



# Hebrew University-Hadassah Braun School of Public Health & Community Medicine International MPH Alumni Newsletter

April 2017



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## Greeting from Prof. Yehuda Neumark—IMPH Director

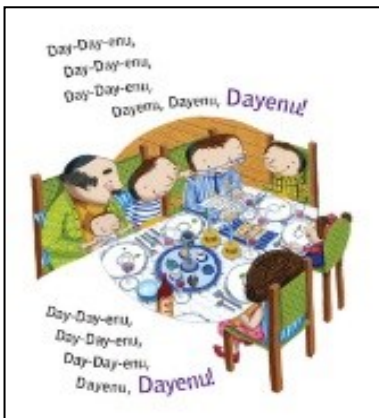
Dear Colleagues & Friends,

It is a little over a year now since I came back "full time" to the IMPH program, and although not without its challenges, it has been an extremely exciting time.

If you have been following us on Facebook (and how can you not, with all our fabulous posts?!), you will know of all the enriching "extras" the current IMPH class is experiencing, including our pre-Passover "Seder" that we had just the other day.

If you haven't yet visited the new IMPH website [[www.imphhuji.com](http://www.imphhuji.com)], I encourage you to do so. It, like life itself, is a work-in-progress, and we are very proud of its development to date, and we keep improving it. I also encourage you to be an active participant on the HUJI Connect IMPH Alumni platform.

All this wouldn't be possible without the phenomenal untiring efforts of the entire IMPH Team (in alphabetical order) – Edna, Matan, Maureen, Pam, Rachel, Reut and Ronit. Hats (and kippas) off to you!!



On Monday evening, Jews the world over will celebrate Passover with the traditional Seder, as many of you experienced during your year in Israel. During the Seder, the song of "Dayeinu" – it would have been sufficient... is sung.

*Dayeinu* is our reflecting on our national history and identifying those moments, those gifts from God that we may have failed to say thank you for. We rectify and repair our ingratitude and thanklessness through the years by saying *Dayeinu* - each of these things was enough to be exceedingly grateful for.

This Newsletter provides us with yet another opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the Pears Foundation, and to our other scholarship sponsors - MASHAV, the British/American/South African Friends of Hebrew University, and the Moshal Scholarship Program.

As you may have heard, the Pears Foundation has recently committed to an additional 4 years of IMPH scholarship funding (8 scholarships annually!) and continued funding for alumni activities. (By the way, these activities will be open to all IMPH alumni and not just those who had been awarded a Pears scholarship, as has been the policy to date). The Pears Foundation is also continuing to support scholarships for two other international masters programs at Hebrew University, plus all their other activities in the UK, Israel, India, Africa..., and all this, despite the huge devaluation of the British pound in recent months.

With that said, I deeply regret to inform you, that the funding for the planned IMPH Alumni Conference in 2018 did not materialize.

All of you who participated in the 2013 Alumni Conference will no doubt agree that it was a very important event for you, as it was for the School, and for the Pears Foundation that fully funded the Conference and was eager to underwrite most of the cost of the 2018 meeting.

However, in light of the devalued currency, spending so much money on a single event, important as it may be, could not be justified. So, while very disappointing, it is understandable given the current financial situation.



We conclude the Passover Seder with the thousands-year-old hope and prayer "Next Year in Jerusalem" and we were so very much hoping that we would be able to welcome many of you here in Jerusalem next year for the IMPH Alumni Conference. Alas, this will remain as a hope for the time being.

I like to believe that I am, by nature, an optimist. But as Former Chief Rabbi of the UK Jonathan Sacks explains in his commentary on the Hagaddah, it doesn't require much courage to be an optimist (only perhaps a certain naivety), because optimism is a passive virtue - a belief that things will get better. Hope, on the other hand, is the active and sustained belief that, together, we can make things better (think Tikun Olam!). I give you my word, that we will continue working together to try to make the alumni conference a reality, even if I can't give any promises as to when that might be.

