

AJMF NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH MEDICAL FEDERATION | www.ajmf.org.au | SPRING 2015

AJMF (Vic)

I am writing this President's Report from Barcelona where we have been to visit the oldest synagogue in Europe. The foundations of the synagogue can be traced back 18 centuries. AJMF is not quite that old. Our history only extends back some 60 years, but we have discovered some interesting information about the first president of the Australian Fellowship of the Israeli Medical Association, **Dr Montefiore David Silberberg**, and have included an article about him in this newsletter.

In August, we were very pleased to host **Professor Ingrid Scheffer AO** and **Professor Sam Berkovic AC**, who shared with us some of their research projects which led to them jointly being awarded the Prime Minister Prize for Science in 2014. In particular, their work on tracing families with strong histories of epilepsy, which has led to the discovery of the genetic basis of many forms of epilepsy. As well as their Australian research they have also been involved in collaborative research with Tel Aviv University, addressing genetic inbreeding in Arab villages.

We are planning to have our AGM on Sunday evening, 29th November. Further details will be posted to our website and emailed to our database closer to the date.

For 2016 we are planning a weekend mini conference at the Novotel Geelong from 26 - 28 February. This is a fully kosher weekend at a great venue close to Melbourne and is a wonderful opportunity to catch up



Sam Berkovic and Ingrid Scheffer with Miriam Kuttner

with colleagues in a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere. The Israel Medical Association and Hadassah Hospital are hosting conferences in Israel in May 2016. Information about upcoming conferences which may be of interest are listed on our website.

We are continuing to sponsor Israeli doctors who chose to further their studies in Australia. Currently, **Dr Maya Korem** has received a scholarship and we have two medical students, **Lee-att Green** and **Talia Gordon** who are about to travel to Israel for their medical student electives. We wish them all success and great learning in their endeavours.

Adios from Barcelona and hasta luego.

Dr Miriam Kuttner



AUSTRALIAN JEWISH
MEDICAL FEDERATION

MINI CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 2016

Friday 26 to Sunday 28
Novotel Geelong, on the waterfront

AJMF (NSW)

AJMF NSW has had two talks this year. In June we had a talk organised by Magen David Adom (MDA) about Australian doctors being trained by MDA to become first responders in case of mass casualty crisis when MDA decides to offer assistance. This may occur either in Israel or other countries as needed. A number of the doctors indicated their willingness to go to Israel to attend a special MDA training course. Anyone interested in finding out more about it can contact **Ralene Reuveny** at gm@magendavidadom.org.au

On 11th October, AJMF NSW recently held a talk on Halachic Aspects of Fertility Treatments. Guest speakers were **Dr Joel Bernstein**, gynaecologist and fertility specialist and **Rabbi Yehoram Ulman**, Senior Rabbi of the Sydney Beth Din. Dr Bernstein summarised various aspects of fertility treatments and Rabbi Ulman then commented on the halachic approach to issues like collection of egg and sperm samples and about the need for *Mashgichim* or trained Jewish supervisors to be present when samples were being processed in the laboratory to ensure the correct sample is returned to the patient. It was pleasing to see how closely the medical, laboratory and Rabbinical staff cooperate to ensure that all the fertility treatments are done in accordance with Jewish law.



L to R: Dr Joel Bernstein, Dr Danny Chalmers (AJMF committee member) and Rabbi Yehoram Ulman

M. D. SILBERBERG | Memorial Lectureship



Earlier this year, the AJMF was contacted by The Royal Australasian College of Physicians regarding the M D Silberberg Memorial Lectureship, which was established in 1960 through an endowment from the Australian Fellowship of the Israeli Medical Association.

The original endowment was for 1000 Pounds, to be used to support scientific lectures, with a bias to cardiology. The terms of the endowment specified that lecturers were to be appointed from the younger age group, and revenue from the foundation has been used to support 15 professionals through the payment of honorariums and related expenses.

