

Since July, we have had three clinical dinner meetings. We heard an entertaining and informative update on diabetes management by Dr Leon Chapman. Recently we had an educational meeting presented by Dr Jack Green on plaque psoriasis and by Associate Professor Abe Rubinfeld on the role of Ultibro Breezhaler. Professor Nicholas Keks outlined a rapid summary of current psychopharmacology in the field of antipsychotics and mood stabilizers.

This year we sponsored four Israeli doctors pursuing further clinical and research experience in Melbourne:

- Dr Uri Dior who is at Royal Women's Hospital undertaking advanced laparoscopic surgery
- Dr Elad Dagan at Peter MacCallum working as a surgical head and neck fellow
- Dr Amit Lotan who is participating in neuroscience research at The Florey Institute
- Dr Chanan Shaul, who is at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital undertaking further training in neuro-otology, including ear and skull base surgeries and cochlear implants.

We look forward to hearing about their experiences in subsequent newsletters.

Over the past few years we have hosted a film night for members in conjunction with the Jewish International Film Festival at the Classic Cinema. However this year the High Holy Days fall on Monday and Tuesday so most Sunday nights were not available. We are planning a different social event for 2017 and will let our members know of the details via email in the New Year. If you are not currently on our email distribution list, please update your contact details

when you renew your membership or email [presvic@ajmf.org.au](mailto:presvic@ajmf.org.au).

Planning has commenced for a national conference in Maroochydore, Queensland for the first week of January in 2018 (proposed dates are January 2-7). Further information will be sent out as details are finalised.

Our last function for 2016 will be our AGM on Sunday 20 November at the newly opened, Justin Art House Museum. We hope that many members can attend, both to participate in the AGM as well as view the magnificent art collection presented by Leah and Charles Justin.

At a personal level 2016 has been a big year for my family as my father, Sam Kuttner recently celebrated his 90th birthday and my mother, Jutta Kuttner is looking forward to her 80th birthday party soon. In addition it is my husband, Philip's 60th birthday and my son, Reuben's bar mitzvah on erev Hanukah.

May we all continue to celebrate simchas!

Wishing you and your families Shana Tova.

*Miriam Kuttner*



JUSTIN ART HOUSE MUSEUM

Passionate collectors of art for over 40 years, Charles and Leah Justin have built the Justin Art House Museum as a way of sharing their extensive collection with the public and to provide a distinctive experience for visitors to engage with contemporary art.

Each visit to JAHM will include a tour of the exhibition conducted by Charles and Leah, after which visitors will be invited upstairs to their home for refreshments to enjoy a conversation about the exhibition, art collecting or whatever is of interest.

Visits can only be made by registration through TryBookings via the JAHM website.

[www.jahm.com.au](http://www.jahm.com.au)

Ph: 0403052641

[info@jahm.com.au](mailto:info@jahm.com.au)

