



# AJMF NEWS

The Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Medical Federation

www.ajmf.org.au | Autumn 2017

## Presidents Report

### AJMF (VIC)

We held our AGM in November at the Justin Art House Museum and we are very grateful to our generous hosts, Charles and Leah Justin who shared with us their passion for architecture and contemporary art. I had received an email from the American chapter of the Israeli Medical Association. They were holding their AGM and Annual Ball at the Beverly Hills Hilton with a special guest appearance of Diana Ross. We can't quite compete with that! "We don't receive wisdom, we must

discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us". Thanks to Marcel Proust for this pithy contribution to my president's report. We have had a relatively quiet start for AJMF in 2017. Although we tried to organize an Urban Quest function for our members at the end of April, we had to cancel due to lack of registrations. On reflection this event was not scheduled at a good time so soon after Pesach, and we did not advertise early enough, nor explain enough about what is involved. So some wisdom gained and we will try to reschedule the event for later in the year. Hopefully members will take up this opportunity to participate in this "amazing race" around the

Melbourne CBD.

We have been focusing our energy on the next AJMF conference to be held at the Watermark Hotel and Spa in Surfers Paradise from 2-7 January 2018. This is a fully kosher conference being catered by Open Table Catering from Byron Bay. The program will include educational meetings, social events as well as hosting guest speakers on Shabbat. For those of you who have not been to Surfers Paradise for many years, it is still a great holiday destination. For those planning to go to Commonwealth Games in April 2018 you can check out some of the sites of your favourite sporting events. This will be our



Charles and Leah Justin, with Miriam Kuttner



**AJMF 18<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

JANUARY 2-7, 2018

WATERMARK HOTEL & SPA,  
GOLD COAST



18th National conference and we hope that many of our members will take the opportunity to join us in Queensland next year over the summer break. A registration form has been included with this newsletter or can be downloaded from our website. People booking before 30 November 2017 can take advantage of the early bird rate.

We continue to support Israeli doctors who come to further their clinical or research experience, as well as medical students who are pursuing their electives in Israel. Reports from Israeli Research Fellow, Dr Amit Lotan and student scholarship recipients Jeremy Moskovitch and Yael Lefkovits are included in this newsletter.

Our next clinical meeting will be held on Thursday June 15th at Kimberley Gardens on the topics of Complexities of Pain: the inherited opioid patient with Dr Daniel Lewis and Optimizing drug delivery to the lungs in patients with asthma with Dr Linda Schacter. We are also planning a supper evening at a private home on 30 July to meet the Israeli doctors who have received



scholarships from AJMF and hear about their work and experiences in Australia.

The AJMF is keen to partner with other organizations promoting ties between doctors in Australia and Israel. Next year UIA are hoping to organize a medical mission to Israel, which the AJMF is supporting. If you are considering joining this mission, register your interest with UIA. We hope that many Australian doctors will join this mission and have an opportunity to see what is happening within the medical

community in Israel.

Further information about the 2018 Conference program and forthcoming events will be posted to the AJMF website and emailed to members closer to the date.

If you have not been receiving AJMF emails, please check that they haven't gone to your 'spam' folder or contact us via [presvic@ajmf.org.au](mailto:presvic@ajmf.org.au)

Dr Miriam Kuttner

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BEIT RAFAEL cares for the needs of families when a relative is in hospital.

The BEIT RAFAEL Benevolent Institution was established in Victoria, early in 2012 to ease the emotional and physical hardships of those undergoing treatment in hospital, and their families, through the provision of all-inclusive, confidential crisis accommodation in close proximity to the treating hospital.

These two-bedroom apartments provide a 'home away from home'—a private place where family members can sleep and eat and relax—to recover physically, as well as emotionally, in a private setting. Available at no charge, BEIT RAFAEL family apartments are fully furnished and self-contained, including foodstuffs and toiletries.

Families are welcome to stay 24/7 at the BEIT RAFAEL apartments for the duration of their loved one's treatment. To date, this has ranged from overnight to several weeks and even, in some cases, months.

There are four BEIT RAFAEL family apartments

**BEIT RAFAEL North Melbourne:** The first of the apartments to open, it is located directly across the road from the Royal Children's Hospital and is available to the families of those undergoing treatment in the Royal Children's, Royal Melbourne and Royal Women's hospitals as well as the new Peter McCallum Comprehensive Cancer Centre.



