



# Christian Friends of Rambam Newsletter

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## 2012 FACTS & FIGURES

- 5,000 Births
- 40,000 Surgeries
- 3,138 people with injuries visited the ER
  - 981 treated for severe trauma
  - 24% under the age of 14

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## The Trauma of Quality Care

We rarely consider the impact that caring for trauma patients has on health care professionals (HCP). When symptoms of secondary trauma were noted in some HCPs who fought a losing battle to save the lives of three critically injured patients, Rambam researchers took a closer look. Was secondary trauma more common in HCPs than is normally recognized? If so, what steps could be taken to help them?

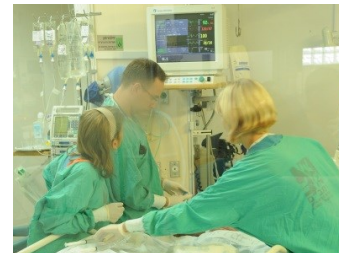
Rambam's trauma unit cares for some of the most difficult patients in the country; while many patients survive, the battle for others is lost. The study involved 50 of Rambam's nurses who care for the most challenging patients. The study

uncovered stories that normally the nurses would have been too embarrassed to share. Nightmares, difficulty functioning at home, and memories, haunted them two years after caring for particularly tragic burn patients.

The study revealed that older HCPs were more prone to secondary trauma than younger ones. Because men speak less about emotional distress, this problem was experienced more by them; whereas women found it easier to talk about their struggle. Interestingly, nurses with academic degrees were more aware of the dangers of secondary stress and were better equipped to avoid it. How? Simple awareness, and

being able to talk about the helplessness they felt when caring for their patients.

The main researcher, Sergey Altunin, pointed out that it helps to focus on patients who recover. "These patients are our compensation for all the difficult cases."



**Intensive care unit at Rambam.**

*Photo by Raanan Tal*

## Not for Another 100 Years!



**Julia Bierger, age 27, from Kiryat Bialik, with her firstborn son.**

*Photo by Pioter Filter*

Julia Bierger's expected birth date was mid-January. However, 12/12/12 seemed to call out to her firstborn son—it was now or never. The baby, born at 36 weeks and weighing 2.57 kg, was not satisfied with just the date. His birth occurred precisely at 12:00 noon in Rambam's delivery suite!

"I have heard about many people arranging to give birth on this date, but in my case, my

son is the one who decided," Julia shared. "The exact date and hour—this was ordained from above. The circumstances of his special birth will be with him for the rest of his life."

By the end of 12/12/12, 2,590 boys and 2,486 girls were born at Rambam—each one precious and received with thanksgiving. A birthday like this won't occur for another 100 years, on January 1, 2101.

## From the ER to the Battlefield



**IDF soldiers evacuate wounded to Rambam.**

*Photo by Pieter Filter*

Operation Pillar of Defense took place 150 kilometers south of Rambam, but the hospital distinctly felt the war's echoes.

Thirty physicians, ten nurses, and ten security staffers were recruited in an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) emergency call-up at the very beginning of the campaign.

A number of these same physicians, whose faces are well known to the public through Rambam press

releases and public relations materials, suddenly became anonymous—they were serving in elite Air Force units that rescue the wounded from the battlefield. Each time they performed a rescue, censorship regulations instructed the media to hide their faces.

During times of national emergency, certain physicians and other staff members who “belong” to crucial departments at Rambam are often more urgently required elsewhere.

We hope the battlefield will not move too close to home. But if it does, the Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Hospital has been built to assure a safe and secure environment to care for the sick and wounded.

Your prayers and gifts will help assure that this underground hospital is equipped and ready should the battlefield come to Northern Israel.

## All That Glitters

On March 26, 2012, an overflow audience gathered at Rambam to hear about contemporary scientific versions of ancient questions: Why do we age, and why is the aging immune system compromised? Are there life habits that distinguish people who experience extreme old age without poor mental function?

These questions and more were explored at the first annual Symposium in Memory of Prof. David Barzilai and Prof. Ami Barzilai, who helped found Rambam's Division of Internal Medicine (David) and Department of Surgery (Ami) and the Technion's Rappaport Faculty of Medicine.

Following that meeting, Dr. Nir Barzilai served as guest

editor for a special issue on aging in Rambam's free open-access peer reviewed scientific publication, the [Rambam Maimonides Medical Journal](#) (RMMJ).

Both the meeting and RMMJ highlighted the amazing genetic secrets that affect aging.