With that, I wish all of us a Happy Passover, Happy Easter, Happy Any-Other-Holiday-You-Might-Be-Celebrating in the coming days and weeks, and a Happy and Hopeful Everyday!

Good Cheer!  
Yehuda



## Greetings from Director of the Braun School

Dear Alumni,

It is a pleasure to greet you all again, as winter passes and we move into the time of birth and regrowth, the festival of freedom (Passover) and of spring. I am sure that you all remember your time at the IMPH, when the red, pink and yellow flowers seemed to be growing everywhere, on the path to Ein Karem, on the road up from Hadassah to the city, and of course, in the countryside. For me, this is always a very special time of year, when I can actually understand how our biblical ancestors believed that this was a land of milk and honey!

This morning, I had the pleasure of attending the annual conference of the Israel Society of Family Medicine. I was invited by the chair of the conference, Prof. Amnon Lahad who is a faculty member at the Braun School. The keynote address was about models of primary health care, about the importance of knowing one's community, and then showed pictures of Dr. Sidney and Emily Kark, and Joe Abramson, a humble giant who left us so recently. The speaker, Dr. Andrew Bazemore from Washington DC, mentioned the ongoing relevance of the COPC model, community diagnosis, community-wide programs and evaluation. I was proud and inspired that the model chosen to motivate these family physicians is one that was developed by the founders of our School!

It got me thinking about what distinguishes epidemiologists from other scientists. One of the discerning features is that epidemiologists (as opposed to clinical scientists) are concerned with the denominator, as was John Snow. We care not only about the "cases" which come to our attention, but the others, which do not, for various reasons. Drs. Kark were concerned with the entire community, and with identifying risk factors and not just clinically obvious disease. This is the secret of prevention and eventually lowering disease burdens. It is so wonderful, that these concepts are being kept alive, not only by our own alumni, but also by acolytes around the world!

And speaking of alumni.... There are over 850 of you in our "denominator" – we don't hear or know about you all but we really want to! If any of you "numerators" know of others who are not in our contact list – please let us know. We would like our IMPH alumni family to be as broad and representative as possible! Today we sent out a query regarding possible research collaborations on our HUJI connect platform and I already have received, within a few hours scores of responses! That is gratifying and heartwarming.

The School is continuing to produce top level research and education. Our faculty members have recently received important grants from the Ministry of Science and other agencies. We recently presented a successful clinical conference on environment and health at Hadassah, and a paper co-written by two of our teachers (Dr. Hochner and Prof. Friedlander) has been chosen as one of the "Papers of the Year (2016) by the American Journal of Epidemiology.

So with these good tidings, I wish you all a happy spring (of fall if you are in the Southern Hemisphere) and every success in the important work that you are all doing.

Ora Paltiel, Braun School Director

### A Message from Dr. Maureen Malowany—IMPH Alumni Academic Coordinator

Dear Alumni,

As we head into both Passover and Easter, we think of all that revives, that restores, that brings new life and hope. As you have seen on our Facebook page – and heard from Yehuda in his message – we enjoyed our IMPH student Pesach seder a few days ago and fondly remember others with many of you.

Our funding renewal means expect emails from me in your inbox through HUJI connect after the holidays. We learn from our alumni – your work, ideas, experiences – to help guide us in terms of planning future local activities or events. I remind you that we have funding to assist with your preparation and attendance at international conferences, online short-term training courses and short-term research projects through Pears Seed Grant funding.

Reut is constantly updating your profiles as new information comes to us. Please do keep us informed of job changes, advocacy work, networks with which you are involved, reports and publications. Your individual successes inspire others – do share!!

Wishing you a lovely Easter, Passover or- as Yehuda has said – whatever holiday you celebrate in these next months!!

Warm regards,

Maureen

IMPH Alumni Academic Coordinator



### A Message from Ms. Reut Kramer—IMPH Alumni Communication Coordinator

Dear All,

I am back in the School for three months now, and it seems like everything is back on track. Communicating with Alumni, and getting such amazing responses of willingness to cooperate with us, is what makes my work special. I read your emails which are filled not only with updates or information, but with such warm feelings to the School. It is so good to be back!