**BEIT RAFAEL Malvern:** Established in 2013, this apartment is situated across the

## When a loved one is hospitalised, there is no greater comfort than the presence of their family

road from Cabrini Hospital.

**BEIT RAFAEL Clayton:** Located opposite the Monash Medical Centre, this apartment opened in September 2015 to provide accommodation initially for families of those undergoing treatment in the Centre itself but will also service the new Monash Children's Hospital.

**BEIT RAFAEL Prahran:** The most recent apartment to open, BEIT RAFAEL Prahran began operating in February 2017 and can be found across the road from the Alfred Hospital.

**BEIT RAFAEL Medical Shuttle:** Launched in October 2015, the shuttle is a specialised vehicle used to assist community members who require transport to attend medical appointments, such as chemotherapy, x-rays, physiotherapy, dialysis and specialist doctors.

A team of trained Volunteers (with VIC Police Check and VIC Working with Children Checks) are available to drive patients to their appointments and, at a pre-arranged time, will return the patient to

their home.

A special feature of this Medical Shuttle is an electronically operated car seat which transforms to a wheelchair, ensuring those who have difficulty in walking or gaining access to a vehicle can be transported safely and with ease.

Following strong demand, a second Medical Shuttle was acquired in July 2016.

**BEIT RAFAEL Shabbos Box Program:** Designed to lift the spirits and morale of those who are hospitalised, this latest initiative commenced in October 2016 in collaboration with Cabrini, Masada and Caulfield hospitals. Each Friday, Beit Rafael gifts a Shabbos Box to each patient, containing challah rolls, battery operated Shabbos candles, grape juice, cake and a sweet treat, all delivered by trained Volunteers.

*Further information is available on the website [www.beitrafael.org](http://www.beitrafael.org) or if you would like to organise a visit to an apartment, contact Shimon Allen via email to [shimon@beitrafael.org](mailto:shimon@beitrafael.org)*



## Israeli Fellowship | Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health

Together with my wife Nava and our three kids- Boaz, Yarden and Stav, I was very fortunate to relocate to Melbourne for a two-year research fellowship in neuroscience, which was partly supported through a generous award from the Victorian branch of the AJMF. Both Nava and I have been working at Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem for several years now. Following a five year army service as a GP in the Medical Corps, both in infantry units and later in the air force, I had undertaken a residency in psychiatry at Hadassah, and since 2013 I have been working there as a senior psychiatrist in charge of our inpatient unit. This unit comprises of 18 beds that are dedicated to patients who have acute psychiatric symptoms that warrant inpatient care, but have also concomitant physical morbidity that necessitates treatment inside a general medical hospital. Thus, we take care of both the mental and the medical disorders in collaboration with consultants from other medical departments.

While overall fascinating, I am a biological psychiatrist, and as such assumes that psychiatric disorders essentially reflect brain disorders. Given the limited efficacy of current psychotropic medications and the fundamental gaps in our understanding of how these drugs work, I have become interested in translational research that aims to identify mechanisms that underlie various cognitive-emotional processes. I believe such understanding is critical for the development of drugs with novel mechanisms of action. This may be especially true for disorders that include a prominent neurodegenerative component, such as the depressive symptoms that often accompany dementias. In fact, whether it is Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or subcortical vascular dementia, depression and anxiety are frequent and debilitating symptoms. However, current treatment is symptomatic, and does not address the core pathological processes underlying these symptoms.



*Dr Amit Lotan (left) with Professor Ashley Bush*

With the neuropsychiatric agenda in mind, and after Nava had been accepted to a clinical fellowship at the Royal Children's Hospital, I have been fortunate to join the Oxidation Biology Unit at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health in April 2016 for a two-year research fellowship. Led by Prof. Ashley Bush, a world-leading neuroscientist and a psychiatrist, the group focuses on exploring fundamental biological mechanisms common to a wide spectrum of neurodegenerative and neurodegenerative disorders. Specifically, based on seminal work that spans over two decades, converging data generated by Prof. Bush and his colleagues suggest that alterations in transition metals such as iron, copper and zinc, which are often overlooked in this context, may in fact represent critical causal factors. Therefore, drugs that restore metal homeostasis in the brain could eventually prove as novel disease modifying approaches.