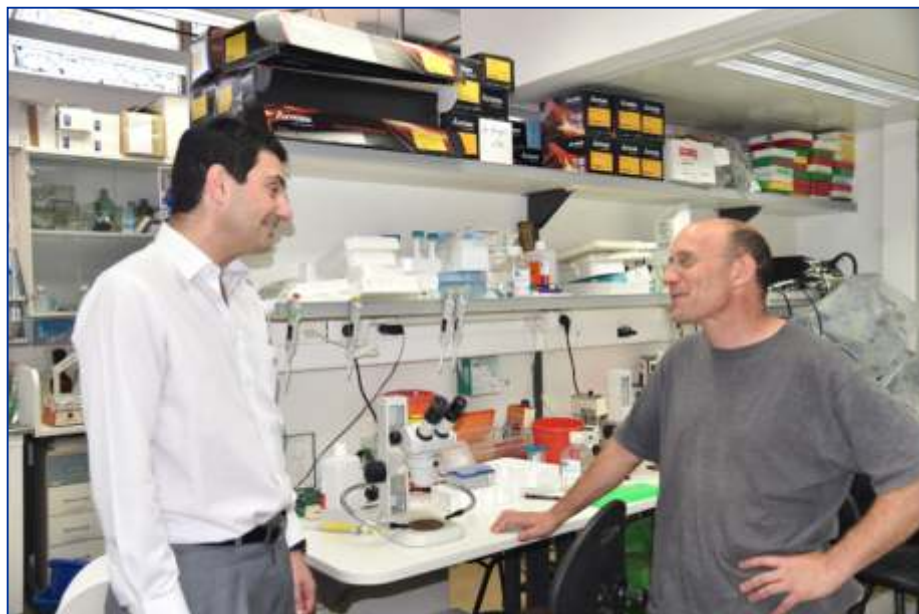


## Baker IDI mission to Israel

A group of researchers from Melbourne's Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute spent a week in Israel on a mission to foster a set of collaborations with Israeli researchers. The attraction was the high quality of Israeli research, and the readiness of investors in Israel to fund biomedical research. The visit was centred around Hadassah Hospital and the adjoining Hebrew University, but collaborations were developed all over the country, from the Haifa Technion to the Negev's Ben Gurion University.

The aim was to find ways of speeding up and strengthening research into heart disease and diabetes. The projects ranged from basic cell biology collaborating with zoologists, and working with engineers to improve echocardiography methods, to combining population-wide data analyses from Israel's Kupat Cholim organisations with Australian and other national data sources to track diabetes, and to transferring health promotion programs developed for Israel's Arab population to Australian Indigenous communities.

Despite decades of research, it is still not known to what extent death of the insulin-producing pancreatic islet cells plays a role in the progressive nature of type 2 diabetes. A Hebrew University team has significantly advanced the ability to determine the tissue origin of the cell-free DNA found floating in plasma after cell



Prof Jonathan Shaw (left) with Prof Yuval Dor at Hebrew University

death. This will enable researchers to track islet cell death. Teaming up researchers at Baker IDI and the Hebrew University (pictured) will allow this technique to be tested on a broad spectrum of patients, at all stages of the disease, and including Indigenous Australians who have some of the most aggressive forms of the disease. The project has the potential to improve our understanding of the pathophysiology of type 2 diabetes, to predict the outlook for individual patients, and to determine if drugs have the potential to alter the natural history of type 2 diabetes. As with

all good collaborations, it brings together groups with complimentary skills – in this case laboratory expertise with clinical and population health research.

The mission will not only lead to important scientific collaborations, but left all of the collaborators with a positive view of the quality of research in both Israel and Australia. Importantly, the Australian group came away with an appreciation of the strengths and diversity of Israel's broader culture.

## Melbourne doctor's Israel mission

A veteran of busy hospital wards, of open wounds and grimacing faces, Dr Michael Harari should have seen it all. But five years after shifting from Melbourne to a hospital in the northern reaches of Israel, he still struggles to process how humans can be so cruel.

At the Royal Children's Hospital he had dealt with kids who had fallen from bikes or had been cut free from mangled car wrecks. But at The Rebecca Sieff Government Hospital, near the Golan Heights, he has shared the pain and sorrow of children, soldiers and families torn apart by the ravages of a brutal civil war just across the border.

"I'm no stranger to severe trauma but if I try to analyse why this has been so much more difficult for me I think it's seeing the



Dr. Michael Harari

human hand and the nature of the injuries, the deliberate inflictions, it's very different from disease or car accidents,"

Dr Harari said. "You can't see the intentional human hand in other forms of trauma. There is something even more grotesque about all of this which disturbs something very profound in me, in all of us, I suspect. "I'm scared to sound that I am lapsing into clichés but it's a very real phenomena, even for an old man like myself."

The 61-year-old left Australia to spend the last decade of his professional career working in his family's ancestral home. It was a tree-change of sorts, a move to a quieter hospital. At least it should have been. Everything changed for this doctor and the medical staff around him on February 16, 2013. As the rebel clashes with government forces intensified, soldiers desperate for medical assistance

did something nobody ever expected. They crossed into Israel, the Jewish heartland and a nation they had otherwise hoped to wipe off the map.