I would take this opportunity to thank Rachel for replacing me on my maternity leave, and welcome her to the IMPH team as the Media Coordinator!

Wishing you all a wonderful spring and happy holidays!

Best regards,

Reut

## A Message from Ms. Rachel Bernstein— IMPH Media Coordinator

With a new year, we've taken a fresh approach to our promotion of the International MPH program. We are constantly being told that people should hear more often about this great program, that it's been one of the hidden gems of Hebrew University. Until now, we've relied on your great help and word-of-mouth to bring in new applicants and new partners to our program. We figured now we should complement your efforts with some better promotion and PR tactics of our own. Of course, nothing beats the experience and honest words of an alumnus or alumna, which is exactly how we're going to keep things going.

**EXPLORE THE INTERNATIONAL MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
AT BRAUN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY MEDICINE, HEBREW UNIVERSITY-HADASSAH

Promoting a Community of Growth through an International Master of Public Health

More than 50 years experience in the international public health field, the Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine at Hebrew University-Hadassah

<p>"The MPH changed my life completely because I have realized how the people, the passionate people, can change the landscape of the health of the population."</p> <p>Dr. Jamilya Sadykova, Kazakhstan, Class of 2000/2001</p>	<p>"Being able to study with doctors, nurses, and health professionals from all around the world is so exciting. I looked at the courses offered and that was when I knew I had to apply."</p> <p>Nina Lavi, USA, Class of 2014/2015</p>	<p>"It's one of the best programs in terms of epidemiology. It gave me the confidence to become head of a new research organization in a global multinational company."</p> <p>Dr. Soumik Kalita, India, Class of 2006/2007</p>
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Our new website, [www.imphhuji.com](http://www.imphhuji.com), is a colorful complement to the school's current website, and focuses more heavily on promoting the program to prospective students. We want to make it easy to understand how the program works, how to apply for studies, and what are the new and great things we are doing all the time as an extension of the school. This means including alumni perspectives, feedback, and promoting the work that you've been doing in the field and in the office.

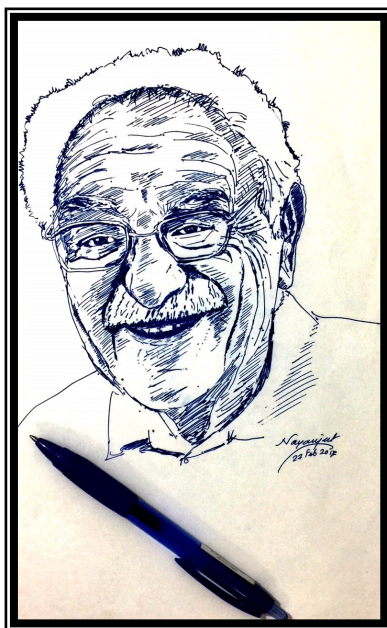
With the help of Dr. Gbenga Adebayo (Class of 2015-2016), we've established a more prominent Facebook voice, and created social media accounts on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/imph\\_huji](http://www.twitter.com/imph_huji)), Instagram ([www.instagram.com/imph.huji](http://www.instagram.com/imph.huji)), and YouTube (<http://bit.ly/2mexpGQ>). These accounts all supplement the message from you about your time here as a student, and what you've been able to bring back home after your studies have finished.

Thanks to you for your help and inspiration in getting our message out there, and we'll keep you updated with our new promotion projects!