**Ilan Zakai today.** Click on the picture to view a short movie about Ilan.

*Photo by Edward Kaprov*

## Chanukah Miracles Happen Here

In a kitchen accident during Chanukah 34 years ago, the expressive face of Ilan Zakai, then a mischievous toddler, was severely disfigured by boiling oil. Ilan was rushed to a local hospital and then to Rambam Health Care Campus for more intensive treatment.

Ilan was hospitalized for four months and underwent many

surgeries. After his release he had to return for follow-up treatments. “It was hard for me to leave the house because I was afraid that people would look at me,” he relates. “My mother encouraged me to go out and not to be reclusive, but it was tough.”

The lonely and rejected Ilan has become a professional

makeup artist in the entertainment field. Not only does he make up his own face so successfully that the burn scars can scarcely be recognized, but he also conducts makeup workshops in the Department of Plastic Surgery at Rambam.

# Visiting the Sick

Maimonides, known by the acronym Rambam, was perhaps the greatest and most famous Jewish physician of all times. Rambam's instructions regarding visiting the sick ring true for us all to this very day.

Why should we, why do we, visit the sick? The obligation is based on several key commandments, including "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). According to Jewish tradition one of the three angels who visited our forefather Abraham was called Raphael (רפאל), meaning God is Physician, and Rophe (רופא) is the same root word (רפא) used for the word Physician today.

This interesting tradition is foundational to achieving the

highest levels of health attainable by acknowledging both medicine's limitations and the patient's need for emotional and spiritual support during the healing process. Hence, the traditional Jewish exhortation to visit the sick.

Some helpful guidelines for visiting the sick include:

- Short visits, as opposed to long ones.
- Visiting sick people of all ages.
- Visiting at a time convenient for the patient: not too early in the morning, not while resting, and not too late at night.
- Bringing an encouraging and happy mood with you.

- Sitting opposite the sick person, where you can be easily seen, not standing over them, nor at their feet or over their head.
- Avoiding bad tidings and emphasizing hope.

Let's all visit the sick, and help them to get well. May we ourselves enjoy the blessing of good health, supported by all who help by delivering health care.

Jesse Lachter, MD  
Clinical Assistant Professor,  
Gastroenterologist  
Rambam Health Care Campus



## *Language, Culture, and Rambam*

# Chanukah at Rambam

Chanukah (also known as the Feast of Dedication or the Feast of Lights) pervades the atmosphere at Rambam, from the employees' dining room and professional meetings to the children's ward in our children's hospital.

In addition to lighting the candles for eight consecutive nights to remember a miracle of light in the Temple, people traditionally give gifts and enjoy tasty treats such as jelly doughnuts (called *sofganiyot*).

At Rambam, candles were lit and everyone ate *sofganiyot*. But in Israel, this is also traditionally a holiday especially for children.

Each evening, volunteers lit candles in the different wards. Children

from all parts of Haifa and the suburbs as well as soldiers, celebrities, and artists visited the hospitalized kids. Gifts, *sofganiyot*, games, songs, and crafts caused these sick children to briefly forget their battles against cancer and other diseases.

Special holiday songs reminded everyone of the essence of Chanukah and its historical and spiritual meaning.

The wonder on the faces of these sick children was for us the real miracle of Chanukah—a festival of miracles.



**Left:** Ido Kozikaro, captain of the Maccabi Haifa basketball team visits children at Rambam.  
**Bottom:** Israeli soldiers playing with children during Chanukah.  
*Photos by Pioter Filter*





## RAMBAM Health Care Campus

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[rambamhospital](https://www.youtube.com/rambamhospital)



Rambam Health Care Campus -  
Hospital



## You Can Help Current Needs at Rambam

We depend on people like you to help us replace old equipment, build new facilities, perform research, and care for our patients. Your gift counts—whatever the amount. Click on the links below for more information on how you can help support the people of Israel via Rambam Health Care Campus.

#### Pray for Us and Tell Others About Us:

Visit our [Christian Friends of Rambam Facebook page](#) often for prayer requests and regular updates about what is happening at Rambam.

**Friends Organizations:** Tax-deductible donations can be made via a Friends organization near you (listed above).

**Giving:** Please [visit our webpage](#) for more information about how you can make a difference in the lives of the people served by Rambam Health Care Campus.

Christian friends from around the world have been praying for and giving for the equipping of our underground hospital. On December 30, 2012, we received a very special gift from our friends in Norway: the funds to cover one basic bed and more in the underground hospital. What an encouraging way to

end 2012!

In this New Year of 2013, we at Rambam would like to thank you for your prayers and giving. May this year be filled with hope and peace, and may you be richly blessed in every way!

# Happy New Year!