

January 2011

...fostering medical research collaboration across the UK, Israel and the Middle East

## Summary to date

- **41 Fellowships awarded during the first two years of funding.**
- **Fellowships awarded across Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territory and the UK.**
- **Ongoing collaborations between home and host institutions, with further research planned in many cases.**
- **Wide spectrum of biomedical research supported.**

## 41 successful Fellowships awarded

The Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowship Scheme provides opportunities for short-term exchange of biomedical researchers between the UK and countries in the Middle East.

Each fellowship provides funds to cover travel and subsistence costs for up to one month.

The scheme provides a starting point for collaborations and facilitates the sharing of knowledge and ideas. Participants' experiences to date have resulted in joint research endeavours and ongoing collaborations between the countries involved.

Feedback has been extremely positive and the response from researchers, their home academic institutions and their hosts has been overwhelmingly in favour of the scheme.

The scheme has proved highly successful with 41 fellowships awarded during the first two years. In many cases networks and new research partnerships have been established.

While the individual cost of each fellowship is relatively small, the benefits are widespread and extend far beyond the length of the fellowship.

Future generations depend not only on medical advances and discoveries but also on the understanding gained from collaboration on a national and international level.

The scheme was established by Lord Turnberg FMedSci in partnership with the Academy of Medical Sciences, in memory of his late Son, Daniel, a Doctor who had a strong interest in the development of research links



**Daniel Turnberg**

between Israel, the Middle East and the UK.

We are truly grateful to all our generous supporters for making these fellowship awards possible. Only your support makes this future a reality.

**Lord Turnberg FMedSci**



**Professor Sir John Bell  
FRS HonFREng PMedSci,  
President, Academy of  
Medical Sciences**

*'This scheme is unique in its coverage of the UK and the Middle East. It's good news for scientific endeavour and international understanding'*

## Wide-ranging research

... into childhood obesity, causes and treatment of cancer, stem cell transplantation and much more.

Fellowship recipients cover a wide range of specialisms and have set a high standard for the future.

Researchers from the first round of awards have a broad-ranging portfolio of research, examples being the investigation of causes, treatment and care of cancer including multiple myeloma, colorectal cancer, breast cancer and neuro-endocrine tumours.

This newsletter offers a small insight into the breadth of research undertaken and the wealth of different experiences gained.

Dr Gal Dubnov-Raz from the Edmond and Lily Safra Children's Hospital in Israel

with colleagues at Exeter University to measure the effects of exercise on childhood obesity.

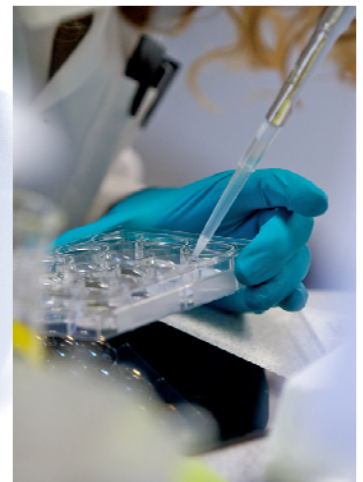
Dr Rasmi AbuHelu from Al-Quds University, Palestine, visited Imperial College to collaborate on research within the field of infectious diseases and autoimmunity.

Mr Tiarnan Keenan from Manchester Royal Hospital, visited St John Eye Hospital, East Jerusalem. He worked with colleagues on the treatment of eye traumas.

Other research areas such as environmental factors affecting future health, nerve development and repair, and web-based training for

pharmacology, are just a few of the fields covered.

For a full list of awardees please see overleaf.



## Case studies

### Exercise and childhood obesity - Dr Gal Dubnov-Raz (Israel/UK)



*'We are continuing to collaborate with the research centre in Exeter'*

Dr Gal Dubnov-Raz, a clinical paediatrician and sports medicine specialist from the Edmond and Lily Safra Children's Hospital in Israel visited the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre at the University of Exeter in 2009.

#### **Gal's experience:**

Paediatric obesity, exercise and fitness are becoming increasingly important public health issues. Few centres in the world perform top level research on these topics. Leading the list is the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre in Exeter.

As a paediatrician and sports medicine specialist with a Master's degree in clinical nutrition, I still felt my training did not adequately provide the knowledge and experience to deal with many clinical cases and research questions. The research fellowship was an excellent way to visit a world-leading centre and broaden my knowledge.

The two main goals of my visit were to obtain hands-on experience in paediatric exercise testing and research, and to create new professional relationships in order to cooperate on future projects.

I wanted to learn how to assess the effects of physical activity in healthy children, and then apply these techniques to children with chronic health conditions, such as lung diseases and muscle disorders, to better understand their physiology and tailor their exercise prescriptions.