Currently, halfway through our 'Aussie adventure', while my kids have settled in

very nicely (in fact, much better than what I've experienced as a kid during my Dad's overseas fellowship in the late 1980's) and my wife is working hard but getting excellent training in her clinical field, I am involved in two projects that involve iron, copper, regulation of protein degradation and early neurodegeneration. Moreover, we have established a scientific collaboration between my home lab at Hadassah and the Florey, so that I will hopefully be able to work on the fascinating and ever-evolving projects that I am involved in now also after my return to Israel. In this context, I expect that in addition to the unique family experience, the skills that I have already mastered, and that I will hopefully further develop and consolidate during our remaining time here, will be most valuable back home in my professional career, that, as I currently envisage, would include a combination of basic research and clinical work at Hadassah.

*Dr Amit Lotan*

## Congratulations to Andrew Kornberg

Associate Professor Andrew Kornberg is Senior Neurologist and Director of RCH Global Health at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne

During March, Andrew flew 27,000km solo over 27 days, spending more than 64 hours in the air, visiting eight of his patients across Australia, as part of a fundraising effort for the RCH.



Associate Professor Andrew Kornberg  
Photo: Alvin Aquino, The Royal Children's Hospital Creative Studio

## Intensive Care Student Elective | Shaare Zedek Medical Centre

Jeremy Moskovitch received a Student Scholarship through the VIC branch of AJMF



I am extremely grateful to the AJMF for helping me undertake my final year elective within the Intensive Care Department at Shaare Zedek Medical Centre in Jerusalem. For some time I had been hoping to do a placement in Israel, and this winter stint in a busy Jerusalem ICU did not let me down.

From my first morning in the hospital, I was blown away by the organisation's ability to provide high quality medical care, whilst simultaneously transcending cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries, which to the outside world, can seem impossible to overcome. Our medical team would not

have been out of place in a Jerry Seinfeld stand-up comedy act on the middle east conflict. Religious ICU consultant, secular senior registrar, arab junior registrar, an American intern and myself – an innocent Jewish boy from the dangerous streets of Melbourne. However, to my surprise, the team worked seamlessly, utilising the latest research to provide the best medical care on offer. It was quite inspiring to see how the conflicts that exist outside of the hospital, almost disappear as one walks through the front doors.

My first few days of the rotation were taken up by trying to navigate the Hebrew medical language barrier. Although on day one it was difficult to follow the interpretation of an intubated patient's chest x-ray in hebrew, by the end of the elective I realised that if I simply add on a suffix, everyone will understand exactly what I mean if I simply say 'intubatzia' in my best anglo-israeli accent.

To the hospital's credit, the ICU team that I worked with were extremely inclusive, translating when necessary, allowing me to participate in ICU ward rounds, hospital wide emergencies and regular teaching sessions. I was exposed to a wide variety of medical conditions, and benefited first

hand from the teaching of the ICU staff. All of the doctors I worked with were always happy to explain a condition I had not come across before, and take time out of their busy schedules to teach.

Additionally, the environment of the hospital was not like any department I had worked in back home in Melbourne. The regular voice level of staff was comparable to vendors at the Jerusalem Market on a Friday afternoon. I could not walk 10 metres without being force-fed large jam filled doughnuts for Chanukah, and it took about 2 days in the hospital before I was invited out for a Shabbat meal to the home of one of the staff. Although the conditions in the hospital can be more stressful than those back in Melbourne, the hospital does an outstanding job of creating a warm environment for both staff and patients.

It was a privilege to undertake this elective during my medical degree, and it is a credit to the AJMF that it aims to help students embark on such beneficial and memorable electives. I want to thank the AJMF again for giving me this special opportunity.

Jeremy Moskovitch



## Dr. Maxine Scelwyn is an anatomical pathologist, working at Anatpath in Melbourne. Last year she re-visited the Sheba Medical Centre at Tel Hashomer, where she undertook her student placement

In 1983, as a fifth year medical student in Adelaide, I chose to do my 6 week elective term at the Chaim Sheba Medical Centre in Tel Hashomer. It was my first experience of an overseas hospital so I had little to compare it to but I do recall the incredible passion and knowledge of the doctors there and noted how this was a hospital for all of the people, with busloads of patients coming up from Gaza each day. But a complication only possible in Israel meant I spent a significant time in Haematology as many pathologists had been called up to fight in one of the Lebanon conflicts.

Thirty-three years later, I decided to email the hospital a few months before a planned trip to see if I could visit and see how things have changed. Within a few hours I received a welcoming invitation from the head of the pathology department, Prof Iris Barshack. I arrived by bus to a hospital that



Maxine with Professor Barshak

is more like a small town. This is the largest hospital in the Middle East and, to give an idea of the size, the bus stopped 6 times within the hospital grounds before I reached my building. There are also 4 hotels on campus for medical tourism and post-natal stays.

