



## A Word from the WF Chairperson



Dear Friends,

As we approach Passover, a time of reflection and renewal, we are reminded of the strength and resilience that unites us all, no matter where we are in the world. This season, traditionally a time for liberation and hope, is a poignant opportunity to come together as a community,

strengthening our bonds and our shared commitment to advancing healthcare, medicine, and the well-being of people everywhere.

In this issue of IMA Around the Globe, we celebrate the incredible achievements of our medical community, highlighting groundbreaking initiatives, resilience in the face of challenges, and the unwavering dedication of healthcare professionals. From the innovative work being

done in Israel to the global impact of our fellow doctors and healthcare workers, we are continuously inspired by the extraordinary contributions of each of you.

As we gather for the Seder, let us also raise our voices in prayer for the safe and swift return of the hostages still held by Hamas. May they be freed without delay, reunited with their loved ones, and may their strength and resilience bring solace to all who await their return.

We stand together, united in our hope for peace, justice, and the safety of all innocent lives.

May this Passover bring peace, renewal, and hope to you and your loved ones. Together, let's continue to make meaningful strides in the world of medicine and beyond.

### Chag Pesach Sameach,

Professor Hana Leiba

Chair

IMA – World Fellowship

Wishing you a joyful Passover filled with peace, love, and happiness. May this special time bring you together with family and friends, as you celebrate freedom, tradition, and the blessings of the season.

## CHAG PESACH SAMEACH!

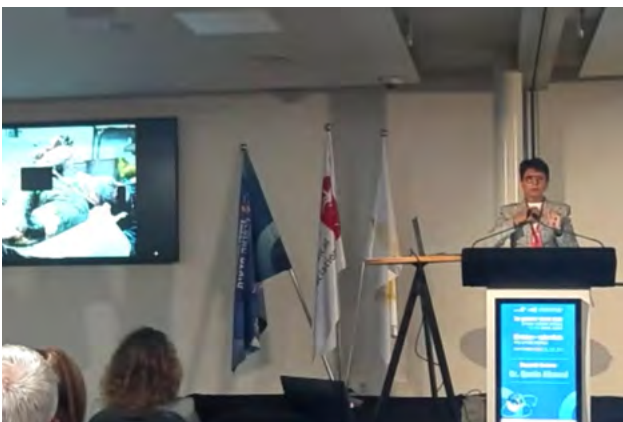


## IMA Domestic News and Activities

### Clinician-Scientists: The Untold Stories

The Israeli National Academy of Science in Medicine by the IMA marked its fifth anniversary with the conference "Clinician-Scientists: The Untold Stories," featuring groundbreaking discussions on AI in healthcare, genetic data for personalized medicine, and innovative approaches to brain health and global health challenges. Experts highlighted strategies to enhance patient care, address climate and pandemic impacts, and advance medical technologies. The conference fostered rich discussions on the future of medicine, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of technology in healthcare, and presented invaluable networking opportunities.

A highlight of the conference was Dr. Qanta Ahmed's powerful keynote speech, in which she shared her experiences as a Muslim physician in the aftermath of October 7<sup>th</sup>, and her attempts to raise global awareness of what occurred, providing a unique perspective on the intersection of medicine and social issues.



To watch the full lecture by Dr. Qanta Ahmed: <https://vimeo.com/1042099712>

### Ethics in War: A Lecture with Dr. Yossi Walfisch



Photo Credit: Facebook page of Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft Nürnberg-Mittelfranken.



On January 15, 2025, a lecture and discussion on Ethics During Wartime and Dilemmas of a Physician Serving in the Military with Dr. Yossi Walfisch took place at Akademie CPH in Nürnberg, hosted by the Federal Association of the German-Israeli Society. Dr. Walfisch, who is the director of a large rural health center treating around 3,200 patients, shared his insights into the ethical challenges healthcare professionals face during wartime. In addition to his role in civilian healthcare, Dr. Walfisch serves in the Israeli Defense Forces as the lead physician of a combat brigade, commanding a team of 50 doctors and in 2023, he was appointed chairman of the Ethics Board of the Israeli Medical Association. The event explored the complexities of responding to terrorist organizations that use civilians as human shields, forcing difficult decisions between protecting civilian lives and neutralizing threats. Dr. Walfisch's unique perspective, stemming from his roles in both civilian healthcare and military service, made for a thought-provoking discussion on the intersection of morality, healthcare, and the harsh realities of war.