The time I spent on the exchange was extremely worthwhile. I have been able to take back with me some hands on experience with exercise testing, and a greater understanding of the physiology of the exercising child. We are still now in active research collaboration with the centre in Exeter.'

### Autoimmune disorders - Dr Rasmi AbuHelu (Palestinian Territory/UK)



*'One of the most interesting experiences of my life'*

Dr Rasmi AbuHelu, a non-clinical immunologist came to Imperial College London from Al-Quds University, East Jerusalem to collaborate on research into autoimmune disorders.

#### **Rasmi's experience:**

I feel that I gained a lot of research and managerial experience during my visit to the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases at Imperial College London.

I established and extended my international research collaboration network and was

very pleased to be introduced to new technologies and new developments in infectious diseases and immunity.

Working closely with Professor Daniel Altmann, I also succeeded in updating my experimental knowledge.

I am delighted to report that, subsequent to this visit, we are planning further collaborative work including a joint proposal on developing novel multiple vaccines to protect against respiratory tract infections.

I believe this visit marked just

the start of what I envisage to be a long-standing and mutually beneficial collaboration with Imperial College.

I am now totally convinced by the benefits of a 'team work' approach. There is exceptional value in our combined efforts. I left London with great joy after a very successful visit. This will certainly remain one of the most interesting experiences of my life.

I would recommend that this experience be spread to other colleagues.

### Eye injury treatment - Mr Tiarnan Keenan (UK/Palestinian Territory)



*'This work will make a real difference...as a result, several articles are due for publication'*

Mr Tiarnan Keenan, a clinical academic ophthalmologist from Manchester Royal Eye Hospital visited St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem in the spring of 2009.

#### **Tiarnan's experience:**

I'd already spent two months at the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem the previous year as a volunteer eye doctor, studying the prevalence and causes of blindness in the Palestinian population.

Having started a few small projects at St John, including

an examination of the features of severe eye injuries presenting to the hospital, I was keen to return to carry on the work. The Fellowship provided the perfect vehicle to do this.

I worked with local doctors, looking at records of those patients over the past eight years who had presented with severe eye trauma and helped to make recommendations on the best way to manage these conditions.

I feel this work will make a real difference. Seeing how clinical medicine and research can be practised in challenging environments, and dealing with different populations, languages and problems was very rewarding.

As a direct result of this visit several articles are due for publication. Tiarnan hopes to return soon for further planned collaborative research projects.

## Removing boundaries by 'filling the gap'

The Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowship Scheme believes that by encouraging strong connections and joint biomedical research across institutions in the UK, Israel and the Middle East, a collaborative ethos and greater understanding will result.

'We felt there was a gap,' explains Leslie Turnberg, a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and founder of the programme. 'We had heard of many young post-doctoral researchers in the

Middle East desperately seeking ways for knowledge transfer with a Western department. But often they were too engaged in their clinical work or research to leave for several months, or they had families they could not leave for too long.'

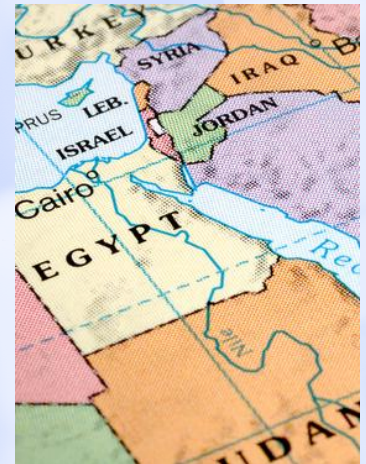
The scheme is one of a kind, offering shorter exchanges which help to develop research links in a more manageable and realistic way.

All participants in the scheme are committed to arrange

further collaboration themselves.

One sponsor, Professor Isaac Yaniv, Head of Paediatric Oncology, Schneider

Children's Medical Center of Israel, who was particularly inspired by his visiting fellowship student commented: *'My intention is to try to build this kind of co-operation in other fields of paediatric oncology.'*



## Feedback from academic hosts & recipients

*'I would like to extend appreciation on behalf of Al-Quds University. We are very pleased with the number of fellowships and quality of research that is supported via the Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowship Scheme. You have supported an area of great importance to Al-Quds University and Palestine at large.'* Samira Barghouthi, Dean at Al-Quds University, Jerusalem.

*'I think it is an excellent Scheme.'* Sir Walter Bodmer FRS HonFRSE FMedSci, Weatherall Institute, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford,

commenting on Dr Naffa's visit, University of Jordan.