"That Saturday night seven Syrians came across the border and since then it has been a steady trickle, the numbers haven't changed by and large," he said.

The load of soldiers became so great in the weeks and months that followed, that three more hospitals in the country's north agreed to take in the wounded. More than 2000 Syrians have crossed the border in the three years since. Bullet and shrapnel wounds, mangled faces and legs blown apart — there has been no end to the brutality.

"It's not of particular interest where they come from or which side of the slender political divide they might be," Dr Harari said. "It's not just the Hippocratic oath of treating everybody equally — it's just that

in some ways everybody sets aside their politics outside the front door before they walk in. 'It doesn't matter who you are or how you were injured, you are treated equally.'"

From the hospital grounds, Dr Harari said he could often hear the war playing out across the border less than 40km away. The sounds of shelling and gunfire first, then the victims arrive hours later. "The carnage is extraordinary and over shreds of ideological difference," Dr Harari said.

"It's extraordinary how people can deal so badly and cruelly with one another over minor differences."

But he conceded it was the children caught up in the chaos that plagued him the most. The youngest unaccompanied child has been a four-year-old, blown apart after a bomb landed in the back yard as her mother was putting out the washing.

Dr Harari has now accepted he is working on the frontline of a war he will never understand. But he remains hopeful that his role and the role of others like him, will in some way, contribute to a final resolve.

"I'm not naive about how deep-seated the hatreds are in the Middle East," Dr Harari said. "But there are some days, usually after a few beers, when you wonder if you have sown a seed that day and whether one day that might sprout into the next generation or the generation after that. "But the desire for peace can be blinding and it can lead one to hope naively. I don't think I have that naive hope anymore."

*This article appeared in the Herald Sun, 19 August 2016. Story and photo by Aaron Langmaid*

## Queens Birthday Honours

**Victorian psychiatrist, Emeritus Professor Sidney Bloch, became a member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his significant service to medicine in the field of psychiatry, to medical education as an academic and author, and as a mentor and role model.**



Sidney grew up and studied medicine in apartheid South Africa, before spending time in Israel working in the neurology department associated with Tel Aviv University and later coming to Australia as a registrar in the psychiatry department of the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He later spent three years at Stanford University on a Harkness Fellowship after being awarded a PhD at the University of Melbourne.

He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) and was awarded a Citation by the RANZCP for his academic

contribution to psychiatry in 2004. He was chief editor of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry for 13 years, the longest tenure in the history of the Journal; and prior to that, Associate Editor of the British Journal of Psychiatry for 10 years.

He has published 14 books, as well as over 200 articles and chapters. His publication *Russia's Political Hospitals* (1977) was the first account of the misuse of psychiatry to suppress dissent in the Soviet Union. The book was awarded the prestigious Guttmacher prize of the American Psychiatric Association. *Understanding Troubled Minds*, a book written for the general public and now in its third edition, was widely distributed to GPs around the country by the RACGP and won the SANE Book of the year in 2012, while his work *An Anthology of Psychiatric Ethics* received a commendation from the British Medical Association.

Sidney has overseen four large scale randomized controlled trials looking at family grief in the wake of death from cancer, facing the loss of a parent from cancer and the familial impacts of breast and prostate cancer.

The ABC television documentary "Wong Side of the Bus" followed his return to Cape Town for his 40 year medical school reunion and his quest to reconcile his feelings of guilt for being a by-stander rather than an activist in the face of racism, discrimination and inequity. Sidney Bloch is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne and Honorary Senior Psychiatrist at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne. He is a panelist on the Victorian Mental Health Tribunal and is still involved in teaching psychiatric trainees. In his spare time, Sidney is actively involved in singing as part of a choir, bush walking and cycling.





## M D Silberberg Study Grant | 2016 Recipient

*The remaining funds from a 1000 Pound endowment set up by the Australian Fellowship of the Israeli Medical Association, in memory of its first president, have been converted to two \$5,000 study grants for cardiology trainees, administered by the RACP.*

*The 2016 grant was awarded to Manaswi Bhupesh Pathik.*

I would like to thank the Australian Jewish Medical Federation for awarding the M D Silberberg Study Grant to allow me to present the findings of my research at the Heart Rhythm Society Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco. This conference is the largest international cardiac electrophysiology meeting that showcases the latest advances in our field.

