



Last month marked five years since AUSiMED was endorsed as a health promotion charity by the Australian Tax Office. We are very excited to be able to share with you details about what we have achieved over this time, thanks to your support.

**Antony Cohen, Chair**



## LIFTING THE BAR

Creating a new sustainable medical research not for profit from scratch, meant creating a unique organisation which strives for excellence and lifts the bar, in everything AUSiMED does.

Uniqueness has come from being the first Australian not for profit to exclusively fund international medical research collaborations and exchanges as well as choosing Australia and Israel as collaborators, two countries that have always punched above their weight in medical research achievements. It has also come from being the first not for profit with permission from the Australian Tax Office to offer impact investing in our projects to philanthropic Foundations.

Excellence has come from supporting world leading researchers and clinicians in both countries as well as requiring quarterly reviews for all recipients of funds, which is new for most researchers. The results have been impressive and we have achieved improved accountability.

**Roz Kaldor-Aroni, CEO**

## SHORT-STAY VISITS PROGRAM TO ISRAEL FOR SENIOR MEDICAL ACADEMICS

In 2018, AUSiMED will continue to fund senior non-Jewish medical academics for four-day visits to Israel who have never visited before. This year we are sending three candidates from Victorian universities, thanks to recent support from the Besen Family Foundation. Visitors meet their peers and gain a better understanding of Israel.

## AUSiMED RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

### DETECTION, PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILDHOOD DISEASES

#### Niemann Pick C type 1 (NPC1)

AUSiMED's 2017 Lowy Foundation Paediatric Fellow, Israeli psychiatrist Dr Amit Lotan, conducted research on a potential treatment for NPC1 at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health in Melbourne.

NPC1 is a rare genetic disorder that causes early onset dementia and mortality in children and has no curative treatment. Dr Lotan assessed drugs that can remove excess iron from the brain as a novel therapy and found that they did not offer any benefit in NPC1 mice. Despite this, the study provided important directions for future research

#### Congenital heart defects

AUSiMED's 2015 Lowy Foundation Paediatric Fellow, paediatric cardiologist Dr Asaf T'shma, conducted research on genetic heart defects at Monash University using their world leading chicken embryo model for detecting mutations.

The new technique enabled him to rapidly confirm (along with other techniques) that he had identified three genetically mutated PLD1 genes that were the cause of infant deaths. Dr T'shma's research will help many millions of families in the future to screen for these genetic defects during pregnancy or IVF.



## AUSiMED'S SCORECARD OF ACHIEVEMENTS



### REVENUE:

Raised over \$4 million since starting in July, 2012, with 16/17 revenue of \$1.3 million



### RESEARCH:

Funded collaborative medical research projects investigating new treatments for:

#### Childhood diseases:

- Niemann Pick C Type - a rare genetic early childhood disease causing dementia
- a rare genetic disease creating untreatable heart defects
- improving foetal survival;

#### Adult diseases

- Vascular dementia;
- resistant forms of breast cancer
- complications from blood cancer
- a new bowel cancer treatment that has progressed to clinical trials

### TRAINING:



Fellowships providing new skills and knowledge from Australia for Israeli's including:

- The discovery of two mutated genes responsible for major heart defects which are now available in foetal genetic testing for over 2 million pregnant women a year worldwide;
- a Paediatric Emergency Medicine specialist who took new skills he learned in Australia and created training courses for doctors in Israel, the Palestinian territories and Africa; and
- Training two senior paediatricians in the new area of Developmental Paediatrics to return to Israel to support children from disadvantaged communities



### PUBLICATIONS:

Two publications with another 10 in progress



### CONFERENCES:

A bi-lateral paediatric medical research symposium in 2014 where seven Israeli paediatricians came to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne to exchange their experience in treating chronic diseases such as cystic fibrosis

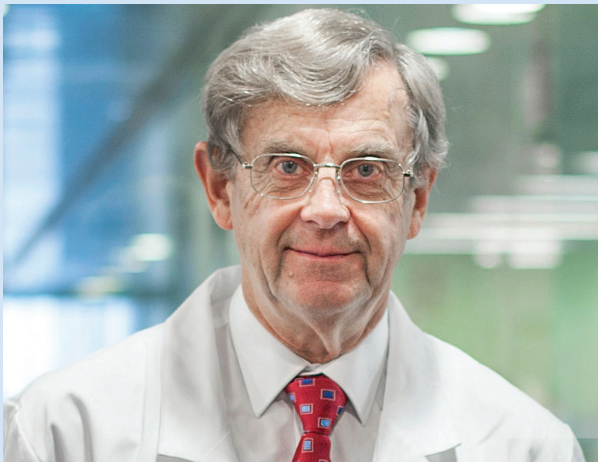


**MEDICAL LEADERS VISITING ISRAEL:** Short visits to Israel for non-Jewish Australian medical leaders to meet colleagues and learn about Israel