*'The visit was very productive for Dr Goldberg and us. I believe that we have cemented a collaboration that will be of great mutual benefit.'* Professor Ian Tomlinson FMedSci, Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, Oxford on Dr Yael Goldberg's visit from the Oncology Department, Sharet Institute, Hadassah-Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

*'After returning from Oxford Dr Musallam's research output almost doubled.'* Professor

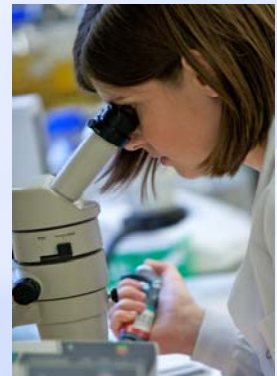
Ziyadeh, American University of Beirut on Dr Musallam's visit to the Institute of Molecular Medicine, Oxford, UK.

*'I feel I have gained much from my time spent at the Marsden and I hope that this is a connection that will continue for many years. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and I hope others will be able to gain from the Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowship Scheme as I certainly have.'* Dr Helen Toledano from the Schneider Medical Centre of Israel on her visit to the Institute of Cancer Research, Royal Marsden Hospital, UK.

### Applying to the scheme:

If you are interested in applying for a Daniel Turnberg UK/Middle East Travel Fellowship Award, please visit the Academy's website for further details:

[www.acmedsci.ac.uk/turnberg](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/turnberg)



## Making it happen

A Fellowship covers airfare and provides a subsistence allowance for a period of up to four weeks.

This relatively short period of time allows us to provide the maximum possible number of exchanges and thereby provide more opportunities for collaboration now and in the future.

We are delighted to have offered so many Fellowships to date and our thanks must go

to our many generous funders.

We would especially like to note the ongoing support from The Royal College of Physicians, the Wellcome Trust and the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust, along with many other generous contributions from charitable institutions and individuals. Further details are available on the Academy's website.

[www.acmedsci.ac.uk/turnberg](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/turnberg)

### Supporting the scheme:

With your help we can expand the number of fellowships we offer, creating vital networks and connections for the future.

For further information or to make a donation, please contact:

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## Fellowship recipients

The 41 fellowships awarded over the last two years are listed below.  
For further information visit <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/turnberg>

2009		
Name	From	Area of interest
Dr Lina Basel-Vanagaite	Israel	Paediatric genetics
Dr Rasmi AbuHelu	Palestinian Territory	Host responses to autoimmune & infectious disease
Dr Yael Goldberg	Israel	Oncogenetics
Dr Samah Desoukey	Egypt	Haematology
Dr Helen Toledano	Israel	Paediatric brain tumours
Dr Yasin Tayem	Palestinian Territory	e-learning
Mr Tiarnan Keenan	UK	Ophthalmology
Dr Alon Chen	Israel	Stress-related hormones and neuro-programming
Dr Randa Naffa	Jordan	Cancer genotyping
Dr Ayala Uri	Israel	Cognitive behavioural therapy
Dr Belal Rahhal	Palestinian Territory	Nerve development and repair following injury
Professor Eran Pras	Israel	Congenital cataracts
Dr Gal Dubnov-Raz	Israel	Paediatric obesity
Dr Lina Quteineh	Palestinian Territory	Pharmacogenetics
Dr Sharon Anavi-Goffer	UK	Molecular pharmacology of cannabinoids
Dr Rula Abdul-Ghani	Palestinian Territory	Breast cancer
Dr Maralyn Druce	UK	Neuroendocrine tumours
Dr Dana Al Hattab	Jordan	Human genetics
Dr Sahar Sharaf	Egypt	Inborn errors of metabolism
Mr Khaled Mussalam	Lebanon	Haematology
2010		
Name	From	Area of interest
Dr Pacint Moez	Egypt	Clinical pathology
Mrs Efrat Kliper	Israel	Neuroscience and imaging
Dr Ayam Hussain	Palestinian Territory	Biochemistry and genetics
Dr Sharon Anavi-Goffer	UK	Behavioural science
Dr Sefi Kronenberg	Israel	Child and adolescent psychiatry
Mrs Smadar Ovadia-Caro	Israel	Neurobiology
Dr Ebtesam El-Gezawy	Egypt	Transplant biology
Dr Shimon Rabichev	Israel	Behavioural science
Dr Abdellatif Shawar	Palestinian Territory	Endocrinology
Dr David Zadok	Israel	Ophthalmology
Dr Jeremy Hall	UK	Psychiatry
Dr Tania Sheynis	Israel	Molecular and cell biology
Dr Asaf Vivante	Israel	Paediatrics
Dr Maher Khadour	Palestinian Territory	Pharmacology, quality and safety
Dr Malena Cohen	Israel	Paediatric pulmonology
Dr Yael Haberman-Ziv	Israel	Molecular biology and genetics
Dr Mohamed Abdelfattah	UK	Urogynaecology
Dr Asama Mohammad	Israel	Internal medicine, haematology
Dr Mayyada Wazaify	Jordan	Clinical pharmacology
Dr Uri Moshe Arad	Israel	Rheumatology
Dr Shay Ben-Shachar	Israel	Medical genetics