<https://www.facebook.com/dignbgmfr/posts>

## MedEx New Jersey

On March 9, 2025, the IMA once again took part in the annual Nefesh B'Nefesh Medex event, which brings together physicians and other health professionals from all over the United States and Canada who are considering aliya. At the event, participants were able to start the process of

transferring their credentials, meet with potential employers and hear presentations about licensing and working as a doctor in Israel from IMA representatives Dana Ashel and Adv. Malke Borow. Almost 200 physicians attended this year's meeting, and we hope to see them all soon here in Israel!



Adv. Malke Borow speaking at the MedEX New Jersey conference. Photo by Shahar Azra

## The Young Academy of The Israeli National Academy of Science in Medicine

On March 27th, the Young Academy of the Israeli National Academy of Science in Medicine hosted its first annual conference. Young doctors and researchers from across the country presented innovative research in various medical fields. The conference featured professional lectures

and fruitful discussions that focused on opportunities to integrate young doctors into research through the "Mavri" program. The impressive participation and high level of involvement indicate that the future of medical research in Israel is particularly promising!



Dr. Orna Steinberg Shemer, Prof. Rivka Cami, Dr. Oren Caspi and Prof. Gal Markel. Photo by Itzick Biran



Panel discussion at the Young Academy conference. Photo by Itzick Biran



## Features

### Spotlight on a Hospital

#### Galilee Medical Center: 427 Days of Dedication on the Frontline

Located just 10 kilometers from the Lebanese border, the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya has long been a critical healthcare hub for northern Israel. When war erupted on October 7, 2023, with the launch of Operation Iron Swords, the hospital immediately transitioned to emergency protocols.

As the conflict escalated, hospital departments were relocated to a crowded underground complex, where medical teams faced logistical challenges and limited privacy. Despite these hardships, the medical staff worked tirelessly to adapt to the environment, improve hospitalization conditions, and maintain the highest standards of care under extreme circumstances.

Dr. Moaad Faraj, head of Surgery Department B, reflects on the experience:

"The war brought a complex mix of loss, resilience, and deep love for our country. As a physician, the responsibility to save lives took on an even greater meaning. Throughout it all, we remained steadfast in providing stability and security for our patients and community. I am proud to be part of a surgical team that works tirelessly to care for war victims with unwavering dedication and sensitivity, not only toward our patients but also toward our fellow medical staff."

Doctors like Dr. Faraj are the backbone of Israel's healthcare system, standing strong in the face of crisis. Their dedication is a testament to the resilience and humanity that define the Galilee Medical Center and the spirit of Israel.



## Medical Achievements

### Virtual Reality Program Could Boost Doctors' Empathy



Medical staff receive empathy training via an OtheReality experience. Photo courtesy of OtheReality

A new virtual reality (VR) program developed by XRHealth and Sheba Medical Center aims to enhance doctors' empathy by immersing them in simulations of patient experiences, such as living with chronic pain or mobility challenges. The program helps doctors better understand their patients' challenges, improving communication and care. Sheba Medical Center is piloting the program, with plans to expand its use globally, showcasing Israel's leadership in integrating technology into healthcare.

Article courtesy of Israel 21c.

To view full article: [OtheReality: Doctor empathy gets a boost through new VR program \(israel21c.org\)](https://israel21c.org/OtheReality-Doctor-empathy-gets-a-boost-through-new-VR-program/)

### Breakthrough AI Predicts When and Where the Next Medical Emergency Will Happen



The new AI system developed by United Hatzalah helps predict future emergencies. Photo courtesy of United Hatzalah

Sheba Medical Center and MDClone have developed an AI-based system that analyzes electronic medical records to predict and prevent medical crises. This system helps healthcare providers allocate resources more effectively and proactively address patient needs by identifying trends and potential risks. The technology also ensures patient privacy through synthetic data, enabling global collaboration in medical research and advancing preventative healthcare.

Article courtesy of Israel 21c.

To view full article: [Breakthrough AI predicts when and where the next medical emergency will happen - ISRAEL21c](https://israel21c.org/Breakthrough-AI-predicts-when-and-where-the-next-medical-emergency-will-happen/)

### Israeli Hospital Awards Innovations from the Druze Sector



Druze entrepreneurs who took part in the project, with the judging panel. Photo by Zachary Goldberg/Sheba Medical Center

Ziv Medical Center in Safed, Israel, has launched a program to recognize and reward Druze healthcare

professionals for their innovative contributions to medical technology and patient care. The initiative aims to integrate the Druze community more effectively into Israel's medical and innovation sectors. By celebrating their achievements, Ziv Medical Center emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and collaboration in advancing healthcare.