Ms. Rachel Bernstein



## Remembering Professor Joe Abramson (1924-2017)



*A Sketch of Prof. Abramson Z"L Made by Nayanjeet Chaudhury (India, 2005/2006)*

Professor Joseph H. Abramson (1924-2017) began his life in Johannesburg, South Africa. He completed his BSc (1942) and MBChB (1947) at the prestigious Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg. Following his clinical graduation, and three years of hospital appointments and general practice, Prof. Abramson began what would be his life-long work in social medicine and public health, with a two year training course at the Institute of Family and Community Health, Durban, South Africa. For the next 11 years (1950-1961), during the Apartheid Era of South Africa's history, Prof. Abramson worked as a Medical Officer, Family Physician and, from 1960-1961, as Senior Family Physician and Acting Head of the Institute. During this time, Prof. Abramson lectured at the Department of Sociology and Social Work and was appointed Clinical Tutor, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and, from 1960-1961, Head of the Department of Social, Preventive and Family Medicine, University of Natal. The Institute, pioneered and led by the late Prof. Sidney Kark, was home to a revolution in population-level primary health care, serving rural, urban and peri-urban African, Coloured, European and Indian communities in rural Pholela, now Kwa-Zulu Natal. (Howard Philipps, The Return of the Pholela Experiment, Medical History and Primary Health Care in Post-Apartheid South Africa, *American Journal of Public Health*, October 2014, Vol. 104, No. 10)

Prof. Abramson left South Africa and immigrated to Israel with his wife, Elinor, and family in 1961 joining the Department of Social Medicine, Hebrew University Medical School (Jerusalem) – the Department founded by Prof. Sidney Kark that has become The Braun School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Prof. Abramson had a prodigious publishing history: textbooks notably 'Making Sense of Data' and "Research Methods in Community Medicine", articles and statistical software, which continue to inspire teachers, students, researchers and practitioners around the world. Prof. Abramson retired as Professor of Social Medicine in 1992 but continued as Emeritus Professor to teach epidemiology and statistics to Israeli and international students until close to his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Prof. Abramson passed away peacefully on Friday February 17, 2017 in his home in Jerusalem, surrounded by his children and grandchildren.

[Eulogies given at Prof. Abramson's funeral](#)

## Alumni Remember

I read of the transition of Prof Abramson at the ripe age of 92 years. His was certainly a full and fulfilled life... a great scholar, a wonderful teacher, an extraordinary great mind, and a gentleman of distinction and excellence in every respect.

His memory lingers on in my mind from the classes I was fortunate to take from him, and from that "extraordinary" moment of experience I had with him as my examiner for my thesis. I am sure that his image and memory lingers on in the mind of all those who were fortunate to have passed through him.

My condolences to his family and the entire school family, including our teachers and fellow alumni. May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

-Prof. Adesegun Fatusi, Nigeria, IMPH 1994/1995

It is with deep sadness that I received the notification of the passing away of Professor Abrahamson. I have been so fortunate to have come under his tutelage as an IMPH student of 1994/95 and my continuing love for epidemiology had its beginnings with this experience with him. I had often been asked the question as to where I learnt epidemiology and I had attributed this to his name and often received a 'wow' comment from fellow epidemiologists who know of him and hold high regard for his knowledge and experience. They are envious of the fact that I have been one of the privileged ones.

He has such big shoes to fill and he will be greatly missed. May his soul rest in peace and may his family find peace in their bereavement knowing that they have someone whom the world of epidemiology and public health hold dear and respect for.

-Dr Salanieta T. Saketa, Fiji, IMPH 1994/1995

I got so sorry to hear that Prof Abramson passed away. I was lucky to meet him during my IMPH course in Jerusalem. He was such a good teacher and role model for us. I am sure he will be always with us with his inputs to our lives and with his book "Research Methods in Community Medicine" that I refer to my students frequently.

-Dr. Belgin Unal Aslan, Turkey, IMPH 1997/1998

It is my great sadness and deep regrets the passing away of respected Professor Joseph H. Abramson who was very kind to all students. I believe that his contributions to Survey Methods and unique approach to Epidemiology and Public Health will last forever. I express my condolence on behalf of my family to Professor Joe Abramson's family. I pray for his soul to rest in peace.