The College has contacted the AJMF as there are insufficient funds for the lectureship to continue in perpetuity and have sought advice as to how the remaining funds should be used. The committee determined that the scholarship be used to support speakers in the field of cardiology or to assist a cardiology trainee pursue further research or study.

With thanks to **Sue Silberberg** and **Natasha Silberberg** for providing additional information and photographs.

The following is an excerpt from a speech read out at the presentation of the first MD Silberberg Memorial Prize in 1961 (with some additional information added in brackets)

Among Australia's distinguished physicians, none ranks higher than that of Montefiore David Silberberg, who during his lifetime was the country's leading cardiologist. When the Australian Fellowship of the Israeli Medical Association was founded in 1954, the Association felt honoured when Dr Silberberg accepted the position of Honorary President.

He was born in Australia in 1882 and graduated from the University of Melbourne (in 1906). On his return to Melbourne (after studying cardiology in London from 1910 to 1912), he became the first Australian physician to practice cardiology as a specialty and introduced clinical electrocardiography into that country.

Returning to civilian practice

(after serving with the 14 Australian General Hospital in Egypt), he rapidly established himself as Australia's leading consultant cardiologist. He became a senior lecturer in Medicine at the University of Melbourne and was for a time honorary physician at three teaching hospitals. He had a deep understanding of patients as human beings with personal problems. His own integrity and intellectual honesty have inspired the many generations of students and post-graduates who attended his clinics. When the Royal Australasian College of Physicians was established, he was made a Foundation Fellow.

Apart from the time he gave to teaching and the conduct of a large private practice, he was able to devote himself to Jewish activities. He was the Foundation President of the Liberal Synagogue in Melbourne, which position he held for 16 years. He was one of the original members

of the Australian Friends of Hebrew University. He is also remembered by many European medical colleagues whom he assisted to rebuild their professional lives in Australia. His visit to Israel in 1952, for which he prepared himself by re-reading a large part of the bible, gave him great pleasure and he often recalled the exciting achievements he noticed in Israel. His death in 1959 was felt as a personal loss by countless friends and patients.

For these many reasons the Australian Fellowship feels privileged at being able to honour the memory of its most distinguished member by the award of this prize. By so doing it hopes to continue the inspiration of such an outstanding man, a beloved physician, teacher and friend of Israel.

In its history of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, Melbourne University credits Dr Silberberg with laying the foundations for the Alfred Hospital's leading role in cardiology in the 1920-30s. After completing his training in Melbourne, Dr Silberberg went to London where he was clinical assistant to Sir James Mackenzie and was associated with Sir Thomas Lewis who did ground-breaking work on digitalis and electrocardiography.

When he returned to Melbourne, Silberberg brought with him the first electrocardiograph used in medical practice in Australia.

The patient sits with both arms and left leg in separate buckets of saline solution, which act as electrodes to conduct the electrical current from the heart and skin's surface.

Long wire filaments are acted upon by powerful electromagnets, which causes sideways displacement of the filament in proportion to the current carried due to the electromagnetic field. The movement in the filament was heavily magnified and projected through a thin slot onto a moving photographic plate.