## NEW TREATMENTS FOR ADULT DISEASES

**New therapy for resistant bowel cancer**

Professors Tony Burgess (Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) and Alexander Levitzki (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) have advanced the development of a new immunotherapy for resistant forms of bowel cancer. The project builds on an innovative technology, developed by Prof Levitzki, for delivering a powerful immunotoxin to kill cancer cells which was tested and improved by Prof Burgess in animal models at WEHI. Swiss biotech firm TargImmune is funding anti-cancer clinical trials at WEHI in 2018 because of this research.

**Vascular Dementia Research**

AUSiMED's donors are currently supporting an Australia-Israel research collaboration between Prof Ashley Bush, Head of the Neurodegeneration Oxidation Biology Unit, Florey Institute, Melbourne and Prof Bernard Lerer, Director of the Biological Psychiatry Laboratory, Hadassah Medical Organisation into finding a treatment for Vascular Dementia—the second most common type of dementia after Alzheimer's disease. This project will be completed at the end of 2018.

**Breast cancer research**

An AUSiMED-funded research project conducted by Dr Shani Paluch-Shimon and Dr Maya Dadiani at Sheba Medical Center in 2016-17 has produced promising results. The project focused on investigating cancer cell populations in triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) tumors (which lack three common proteins that respond to targeted therapies). The results have possible prognostic and therapeutic implications for TNBC patients with a mutation in the BRCA1 gene. AUSiMED is considering support of further studies.

**New therapy for immune disorders**

With the generous support of Ronit Fraid and Vivien Rosenfeld, AUSiMED is funding a two-year research program at the Cancer Immunotherapy and Immunobiology Research Center, Hadassah Medical Organisation, Israel. Professor Reuven Or and Dr. Osnat Almogi-Hazan are developing a new stem cell therapy to enhance the control of the immune system after organ transplantation and other immune challenging diseases.

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Enormous thanks to over 600 donors for your generous support of AUSiMED over the last five years. Our numerous achievements were only possible because of this support.

Below is a list of donors and sponsors, who have consented over the years to their name being published as supporters of AUSiMED:

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## TRAINING

### IMPROVING PAEDIATRIC MEDICAL CARE FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN ISRAEL

The **Goshen Project** is a bold national initiative that is catalysing a transformation in the design and delivery of healthcare for young children in Israel, particularly in disadvantaged areas. It is doing this by teaching paediatricians to identify and treat problematic development issues in young children.



Thanks to the generosity the GBM Group (the Private Family Office for Sam and Minnie Smorgon), two Israeli paediatricians Drs Foad Alsana and Dafna Idan-Prusak, have received specialised developmental paediatric training at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne with Prof Frank Oberklaid. The GBM Group will also be helping establish two new Goshen Centres in the north and south of Israel, headed by Drs Alsana and Idan-Prusak. These centres will substantially improve health outcomes for many children in both early childhood and later life.

### DR SAAR HASHAVYA—AUSiMED PAEDIATRIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE (PEM) FELLOW



In 2014-15, the first AUSiMED Lowy Foundation Paediatric Fellow, **Dr Saar Hashavya** came to Sydney from Hadassah Medical Organisation, Jerusalem to train at the Paediatric Emergency Medicine (PEM) Department at Sydney Children's Hospital.

Dr Hashavya learned the importance of retaining responsibility for managing treatment of children in the PEM Department for much longer than at Hadassah.

Since his AUSiMED training Fellowship, Dr Hashavya has passed on his training at not only the Hadassah PEM department but he has also established a traveling "simulation centre to provide onsite paediatric training and delivered PEM training workshops in Israel and Africa.

For further information on the stories in this newsletter and other AUSiMED articles, visit [www.ausimed.org](http://www.ausimed.org)

To update your details, please contact the office **9272 5699** or [info@ausimed.org](mailto:info@ausimed.org)