I am currently a Fellow in Cardiac Electrophysiology and Pacing undertaking a PhD at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the University of Melbourne under the supervision of Professor Kalman. My PhD is focused on improving our understanding of the mechanisms of the common atrial arrhythmias of atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter. With the aid of the M D Silberberg Study Grant, I was fortunate to be able to

attend the Heart Rhythm Society Annual Scientific Meeting to present two oral abstracts and a poster arising from work carried out during my PhD.

The findings of my research determining the mechanisms of persistent atrial fibrillation were presented at this meeting. It is envisaged that with a better understanding of arrhythmia mechanism, this will allow us to develop better treatments which are currently largely ineffective in persistent atrial fibrillation.

In this study, we used novel three-dimensional mapping software developed at the Royal Melbourne Hospital to display activation patterns in persistent atrial fibrillation in 3D. Prior research has only used two-dimensional technology. The findings of this study has substantially improved our understanding of the mechanisms of

persistent atrial fibrillation as well as highlighting limitations in catheter design which will be the subject of ongoing research within the Department.

In addition, the conference provided an opportunity to listen to and interact with eminent international speakers in the field who pass on their experiences and knowledge which will help improve both my clinical and procedural management of patients with arrhythmias.

Once again, I would like to thank the Australian Jewish Medical Federation and I am extremely grateful for your support to attend this conference.

*Bhupesh Pathik*

*Further information about the Grant, including the closing date for applications for 2017, can be obtained from the RACP website.*



*Dr Baruch Berzon and Talia Gordon.*

## Student Elective | Shaare Zedek

*Talia Gordon received a Student Scholarship through the VIC branch of AJMF*

I was fortunate enough to undertake an elective in the Shaare Zedek emergency and trauma unit in Jerusalem with Dr Avi Alpert and Dr Baruch Berzon. I attended for 6 weeks between June and July 2016 during my gap year before my final year of medical studies at Monash University. I chose to do this optional elective with the aim of understanding the differences and discrepancies in health care between Israel and Australia, to experience living in Israel and whether it is possible as a long term option and to gain further experience in the field of emergency medicine.

Many different aspects of my elective contributed to it being a successful learning experience both medically and socially. My experience ranged from

interviewing and examining fast track patients to fracture reductions, assisting in CPR and being present in terror-related trauma cases. I was also present for the opening of the stroke unit in the emergency department and attended part of the training day. I was witness to some of the first stroke codes and was able to understand how these situations are systematically handled in a tertiary hospital.

While the conditions can be somewhat more stressful in Israel in comparison to America or Australia due to the limited number of beds and the Israeli attitude toward privacy, Dr Alpert and Dr Berzon both do a fantastic job at remaining compassionate and positive. Dr Alpert is the head of the emergency department and has a wealth of knowledge which he is always willing to share while at the same time allowing students to be independent and learn from practical experience. Dr Berzon arrived in the middle of my placement from the US after completing his training as an emergency physician but even while

settling in he always had a spare moment to help out students and explain cases. Additionally I spent a day with Dr Debra West, the head of surgical emergency at Ichilov hospital who has spearheaded the new emergency physician training syllabus in Israel. All three were fantastic role models as doctors as well as olim (immigrants) who have successfully integrated into the medical field in Israel.

Shaare Zedek is a wonderful hospital providing care to patients of range of different ages, nationalities and religions. It provides a comfortable space to be an observant Jew while simultaneously practicing medicine. Many of the medical staff are originally from areas outside of Israel and have a very supportive environment for those immigrating and wanting to practice in Israel. I look forward to hopefully moving and practising in Israel in the future.

I would like to thank the AJMF for its kind donation to help fund an extremely memorable and formative experience in my medical career.

*Talia Gordon*

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Wishing you a Shana Tova U'metuka.