Article courtesy of Israel 21c.

To view full article: *Israeli hospital rewards innovations from Druze sector - ISRAEL21c*



## The Innovative Program for Advancing Medical Studies for Released Combat Soldiers



Photo by Gav Laloheem PR

Herzliya Medical Center has partnered with the "Back to the Combat Soldier" organization to launch **"Back to the Combat Soldier MEDIC"**—an innovative and unique program designed for released male and female combat soldiers interested in studying medicine in Israel.

The program's goal is to assist released combat soldiers in realizing their medical potential and to provide comprehensive support throughout the medical school admissions process. Participants will be introduced to the world of medicine, go on hospital tours, meet some of Israel's top physicians, connect with medical students, and more.

Each participant will be paired with a medical student mentor and will receive a personalized work plan tailored to their unique circumstances and needs along the way.

Source: Maariv, November 6, 2024

<https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/article-1145954>



## Israel Has Become a Global Powerhouse in Digital Health



Dr Merav Mor and Dr Michal Mor. Photo by Lumen

Israel is now considered a global leader in digital health, and its success is no coincidence—it stems from a unique combination of innovation, extensive investments, and collaboration between the public, private, and academic sectors. A recently published report by the Export Institute reveals that investments in digital health since the beginning of the year have reached approximately half a billion dollars—a sum comparable to the total investments in 2023. This figure reflects a growth in investment volume, underscoring the field's attractiveness and the significant trust it inspires among investors.

Israel is a prominent player on the global medical innovation stage, serving as a kind of incubator for startups, research institutes, and universities driving the development of advanced solutions in areas such as medical diagnostics, telemedicine, health data management, and artificial intelligence. Israel's innovation ecosystem empowers the public to manage their health independently through access to more focused healthcare services.

One example is the rapidly evolving field of **precision medicine** in Israel, which enables the precise tailoring of treatments to the individual patient's profile, including metabolic data, lifestyle, and additional medical information. This advancement places Israel at the forefront of global knowledge and provides it with a significant edge in personalized healthcare.

Source: Calcalist, November 13, 2024

<https://www.calcalist.co.il/calcalistech/article/sycbtmffke>





## International Conferences/ Webinars

### CONFEMEL



**Dr Ester Barchilon Assistant Director, Relations with Latin America and Rachel Kempler Ohayon, Director of the Examinations Department at the IMA**

So many things are happening in our country that it's hard to believe that the last Conference of CONFEMEL (Confederation of Ibero-American Medical Federations) took place almost two months ago in Lima, Peru.

This time Rachel Kempler Ohayon from the Examination Committee from IMA came with me representing IMA as we are Associated Members of the organization.

The meeting took place Nov 27-29<sup>TH</sup> and for the first time there was a long session devoted to the Organization of Young Doctors with the participation of the head of the



World Young Doctors Organization. I had the honor and the pleasure to expose the IMA's program for residencies in Israel's Hospitals and telling them the successful program of 16 doctors from Panama that take part in the program.

As always there were most interesting and challenging discussions on ethical issues in medicine, violence and abuse of medical staff, accreditation of doctors from different countries.

After some years of absence, the representatives of Ecuador and Chile were back, and Italy was also admitted as Associated Member of CONFEMEL.

During the Assembly, the new Board of Directors was elected, resulting in the unanimous election of Dr Jorge Coronel of Argentina- Dr Pedro Riega from Peru was elected Secretary General and Dr Zaida Arteta, outgoing President from Uruguay, as Finance Secretary.

The Conference venues at the impressive Colegio Medico de Peru, the perfect organization, the challenging topics and the warm welcoming to us made it a most unforgettable experience.

We are looking forward to the next meeting at the beginning of May in Sucre, Bolivia.

## Standing Committee of European Doctors General Assembly – Brussels, March 2025

Adv. Leah Wapner, Secretary General and Michelle Glekin, International Relations Officer, represented the Israeli Medical Association at the General Assembly of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) in Brussels on the 20-22 March 2025.

