

Israeli Medical Achievements

Leading Israeli menopause researcher finds positive results for hormone replacement therapy

The UK-based International Menopause Society (IMS), headed for the past two years by Israeli menopause specialist and Tel Aviv University (TAU) Professor Amos Pines, announced good news this month for women around the world: controversial estrogen replacement therapy in fact decreases the chances of heart disease among its users during the early postmenopausal period.

Research like this and continuing education on women's health issues are the mission of the IMS. It is this research and education, Pines suggests, that is in danger of being smothered in political issues.

An active member of the IMS for the past 12 years, Pines, a member of TAU's Sackler Faculty of Medicine, was voted in as IMS president for a three-year term by the society's board. It was his academic merit and enthusiasm for education on women's health that made

him an obvious choice. A board of 12 international members voted him in.

One of the most meaningful and recent projects the IMS has undertaken is to reverse public opinion on the risks of hormone replacement therapy. After a 2002 Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study was published, more than half of menopausal women everywhere stopped using this effective anti-hot-flash and mood-balancing therapy prescribed by their doctors.

"Some people called it a tsunami," recalls Pines, "It was a catastrophic event in the history of menopause. And we were the only society to raise our voices against the new NIH guidelines. We believed that the interpretation of the study was not right and led to the wrong conclusions and misleading media coverage. Too many women stopped taking hormones and they suffered for no valid scientific reason."

As for the recent proposal by UK academics to boycott Israel, says Pines:



Professor Amos Pines: Here at the IMS.

"In science, there is no room for politics. Here at the IMS, we are all scientists and we are all physicians dedicated to one cause and that is to help people. Whoever involves politics in scientific affairs is damaging the whole ethical principle of scientific research."

The IMS is the most-trusted independent menopause society in North America and Europe; the world's most important opinion leaders are at its helm. The Society is also active in developing standards and education on women's health in Asia, the Far East, Latin America and Central America.

"The fact that I am from Israel is irrelevant among our members," says Pines. "We physicians who care about women's health are really all from the same family, with the same goals."

Today, the headquarters of the IMS is in the UK, but meetings among its international experts, hundreds of them, can take place anywhere. Most recently, the IMS met in Budapest and among the delegates were people from countries that do not have peace treaties with Israel.

Concludes Pines, "No one is thinking that the president of our organization is an Israeli. And if it were to happen, I think that a boycott simply would not hold any water with our society. Our members agree that this proposed UK boycott is completely out of context in the scientific world."

By ISRAEL21c staff

Prof. Ring - President of the European Federation of Research in Rehabilitation

Prof. Haim Ring, Chair of the Neurological Rehabilitation Department at the Loewenstein Rehabilitation Center of Clalit Health Services in Raanana, has been unanimously elected as President of the European Federation of Research in Rehabilitation (EFRR) during the 9th Congress held in Budapest August 26-29th, this year. Dr. Airvars Vetra, convener of the next meeting in Riga (Latvia) in 2009 will be the Secretary. The EFRR is an interdisciplinary organization of people from different European countries and different professions. The other members of the Council are from Sweden, Finland, Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Germany and Latvia. They are medical doctors -rehab and neurology - as well as a vocational rehab professional, OT, architect and a psychologist. At the same opportunity the Editorial Board of the Int'l Journal Rehab Research, the EFRR organ, changed (effective as of 1.1.08) and Prof. Ring will serve as Associate Editor. ■



Prof. Haim Ring