Eric Lowenstein | CEO

## MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY

### Core policy checklist

- ✓ Satisfies AHPRA product standards
- ✓ Private practice
- ✓ Public patients
- ✓ Participates in Run-Off Cover Scheme
- ✓ Coronials, complaints & investigations
- ✓ Medicare audits
- ✓ Legal fees, costs and expenses
- ✓ Defamation
- ✓ Administrative staff cover
- ✓ Employment related disputes
- ✓ Communicable diseases
- ✓ Emergency legal costs



*Go your way.*

## IMA World Fellowship Conference, May 2016

*Dr Railea Abrams and AJMF Past President, A/Prof Maurice Brygel attended the IMA conference in Haifa earlier this year. The conference program and copies of presentations are available on the IMA website, [www.ima.org.il](http://www.ima.org.il)*

The stark contrast between the challenges we face in Australia compared to those of our colleagues in Israel was highlighted for me during a very memorable tour of Rambam Hospital and in scientific presentations that covered Medical Ethics and Medicine in Times of Conflict.

On the first day of the IMA conference, Dr Tami Karni spoke on the topic Dilemmas of the Physician when Treating Hunger Strikers and the Ethical Position of the IMA. Dr Karni, who is Chair of the IMA Ethics committee, provided a historical overview of hunger strikes and then spoke about the response of the IMA to the movement of prisoners on hunger strike from Israeli jails to public hospitals and Israeli Government legislation that would enable authorities to force feed hunger strikers.

Dr Karni spoke about the outcomes from an IMA organised "Consensus Conference", which brought together the various parties responsible for the medical treatment of prisoners and detainees, including the CMO of the Israeli Prison Service, representatives from Hospitals, the Ministry of Health and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

While the legislation to enable authorities to force feed hunger strikers was passed, this did not obligate physicians to treat the patient without consent.

Dr Karni and other professionals within the IMA established a 24 hour emergency hotline to provide support and assistance to physicians. At the completion of her presentation, Dr Karni shared a thank you letter written to medical staff at Ichlov Hospital, from a group of detainees who had been on hunger strike for 63 days. The authors commended their "interest and concern for our situation and health"...noting that "the staff were professional, independent and clearly shared the value of international human rights":

Later that day, Dr Gilbert Sebbag, spoke about managing a 1063 bed Academic Level 1 trauma centre in southern Israel, during war and under missile attack. As Director of Emergency and Contingency Situations at Soroka University Medical Centre at Ben Gurion University, Dr



*Display Operating Theatre and Wards, Rambam hospital carpark*

Sebbag detailed the challenges of maintaining quality of care under fire.

During Operation Protective Edge, 8 units and 250 patients needed to be moved from non-protected structures in less than 6 hours, with logistical help from IDF soldiers. Designated protected "shelter areas" were identified and used during rocket bombing alerts. The hospital continued to operate at about 85% capacity, despite staff, including 24 physicians and 5 male nurses, being called up for military reserve duty. Additional support to deal with military and civilian casualties was provided by volunteers including trauma surgeons and anaesthesiologists who came back from retirement or teaching positions as well as volunteers from other Israeli hospitals and from abroad.

Over the 50 days of the military operation, there was some decrease in ER attendance and fewer elective procedures, but the hospital still had to care for 1400 newborn babies.

On Friday, we were given a tour of Rambam Hospital, with its advanced fortified hospital that allows essential services to be moved to the underground car park during times of chemical or biological warfare, missile or rocket attack. The three level underground car park usually provides parking for over 1000 cars, but electrical services, power outlets, heating and cooling systems have been incorporated into the walls and floors so that the car park can be transformed within 72 hours into a 2,000-bed hospital.

*Railea Abrams*

## A Story of Two Victims, on Erev Yom Hashoah

As part of the IMA conference, Dr Batsheva Porat Katz gave her address at The Ghetto Fighter's Kibbutz, to a large audience of overseas guests. Her movie presentation, the guided tour of the museum and the cantorial rendition by an Orthopaedic surgeon were an emotional, memorable holocaust eve experience.