The meeting began with a members' conference held at the European Parliament on Solutions for the European Health Workforce Crisis. The conference which was hosted by MEP Dr. András Kulja and MEP Tilly Metz, was attended by doctors from 30 countries. The participants addressed the unprecedented crisis currently facing Europe's health workforce which is being driven by an ageing population and an increasing demand for medical services. Healthcare systems in the European region are struggling with severe workforce shortages, which places an enormous burden on doctors, resulting in long working times, burnout and compromised patient care. These poor working conditions

are making medicine less attractive as a profession.

The following day began with workgroup sessions on Digital Health, Pharmaceuticals, Professional Practice and Public Health. At the CPME General Assembly Dr. Bakke welcomed the participants to the meeting which began with a special session on National reports. Reports were given by Bulgaria, UK, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, France and Czech Republic. Adv. Wapner gave a report on behalf of the Israeli Medical Association. Common themes that arose from these reports were on workforce shortages and threats to the independence of medical associations.

Other outcomes of the General Assembly included agreement to launch a survey among its members on safe staffing levels and a statement on medical devices was also adopted. The statement underlines that having high quality standards for medical devices is essential to ensure patient safety. Finally, the CPME decided to merge three Working Groups on Healthy Living, Vaccinations, and Environmental Health & Climate Change into one Working Group on Public Health. The new work group decided to start a process to draft a new policy on the health effects of gambling and launch a members' survey to map how European countries support the mental health of doctors. These will be discussed at the next meeting in the Autumn.



**Dr Ole Johan Bakke, President of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), stated that**

*“The warning signs are clear: Europe's health workforce is stretched thinner every year and is heading towards a breaking point that will impact patients and professionals alike. European countries share these problems and we need to cooperate on shared solutions.”*



# Aliyah Interview

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## Personal/Professional Background

### Could you tell us a little bit about your education and past work experiences?

I earned my medical degree from Universidad de Buenos Aires in 2015. From 2015 to 2019, I completed a residency in Nephrology at Hospital Churruca. Subsequently, from 2019 to 2021, I undertook an Anesthesia residency at Hospital Simplemente Evita.

### How did you decide to make Aliyah?

My desire to make Aliyah dates back to 2006, when I was 16 years old and visiting Israel for the first time. The moment I saw Hebrew signs on the streets, I felt at home. Deciding to make Aliyah took longer because I knew obtaining my degree would be somewhat easier in Argentina than in Israel. I wanted to establish myself as a physician before making the move. The events of 2020, during the pandemic, made me realize I could no longer delay my deep-seated aspiration to make Aliyah. Three years later, here I am, working at a hospital and feeling the same sense of belonging I felt at 16.

### What were your reasons for making Aliyah?

Zionism was my sole reason for making Aliyah, along with the hope of raising a family in Israel.

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## The Aliyah Process

### Could you briefly describe the process of making Aliyah?

The Aliyah process varies in length depending on the paperwork required by the Jewish Agency. I opened my Aliyah file at the end of 2020. The bureaucratic process in Argentina for both my Aliyah and my medical licensing (to take the Israeli license exam, which is required for

most Latin Americans) took almost a year to complete. From what I observe now, new Olim, especially doctors, have access to more support from various organizations to streamline the process.

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## Life in Israel

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

I live and work in Jerusalem at Hadassah Mount Scopus. I made Aliyah at the end of 2021, passed my licensing exam in February 2022, and started working in July 2022. I am an anesthesia resident, providing anesthesia for surgeries, working in the labor ward, and rotating through various departments at Hadassah Ein Kerem, including ICU, Cardiology, and Neurosurgery.

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## What do you enjoy most about life in Israel?

### What are some of the challenges you have faced?

What I enjoy most is the opportunity for everyone to thrive regardless of their background. Whether or not you have a university degree, if you are willing to work hard, the opportunities are endless. One significant challenge for Olim is mastering Hebrew, which is especially important for physicians. While the licensing exam can be taken in English, the mandatory residency exams (written and oral) are in Hebrew. This creates a unique challenge for non-native Hebrew speakers, as the exams are difficult and preparing for them while working is daunting.

Compare working in Argentina to working in Israel. This is difficult to compare. In Argentina, the medical field has been in decline for years due to emigration. During my residency, salaries were barely enough to make ends meet, and with inflation, many residents today earn below the poverty line. It's heartbreaking to see highly skilled medical professionals struggle financially despite working long hours. In addition, resources are often limited. Medicine in Argentina is renowned for its excellence due to its dedicated human resources, but no government has ever provided the necessary economic support for healthcare workers to thrive.