ECG in 1912

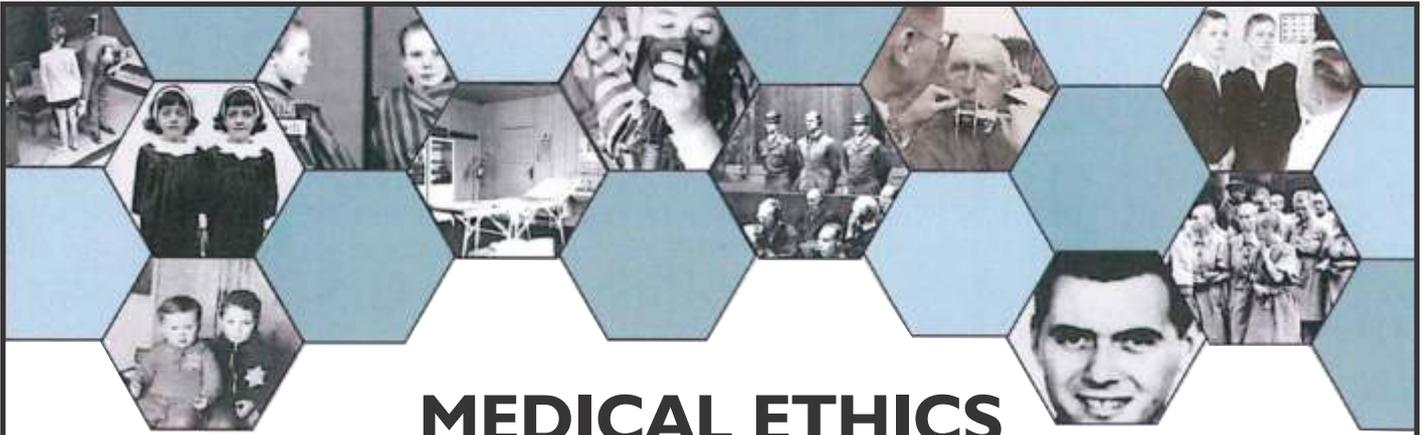


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CONTRIBUTORS:

- Professor Kerryn Phelps AM
- Professor Sidney Bloch
- Dr Bruce Boman
- Professr Angus Dawson
- Professor Garry Walter AM
- Dr Ross Halpin
- Associate Professor Robert Kaplan
- Professor Conrad Kwiet
- Dr Hans Pols
- Associate Professor Michael Robertson
- Professor Colin Tatz AO

TOPICS:

- Panel Discussion: The relationship between the profession and the State
- Euthanasia in its contemporary context
- Medical ethics - Nazi doctors and Jewish doctors
- Evolution of medical codes of ethics
Contemporary Eugenics
- Examination of the medical profession and genocide
- Medical ethics and extreme adversity
- Historical overview of medicine under Nazism

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For information contact Ilana McCorquodale at imccorquodale@sjm.com.au

AJMF supports Israeli Fellowship at Alfred Hospital | Maya Korem

My name is **Maya Korem** and I had moved to Melbourne from Israel with my partner and our three kids for a clinical fellowship under the guidance of **Dr. Orla Morrissey**, the head of the immunocompromised Host Infectious Diseases Consult Service in the Alfred Hospital. I'm an Infectious Diseases physician for the last 5 years, and I work at Hadassah Hebrew University Hospital in Jerusalem at the Infectious Diseases Department. My main interest is fungal infections in immunocompromised hosts such as patients with haematological malignancies (for example leukemia), and bone marrow transplanted patients, who have impaired immune function and therefore a tendency for severe infections.

The Alfred Hospital immuno-compromised Host Infectious Diseases Consult Service provides comprehensive care for patients with infectious diseases complications post bone marrow or solid organ transplant, undergoing chemotherapy for haematological or solid organ malignancy, and undergoing intensive immuno-suppression for connective tissue disorders or inflammatory bowel disease. It is the only such service in Australasia, providing dedicated clinical support to such a broad range of immuno-compromised patients. The service provides expert clinical care, develops guidelines for the prevention and treatment of infections in these vulnerable patient groups and has an active research program facilitating clinical and translational research designed to improve outcomes for these patient groups. It provides a unique training opportunity for Australian and International Infectious Diseases trainees and fellows as myself.

During my fellowship I attend clinical rounds and out-patient clinics, the clinical care and research meetings of the Malignant Haematology and Bone Marrow Transplant Service and the Lung Transplant Service, as well as Microbiology Rounds. In addition I conduct a clinical research that is looking at a new diagnostic assay based on the lateral flow technique, for invasive aspergillosis, a common and life threatening fungal infection in



immuno-compromised patients. This study is a prospective multi-centre study that involves hospitals in Melbourne and Sydney.