Batsheva is a psychogeriatric physician at the Ministry of Health in Tel Aviv. She addressed the topic of Hoarding in Holocaust Survivors, showing a comprehensive study on film of one such survivor and her family.

It appeared that Batsheva had been to Melbourne for 4 months as a guest of our Australian Fellowship of the Israel Medical association in 1995 and we soon

recalled that Batsheva had spent a Shabbat meal at our home! When in Australia, she had been looked after, together with her 3 children, by our AJMF committee and specifically Dr Giselle Solinsky. Giselle arranged her accommodation and time here attending the Psychiatric Department at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. Batsheva attributes this visit to her becoming one of the first to introduce the now very extensive field of Psychogeriatrics to Israel.

It was a thrill to learn so long afterwards that the AJMF had been able to contribute to the care of the elderly survivors in this then new field in Israel.

As Melbourne is home to many "survivors" it also has a holocaust



*Prof Maurice Brygel presented a personal account of his experience as a medical volunteer during the 6 day war.*

museum. This led me to recall a holocaust experience. It involved strangely the only obvious antisemitism I





Railea, Batsheva and Maurice at The Ghetto Fighter's Museum

had ever personally encountered. It was years ago as I opened my mailbox that I found a sheet of paper with a swastika imprinted. Then the following day, one was painted on my outside office wall. I had it scrubbed out and wondered what action to take. Maybe it was a patient? I did recall an elderly lady whom I had found difficult to placate.

Like a sleuth I sought out her records and address then investigated. On a cold stormy winters evening I knocked on her housing commission flat. The door

opened slowly and there was my frail patient. She readily admitted her actions. She even appeared pleased to see me. I realized as we talked that her behaviour was a result of being a holocaust survivor. She had developed an antipathy to doctors. I dared not question why. The harassment ceased. I was no Psycho-geriatrician, but Batsheva and I had both encountered victims.

Maurice Brygel

## Pediatric Student Elective | Rambam Hospital

Supported generously by the Australian Jewish Medical Federation, I had the opportunity to undertake an elective placement in Israel in January to February 2016. As a final year medical student at the University of Sydney I organised this placement, through the Technion Society of Australia, at the Rambam Hospital in the northern port city of Haifa. The Rambam Hospital, located in the tranquil seaside suburb of Bat Galim, is a public tertiary referral

examination of inpatients. In fact, by the end of my placement, I had picked up many pertinent Hebrew terms and phrases, including the words for common presenting complaints such as fever and pain.

Working with undifferentiated patients was helpful in improving my diagnostic knowledge and reasoning, while observing senior paediatricians formulate management plans illustrated to me the importance of thoroughness in dealing



with children who are particularly vulnerable. I now feel more confident in approaching paediatric patients presenting with common complaints including fever of unknown origin, respiratory distress, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, new-onset rash and new-onset limp. Moreover Israel has a high prevalence of rare genetic disorders, seldom seen in Australia,

centre that houses all specialties and serves a wider catchment area of some 2 million people in northern Israel. The patient demographic is therefore large and varied.

My elective placement was in the department of General Paediatrics, where I was welcomed as a student member and joined the team in daily activities including ward rounds, patient consults, interdisciplinary meetings and journal clubs. With my very limited knowledge of the major local languages Hebrew and Arabic (and even Russian to some extent), and given that the majority of patients were not able to converse in English, I was reliant on the local doctors and students when clinically assessing patients. The local doctors and students however were generally ready to help translate the patient encounter, and under their guidance I was able to contribute to history-taking and physical

and this is particularly evident in Paediatrics. For the first time in my medical education, I witnessed cases of Tay Sachs Disease and Fanconi Anaemia in Israel.

Israel is home to an exquisitely diverse population in terms of language, ethnicity, cultural tradition and religious belief. In the hospital this diversity presented some interesting issues, for example in translating information between languages and in navigating cultural/religious sensibilities with regard to management decisions.