-Prof. Sathian Yovapue, Thailand, IMPH 1973/1974



I feel so pained at this moment that I am at a loss of words. It was actually Prof. Abramson's book Survey Methods in Community Medicine that drove me to seek a scholarship to go to Hadassah-Braun School to study IMPH so that I could attend his class once in my life time. I was doing residency in Community Medicine at that time and my understanding of Epidemiology and quantitative approach to public health problems was substantially poor. My cravings were so intense that despite so far being a mediocre student, I overcame every obstacle to win just one seat in any discipline in whole of Israel offered every year by Moshe Greidinger Rotary International Scholarship, thus fulfilling my dream at last to be a part of the IMPH team in 2005-06.

Besides all the great learning that I had with all the fantastic teachers, I have special memories from Prof. Abramson's class. He would give us several papers one week ahead of the scheduled class so that we could come prepared to demonstrate our newly gained competencies in reviewing published research particularly epidemiological ones. We left no stones un-turned to crack them but we discovered that almost every student had a different approach to the problems cited in the papers. Finally Prof. would reveal the new techniques and methods that he had planned for that class and smile at the awe struck pupils seeing how simply he explained everything. I did ask him, "Prof. You didn't have a formal training in Epi, so how did you learn it?" and the answer was as cool as his ever pleasing disposition, "by doing". To a subsequent question on "how to continue learning Epi once we graduated", in fact he had the same answer. His teaching had a profound impact in my life and I shall cherish till the end of my life the proximity I had with him for that one year.

I pray for his soul to rest in peace! Shall miss him forever. At the same time, I am committed to spread his extra-ordinary teachings in whatever capacity I am in.

-Dr. Nayanjeet Chaudhury, India, IMPH 2005/2006

It is indeed heartbreaking news. I was lucky to attend his course "Selected topics in Epidemiology" in 2007-08.

I still remember his witty comments and depth of his knowledge.

Recently I attended IPHACON (Indian Public Health Association Conference) in Jodhpur, India. I was really emotional when I suggested BEST books in research methods, epidemiology and interpretation of data (making sense of data) to young post graduate students of community medicine/family medicine. Both Prof Gordis (he delivered key note address in 2008) and J. Abramson are not with us today but let us try our best to walk the path shown by them to improve health of a common man in the world.

May his soul rest in peace.

-Ajay Phatak, India, IMPH 2007/2008

Wow....this is very sad. I remember the competition amongst us all in first semester to make sure we make his elite Epi 2 class. How can one forget those fond memories & the numerous articles to digest and discuss within the shortest possible time? He sure brought home the theory of epidemiology in first Semester into real practice in the second semester. Adieu Prof Abrahamson, the 2012/13 cohort surely learnt so much from you. Rest In Peace and we wish your family the fortitude to bear this irreparable loss.

-Dr. Rilwan Raji, Nigeria, IMPH 2102/2103

## Highlighting an Alumnus

### Dr. Guillermo Troya, MD, MPH, MS (Ecuador, 1979/1980)

Dr. Guillermo Troya is a medical doctor from Ecuador. Dr. Troya received his MD degree from the Universidad Central del Ecuador in Quito, Ecuador in 1979. Upon graduation, he spent one year in the rural mountains of Ecuador, in an area with chronic iodine deficiency, as a field researcher and community organizer in a research project supported by the Ministry of Health of Ecuador. A year later, he was awarded a MASHAV scholarship to study in the IMPH Program. Upon his return home in 1981, he began working at the National Research Institute in the Ministry of Health of Ecuador, and a year later was appointed Head of the Health Department of the National Council of Science and Technology. In 1984 Dr. Troya was granted a Fulbrht/Hubert H. Humphrey Scholarship by the government of the USA and completed a MSc in Science and Technology at George Washington University in Washington, DC, and a Diploma in International Development from the American University. He then completed a one-year fellowship at the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) in International Health.



Upon returning home in 1986, Dr. Troya took up the position of Senior Adviser to the Minister of Health and National Director of International Affairs of the Ministry of Education, a post that he held for almost ten years. During this period, he contributed to the strengthening of human resources through the National Fellowship Council, and formal training of MoH senior staff in the field of International Health, which contributed to the creation of a cadre of senior staff in charge of the management of international cooperation.