My goal is to learn a number of skills as the multidisciplinary approach to complex immunocompromised patients, transplant immunology and the development of prophylactic strategies and other clinical guidelines. This will allow me on my return next year to Israel to successfully manage immuno-compromised patients. In addition, I will be able to develop such a service at Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Centre. This will benefit immunocompromised patients at Hadassah, and will also allow me to develop a similar training program at Hadassah to benefit future Israeli

medical trainees.

Through my research I am learning new laboratory skills which I can then implement in the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory at Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Centre, on my return to Israel. This will allow us (in Israel) to diagnose or rule out invasive aspergillosis with greater certainty and earlier which in turn will allow for the better targeting of antifungal therapy to those who need it and prevent unnecessary antifungal therapy and drug toxicity in those without invasive aspergillosis. In turn, this will improve the survival of immunocompromised patients.

The research knowledge gained in Australia and the networking that resulted from such a fellowship will allow me to continue to develop new research projects and continue to collaborate with Dr. Morrissey's group and to expand our collaborative research into other areas such as new antifungal drug targets.

Moving here was an immense challenge for me and my family in many aspects. It was heartening to find a warm and supportive Jewish community which I'm privileged to be a part of while staying here. I'm looking forward to coming back to Israel, with more experience and expertise which will hopefully benefit patients in Hadassah and Jerusalem.

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References:

1. Meikle PJ, et al. JAMA, 1999; 281: 249-254. 2. Grabowski GA, J Pediatric, 2004; 144: S15-S19.

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Shire
To be as brave as the people we help

This story is based on an article that previously appeared in the King David School Inspirations magazine

A Tale of Four Generations

With **Simone Sandler's** completion of her medical degree from Monash University, the **Taft Family** have welcomed a 4th generation doctor to their family. The story begins with Simone's great-grandmother, **Ettel Zeigermacher**, who graduated from medical school in Geneva in 1914.

Ettel was an infectious diseases specialist in the Russian Army during World War 1, and her son, Simone's grandfather, **Eric Taft AM** is a 92 year old practising dermatologist. All of Eric's four children are doctors or healthcare professionals; **Jonathan**, is an Endocrinologist, **Judi** is a physiotherapist practising part-time at Epworth Eastern Hospital, **Deborah** is a general practitioner working in Wheeler's Hill and Simone's mother, **Natalie**, is also a GP.

Ettel's story is fascinating and illustrates the determination of a woman wanting a career during an era that did not support this. Medicine, as a career contributing to human society and historically being transportable with migration, was always an attractive career for minorities, including Jews.

Ettel was born in 1887 in Russia (actually, in the Ukraine, when it was part of the Russian Federation). She studied medicine by moving to Geneva where she would study in French and attend French language classes. After passing her examinations in Geneva in 1913, Ettel was required to undertake further examinations in St Petersburg in Russian language to requalify, which she did in 1914.

After some time in a Russian hospital, she was called up for military service and was sent to the Eastern Front in World War 1 to manage an Infectious Diseases hospital. After the Russian Revolution, she spent time in Industrial Medicine for a few years, before marrying Simone's great grandfather, **Baruch Tafipolsky** (later changed to Boris Taft), in Constantinople and then migrating to Australia in 1922. Ettel was not qualified to practice in



Eric Taft with daughter Natalie and grand-daughter Simone Sandler

Australia - she would have had to attend 5 additional years of medical school in English.

Her son, Eric, studied medicine at Melbourne University after attending the "big 3 schools" - Ripponlea State, Caulfield North Central and Melbourne High. He was accelerated through High school matriculation and Medical School to fill the workforce which was the protocol at the time during World War 1. Eric graduated from Medical School in 1945, and then was the medical officer at the late lamented Prince Henry Hospital.