**Full Name:**

Melisa Umansky

**Occupation:**

Anesthesia resident at  
Hadassah Mount Scopus

**Date of Aliyah:**

23.12.2021

**Originally from:**

Argentina

**Made Aliyah with (family):**

Alone



**Describe any professional culture shocks you've experienced in Israel.**

Well, working in Hebrew! The first months were beyond difficult, every day you learn something new. Another notable difference is the support female doctors receive during their residency. In Israel, hospitals are accommodating and supportive when residents start families—something that is nearly impossible in Argentina.

**Would you like to share your experience as an Oleh physician since October 7th and how it has impacted you?**

October 7th was hard, to say the least. At the time I had just started my ICU rotation in Hadassah Ein Karem. We got

called in to the hospital, and we received injured soldiers and civilians that needed urgent care in the surgery room. I knew, that eventually, living here, there was a possibility of something like this happening. But living through it was something else that I am still processing. Until the end of that year, I worked in the ICU, witnessing the incredible dedication of the staff as they cared for patients from the battlefield or referred from other hospitals. I saw young people recover against the odds, while others succumbed to their injuries. All their faces still remain in my memory, and whenever I see a post from social media I recognize them. The war's most significant personal impact came two months later, on December 10, 2023, when my cousin, Etay Perry Z"L, fell in battle. Processing a family loss while continuing to work as a physician during wartime is an ongoing challenge. My heart goes out to all those who have suffered irreparable loss

# IMA Around the World

## Global Jewish Health Alliance



The Global Jewish Health Alliance is a non-political, international organization, co-founded by the Israeli Medical Association and the American Jewish Medical Association (AJMA) in early 2024, following the events of October 7, 2023. Born from an urgent need in the wake of antisemitism and anti-Zionism in healthcare, GJHA stands as a beacon of advocacy, education, and collaboration. As the GJHA endeavors to create a united front, it stands poised to make a meaningful impact on global health and social justice, guided by the timeless Jewish values of compassion, equity, and solidarity. The GJHA coordinates Jewish medical associations and groups from around the world to further our common goals. The aim of the Global Jewish Health Alliance is to amplify the Jewish voice in global health, combat antisemitism and anti-Zionism, and foster equitable representation in healthcare systems.

Global Jewish Health Alliance Website:  
<https://www.globaljewishhealth.com/>

## International Membership

### Coming Soon: IMA's International Membership Program

The Israel Medical Association will soon launch its International Membership program—a new initiative for physicians around the world who wish to connect with and support the Israeli healthcare system. Members will gain access to professional collaborations, fellowships, exclusive events, webinars, and opportunities to engage with the Israeli medical community and the global Jewish medical network.

If you'd like to receive more information once the program goes live, please contact Libi Moryosef at [mor.yosef@ima.org.il](mailto:mor.yosef@ima.org.il).

## The Israeli Medical Association: Seeking International University Partnerships

The Israeli Medical Association is looking to establish academic partnerships with universities abroad in areas of mutual interest, including leadership and management, innovation, health policy, trauma, and more. As the professional organization representing physicians in Israel, the IMA is deeply involved in advancing medical education, advocacy, and research.

Israeli physicians bring extensive expertise, shaped by a dynamic healthcare system and experience in high-pressure environments. Through the IMA, we can also offer access to global medical networks such as the European Forum of Medical Associations (EFMA), the World Medical Association (WMA), and other international bodies. These collaborations provide opportunities for joint research, faculty exchanges, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

If you or your institution are interested in exploring a partnership, or if you have relevant contacts, we would love to hear from you.

Let's build meaningful academic collaborations that drive innovation and progress in healthcare.

For more information, please reach out to Libi Moryosef  
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# IMA

## Around The Globe

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## ISRAELI MEDICAL ASSOCIATION JOURNAL – IMAJ

We are happy to inform you that the Israeli Medical Association Journal (IMAJ) is available online to all IMA World Fellowship members.

IMAJ publishes original articles and reviews, editorials, case reports and other feature columns and includes unique coverage of specific regional issues such as infectious and parasitic diseases, effects of the local environment on morbidity and mortality and Jewish genetic diseases, that are relevant to medical practice in distant countries with similar biopsychosocial problems.

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