For many years, and even to this day, parts of Israel have been rent by tension and conflict arising from the abovementioned differences amongst the population. While I was in Israel in early 2016, this tension often spilled over into incidents of frank violence in restive areas such as Jerusalem and regions of the West Bank. Haifa fortunately is one of

Wiraaj Agnihotri received a Student Scholarship through the NSW branch of AJMF

the more tolerant Israeli cities where different communities coexist quite peacefully. A resonant observation I took away from my time at Rambam Hospital, where I saw great human diversity amongst both patients and practitioners, is that the healthcare system can serve as a powerful sanctuary of humanity where medicine can play an important role in bringing people closer and bridging deep-rooted divisions. Outside the hospital, I relished every chance to explore this unique country. Amongst the places I visited were the vibrant Tel Aviv, historic Jerusalem, charming Bethlehem, serene Akko and rugged Golan Heights. Though I feel my stay in Israel was much too short, I now have a first-hand appreciation of the richness of diversity of this fascinating country, and I would be eager to visit again in future should the opportunity arise.

Wiraaj Agnihotri

### Jewish Genetic Screening and Genetic Counselling Contact Information

#### VICTORIA

Kate Scarff Tel: (03) 8341 6394 - Victorian Clinical Genetics Services  
www.taysachs.net  
email: katrina.scarff@vcgs.org.au  
Screening tests can be ordered through Australian Clinical Labs.  
GPs can contact Kate for further information or to discuss referring patients to VCGS for genetic counselling around testing.

#### NSW

Debbie Redelman Tel (02) 9328 6077 - Wolper Hospital  
www.wolper.com.au  
Wolper Hospital runs testing clinics by appointment on the first Sunday of each month or at pre-arranged times. Contact Debbie for further information about the Community or High School Genetics Program.

## Nomi Blum

### Pictures Tell Patients' Stories

#### *The Daily Advertiser*

WHAT began as a hobby between shifts at a Sydney Hospital has become a campaign to humanise hospital patients for Nomi Blum. The junior doctor at Wagga hospital has spent hours photographing and interviewing patients that come through its doors. She now hopes the collection of 30 photos, aptly called Faces of Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital, can be exhibited. Photographing patients first started in between rounds at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. "Whenever I had the chance I would sit with patients and have a chat," Dr Blum said. "It was quite remarkable hearing what people had to share when you gave them the time."

Sometimes the focus is on their lives and love lost, other times it centres on their illness and why they are in hospital. "A man who has been in



Picture: Nomi Blum



Kaye Stanton and family: "I hope she grows up happy, that she has a good life with no health problems. I hope she achieves everything she wants in the future."

hospital for quite some time, I interviewed him with his wife," Dr Blum said. "It turned out he had been at the local supermarket, he collapsed in the supermarket, but one of our doctors was nearby and she saved his life."

Dr Blum said documenting people's stories gave her the chance to tell the stories of very sick people who may feel defined by their illnesses and hospital stays.

"I think people in hospitals are in a very vulnerable position," she said. "They're physically vulnerable, they're emotionally vulnerable, and so things come out that wouldn't necessarily in another context."

*Reprinted from an article by Hannah Paine, The Daily Advertiser, 20 June 2016 "Faces of Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital"*

*Photos by Nomi Blum*

### SAVE THE DATE

Further information about upcoming events and conferences are posted on our website [www.ajmf.org.au](http://www.ajmf.org.au)

#### **VIC SUN 20 NOV 2016**

AGM

Justin Art House Museum

RSVP (Essential) to

[presvic@ajmf.org.au](mailto:presvic@ajmf.org.au)

#### **ISRAEL 4-6 JANUARY 2017**

2017 Symposium: Innovations in

Gastroenterology

Hilton Hotel, Tel Aviv

[www.comtecmed.com/gastro/2017](http://www.comtecmed.com/gastro/2017)

#### **ISRAEL 21-23 MAY 2017**

International Conference on Trauma &

Mental Health

Advances in Diagnosis & Management

Dan Jerusalem Hotel

[www.traumaandmentalhealthconference.org](http://www.traumaandmentalhealthconference.org)

## AJMFNEWS



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