Finding the Pathology building was like a mini-safari but once there I was able to see that from a simple space the department had grown to three floors of spacious offices and laboratories with cutting edge equipment and technology. Each pathologist practised a subspecialty, such as dermatopathology or neuropathology, as well as taking part in the general surgical pathology roster. Particularly impressive, from my point of view, was to see that each pathologist worked from a microscope with two sets of eyepieces to enable teaching and sharing of opinions. We entered several offices where exactly this was taking place - two colleagues analysing and discussing challenging cases. I was invited to give my opinion on some difficult lung tumours and although flattered by the request, I was grateful that the schedule of Prof Barshack did not allow me the time to reveal potential gaps in my knowledge. I was, however, pleased to be able to share some articles from a recent Australian College of Pathologists journal on melanoma which I had brought with me, as this is a disease of growing incidence in

Israel as many Europeans have made aliyah, particularly from Russia, without the Sunsmart education we have here.

After meeting the pathologists I toured the laboratories where all the modern technologies, including molecular and genetic testing, were performed. This hospital is one of the world leaders in personalised medicine, where particular abnormalities in tumours are identified and then treated with new-age drugs which can specifically target the cancer cells carrying those genes.

There is no question that this department is a world leader with regards to case material, technology and practise and all the pathologists and residents in training also undertake research, making a department of excellence now with a constant view to the future.

The one difficulty in this department, and indeed across Israel, is a shortage of pathologists. Unlike Australia where we now have an oversupply, in Israel this is not the case. The department also still extends a welcome to medical students, as they did to me so many years ago, so any budding pathologists out there who would like to combine a love of Israel with the chance to work in a world class facility, please be sure to think of the Sheba Medical Centre.

*Dr Maxine Scelwyn*

## Proposed UIA Medical Mission in 2018

UIA are planning a special interest medical mission in 2018, aimed at people in the health field. The mission will include visits to major hospitals, biotech and medical device companies. Dinner speakers will include experts in the health area and a

partner's program to factory outlets and museums will be organised depending on demand.

It is expected that the mission will be in mid-April 2018, shortly after Pesach,

enabling participants to experience Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel.

UIA are inviting expressions of interest and would welcome any suggestions regarding the format or content of the mission. Please register your interest with Jenny Bourstein at [jenny.bourstein@uiavic.org](mailto:jenny.bourstein@uiavic.org)



## Obstetrics Student Elective | Shaare Zedek Medical Centre

*Yael Lefkovits received a Student Scholarship through the Victorian Branch of AJMF*

The concept that two microscopic segments of genetic material can come together and form a human life is simultaneously the most basic scientific process and also the most complex. Being able to understand and witness what can only be described as a medical miracle was undoubtedly a highlight of my overseas medical elective.

The four weeks I spent at Shaare Zedek's IVF and obstetrics' department, thanks to the generous support of the AJMF, was one of the most rewarding experiences I could have hoped for. I was privileged to learn firsthand from a team of truly interesting, passionate and knowledgeable doctors and nurses.

My first week of placement was spent at the IVF department, where I witnessed the entire miraculous process of IVF almost from start to finish. I held a woman's hand during egg harvesting, accompanied the sample to the laboratory, watched it become fertilized, and recently just learnt that the woman is now almost eight weeks pregnant.

On a typical morning I could meet a charedi woman wanting IVF to allow her to have a 10th child, a 20-year-old woman recently diagnosed with breast cancer wanting to freeze her eggs, and a Muslim woman who had been battling infertility for almost a decade. The desire to procreate is a great equalizer, and I watched in awe as the doctors traversed highly emotional and sensitive consultations with great



*Yael Lefkovits and Professor Hananel Holzer*

professionalism and respect.