In March 1998, Dr. Troya joined PAHO as an International Health Systems and Services Adviser in Jamaica, Panama, Belize, and Trinidad & Tobago. In each of these countries, he stayed for 4-5 years in charge of supporting the Ministries of Health in the strengthening of the health system, human resources, integration of health service delivery, national health information systems, and evidence-based policy formulation. In 2011, he was appointed as the PAHO/WHO Representative in Suriname and played a central role in that country's adoption of the WHO Health in All Policies (HiAP) Initiative within the framework of the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), with the international support of Sir Michael Marmot (then Head of the WHO Commission of Social Determinants of Health).

Dr. Troya retired from PAHO/WHO in April 2016, after almost 20 years of professional dedication to the Caribbean Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean Region.

Upon retirement, he was asked by PAHO and the Universidad Central of Ecuador to coordinate the establishment of an International Master Degree Program in International Health, a position he holds till today.

## Alumni News

A qualitative study led by Jane Osindo (Kenya, 2015/2016) offers insights into the challenges faced by CHVs in urban informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. The findings of the study suggest that there is need for close coordination between the national government and community units for CHVs to contribute to improved health outcomes at the local level. The full study titled, "Challenges and opportunities for promoting maternal, new born, and child health in urban informal settlements: perspectives of community health volunteers in Nairobi, Kenya" is available here: <http://aps.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/927>



Rajesh Kumar Rai (India, 2010-2011) and Jing Luo (China, 2013-2014), along with Prof. Ted Tulchinsky, recently published a paper on Vitamin K supplementation in World Journal of Pediatrics.

Follow link to read the article:

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12519-016-0062-6>

Dr. Alvaro Rivera (Guatemala, 2014/2015) has been accepted to a competitive Health Innovation Fellowship program hosted by INCAE Business School and sponsored by the Central American Health Care initiative. His project proposal explores using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) as a tool to train indigenous Community Health Care Workers on Chronic Disease prevention in different dialects.

Nathan Martin Reynolds (USA, 2013/2014) was accepted to Ohio University's Medical School at Cleveland Clinic's South Pointe Hospital! We wish Nathan good luck and success with his studies!





Mazal tov to our Netanela (Nettie) Faratci (USA, 2013/2014) who married Moishe Aharon.  
We all wish you good health and many happy years together!

Congratulations to our Kanan Desai (India, 2015/2016) who got married recently. Best wishes to the newlyweds, for a long and happy life together!



Mazal Tov to Joseph Akuze Waiswa (Uganda, 2013/2014) upon his marriage! We wish you and your beautiful wife a lifetime of joy together, in good health!

Joseph has been accepted as a PhD candidate in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Congratulations and good luck!

## News from the School

Israeli and Palestinian researchers led by Prof. Ora Paltiel, have conducted an extensive epidemiological study examining risk factors for B-cell type of non-Hodgkin lymphoma and its subtypes in these two populations.

Read full article here:

<https://goo.gl/VHIHIQ>

Dr. Hagai Levine with funding from the Ministry of Health and Israel Cancer Organization, have created a new SMS program that helps Arab smokers kick the habit.

Read all about the program in the *The Jerusalem Post* article here: [goo.gl/l4pSki](http://goo.gl/l4pSki)

Dr. Maureen Malowany, our Alumni Academic Coordinator, has recently co-published an article at *the American Journal of Public Health* titled "The University–Public Health Partnership for Public Health Research Training in Quebec, Canada".

[goo.gl/nrRRY1](http://goo.gl/nrRRY1)



We have six Faculty members in the 2015/16 Outstanding Teachers List of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (based on anonymous course evaluations by students)!

Congratulations to Prof. Ora Paltiel, Prof. Yehuda Neumark, Dr. Hagit Hochner, Prof. Ram Weiss, Prof. Michael Hartal and Dr. Maureen Malowany of the Braun School of Public Health for the well-deserved honor.