

## Just look at us now

Thursday Jan 05, 2012

### If it wasn't for Israel you might not be alive

My Rabbi frequently looks out at his community from the pulpit and says, "You know, ten years ago, half of you wouldn't have been here". What he means, is that the medical advances over the last ten years have saved the lives of at least 50% of his congregation. And the same goes for Israel's medical and technological innovations. Probably half the population of the planet have had their lives extended by Israeli cancer therapy, medical treatments and research, humanitarian aid, agricultural innovations and water technology.

Lets get straight to the "heart" of the matter. The "Innovations in Cardiovascular Interventions" (ICI) conference in Tel Aviv in December was one of the largest international conferences on the subject. Israel is a **leader in cardiology innovation**, producing stents, heart valves and innovative pacemakers. And I couldn't write about the heart without mentioning the wonderful work of Israeli humanitarian organisation "**Save A Child's Heart**". At a time of political stalemate between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, SACH surgeons at Wolfson Medical centre are still fixing Arab hearts and creating bonds with the patients and their families.

One of the most **heart-stopping stories** of the week was when a Palestinian Arab with no pulse arrived at the gates of an army base in Judea and Samaria after midnight. Lt. Kim Ben Tikva and Sgt. Sharon Grisaro started intensive CPR and after 15 minutes the man began breathing. He is now at the Rabin Medical Hospital and his condition is stable.

Thanks to Israel, treatments for diabetes have improved significantly and last week Israel's InsuLine Medical announced positive results for the trials of its InsuPatch. The patch increases significantly **insulin levels in the blood** compared with an insulin injection. And a Hebrew University research team has the first proof of molecular risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. This could also lead to **new treatments for diabetes** and to detecting a susceptibility to other diseases at an early stage.

Other developments in Israel during this past week include trials of a new drug from Israel's AtoxBio Ltd for treating **necrotizing soft tissue infections** (NSTI) for which there are no alternative approved treatments. Meanwhile Israel's Collplant has signed an agreement with Pfizer to jointly develop an orthopaedic product for the **repair of compound fractures**. Collplant manufactures human collagen from plants.

A new phenomenon has just emerged - foreign pharmaceutical companies, like Bristol-Myers Squibb, are coming to Israel to develop their medicines. Israeli specialists are helping Squibb with their launch of a new drug for the **treatment of melanoma**. And you can understand what these companies see in Israel when we hear every week new research discoveries such as the Weizmann Institute scientists who have uncovered the method that **white blood cells** use to target invading pathogens.

Let's look now at the outside world in more detail. As usual, Israel continued to support **over a million Gazans** when it delivered 1094 trucks, 32,271 tons of food, clothing, electrical products, raw materials, medicines, aid through the Gaza crossings last week. Farther away, following the typhoons in the Philippines, Israel is literally "re-seeding" the islands' shattered economy and **rebuilding the lives** of local farmers. It has installed a massive hi-tech greenhouse in Licab, including a mist irrigation system, which can produce 20,000 vegetable seedlings per batch.

"Water is life" and Israel is at the heart of developments concerned with the world's precious water resources. Kibbutz Amiad, for example, develops products for wastewater treatment. Recently a delegation of Israeli water companies, including Amiad **visited Chile**, which needs their hi-tech equipment in order to make best use of the massive amounts of water required by their mining companies. Amiad was even featured **on the BBC**. And in rainy old Britain, **British Water** has just signed a cooperation agreement for Israeli water technology. Finally, Israel's national water company signed a financing agreement to build a state-of-the-art chemical-free reverse-osmosis desalination plant, which could allow drought-ridden Israel to **export water to its Arab neighbours** upon completion in 2013.

But as Rabbi Hillel said, if I am not for myself, then who am I? Which is why I was thrilled to read about Elan Bielski – the grandson of Zus Bielski who was the subject of the amazing film "Defiance". Zus and his brothers fought the Nazis in Belarus and saved 1200 Jews during WW2. Elan is now a paratrooper in the Israeli army. He is a lone soldier and proud to carry on his grandfather's legacy of **saving innocent lives**.

Meanwhile, three American graduate students have recently launched a “Jewish Tooth Fairy Fund” for **survivors of terror attacks** and their families to obtain dental care they otherwise could not afford.

Finally, Israeli cancer treatments have been saving lives for decades, but I'll finish with the news of the campaign by cancer charity Zichron Menachem, whereby hundreds of Israelis are currently donating their hair to **cancer sufferers**.

### **It makes you feel good to be alive!**

Michael Ordman writes a weekly newsletter containing Good News stories about Israel.

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