Being in Israel on a medical rotation was like nothing I'd ever experienced. It is the only place where the head of the department would call me into his office to ask if I would join him for Shabbat. It was exceptionally interesting to watch the interplay between modern medicine and Jewish law. And in no other department are these matters as pronounced as the IVF and obstetrics department. With the Jewish laws pertaining to reproduction being particularly stringent, it was certainly eye opening to consider the religious implications of using donor eggs or sperm, and even discussing whether the use of sperm donation constitutes 'adultery.' The obstetrics department at Shaare Zedek is the largest in Israel, with over 20,000 births per year. In the space of one morning, I was able to 'scrub in' on three cesarean sections and assist with two natural deliveries. In obstetrics, the contrast between the greatest of joys and the lowest of lows is particularly pronounced. In one bed was a 41-year-old

Jewish woman about to give birth to her first child after almost twenty years of trying to conceive. In the very next room was an Arab woman, facing the impossible decision of having to abort one of her twin fetuses, or risk the lives of both.

I witnessed Jewish nurses holding the hands of Muslim women, Arab doctors delivering charedi babies and everything in between. This notion is perfectly captured in the observation of one of the midwives who remarked, "In hospital, there is no politics and no religion. There are only patients."

Being an Australian in the Israeli healthcare system is particularly special. I met numerous doctors and nurses who used to live in Australia, and even helped deliver a baby with a midwife who was a teacher of mine in primary school. I am extremely grateful to the AJMF for the wonderful opportunity, and would certainly encourage anyone considering a medical elective in Israel to seize the opportunity.

*Yael Lefkovits*

# The Maimonides Best Published Research Prize



Dear Colleagues,

In order to promote the publication of scholarly research, we are turning to researchers worldwide to publish their own and/or their student's original research. We are pleased to announce the establishment of the **Maimonides Best Published Research Prize**, beginning in January 2017. A prize of US\$1,000 will be awarded annually, at the beginning of the following year, to the first author of the best research article published in the Rambam Maimonides Medical Journal (RMMJ) from January through December of the previous year. Adjudication will be by the RMMJ Research Publication Advisory

Committee. All papers must be submitted to the journal according to the submission process outlined on our website, [www.rmmj.org.il](http://www.rmmj.org.il).

The first such prize will be awarded in January of 2018, with the award ceremony being held at the Rambam Health Care Campus.

The RMMJ is an Open Access peer-reviewed publication Indexed by PubMed, the Thomson Reuters Emerging Sources Citation Index, Google Scholar, EBSCO and more. We have been advised by Thomson Reuters that the journal will be reviewed for an impact factor in 2019. Supported solely through donations, the journal is free to both readers and authors (no submission charges). To date our journal has more than 16,000 registered readers from 162 nations, with close to 200,000 articles downloaded worldwide.

We look forward to your submission.

*Best personal regards,*  
 Shraga Blazer, MD  
 Editor-in-Chief, RMMJ for the Editorial Board  
[www.rmmj.org.il](http://www.rmmj.org.il)

## 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: THU 15 JUNE 2017**  
 Education Program/Dinner, Kimberley Gardens Hotel  
**Complexities in Pain: The inherited opioid patient**  
 – Dr Daniel Lewis  
**Optimising drug delivery to the lungs in patients with asthma**  
 – Dr Linda Schacter  
 Sponsored by Mundipharma

**ISRAEL: 21 – 23 MAY 2017**  
**International Conference on Trauma & Mental Health**  
 Advances in Diagnosis and Management  
 Dan Jerusalem Hotel  
[www.traumaandmentalhealthconference.org](http://www.traumaandmentalhealthconference.org)

**ISRAEL: 29 JUNE – 13 JULY 2017**  
**Hebrew University Trauma and Resilience Program**  
<http://traumaweb.org/international-trauma-resilience-summer-course/>

**ISRAEL: 3 - 8 DECEMBER 2017**  
**MDA International Seminar in Emergency Response**  
 Further information: [vicia@mda.org.il](mailto:vicia@mda.org.il) or contact your local Australian state office of MDA

**AUS: 2-7 January 2018**  
**AJMF National Conference**  
**Watermark Hotel & Spa, Gold Coast**  
[www.ajmf.org.au](http://www.ajmf.org.au)  
[www.watermarkhotelgoldcoast.com.au](http://www.watermarkhotelgoldcoast.com.au)

**ISRAEL: APRIL 2018 (Date to be confirmed)**  
**UIA Medical Mission to Israel**  
 To register your interest:  
[jenny.bourstein@uiavic.org](mailto:jenny.bourstein@uiavic.org) or (03) 9272 5533

## Sponsors and Advertisers

The format of our Newsletter lends itself to sponsorship/advertising opportunities. We are read by over 1600 doctors and families, and would like to encourage potential advertisers to seriously consider the benefits of directed marketing to this select group.

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## AJMFNEWS



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