After the birth of his 4 children, Eric began to specialise in dermatology and contributed to the founding of the College of Dermatology. He received an AM in 1980 for service to medicine particularly in the field of dermatology. He has practised (and continues to practise) in dermatology in East Melbourne.

Eric's daughter, Natalie, studied

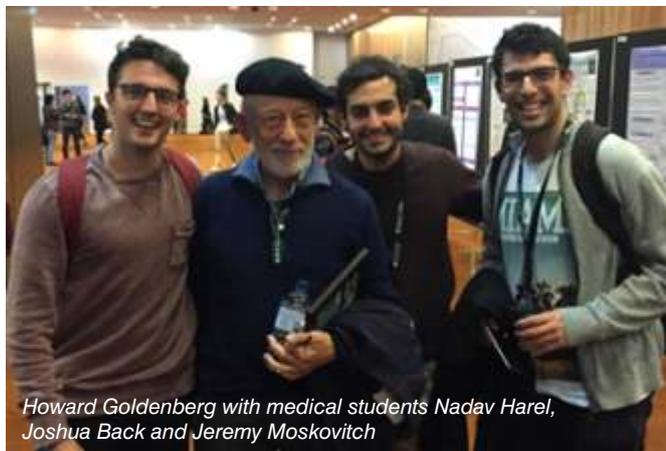
Medicine at Monash University, graduating in 1985 and went on to complete her residency at The Alfred Hospital. She subsequently was involved in teaching medical students in the Department of Community Medicine before joining her current practice in Glen Iris in 1992.

Simone completed VCE at The King David School in 2007 and after spending a year on a "shnat" program with Netzer in Israel, commenced her studies in Medicine at Monash University. She completed her final year elective in Aboriginal Health in Alice Springs and is undertaking her internship at Monash Health Network. She has accepted a junior resident job in Alice Springs for the first six months of 2016 in paediatrics and emergency medicine. In July 2016, she will be undertaking a 12 month position as a research associate for the Paul Famer Program in Global Surgery and Social Change at Harvard Medical School.

Faith In Medicine

at Student Conference

In June, Dr Howard Goldenberg was a guest speaker on a panel discussion at The University of Melbourne's MD Student Conference, one of the largest student conferences worldwide. The session was entitled "Faith in Medicine", which explored how



Howard Goldenberg with medical students Nadav Harel, Joshua Back and Jeremy Moskovitch

religion influences a doctor's professional practice and how religious and cultural diversity can be celebrated in medicine. Discussions at the session examined the decision making process around end of life issues, both from the patient and doctor's perspective, and how healthcare professionals from different faiths can successfully balance their professional duties with their own religious beliefs.

We asked Howard about including a photo from the conference and for his thoughts and observations from the conference. Here is his reply...

“ Yes by all means use my face. It is a remarkably beautiful face - my mum told me so repeatedly.

I found myself in a lecture room crammed to overflowing with medical students who were believers; the odd Jewish face was familiar, the numerous Chinese faces not unexpected. The great majority were Christians - none of whom revealed themselves (in the discussions, which were the best part of the event) to be blind bible bashers.

The ideas and philosophies taught at medical school, more clearly originating in Athens than Jerusalem, seem to have met, fertilised and informed the faith.

I thought of Maimonides ”

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SAVE THE DATE

Further information about upcoming events and conferences will be posted on our website www.ajmf.org.au when available.

NSW - SUN 15 NOV 2015
Medical Ethics Seminar
 Details page 4

VIC - SUN 29 NOV 2015
AGM

VIC - 26 to 28 FEB 2016
AJMF Mini Conference
Geelong
 Forms can be downloaded from website

ISRAEL 4 - 8 MAY 2016
IMA Conference
www.ima.org.il

ISRAEL 7 - 9 MAY 2016
International Conference on Trauma & Mental Health
www.traumaandmentalhealthconference.org

AJMF NEWS



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