

Major Breakthrough At Ben-Gurion University

BEERSHEVA, Israel — A major breakthrough in medical research is taking place at Ben-Gurion University on the body's processing of Vitamin D which may mean the end of suffering for millions of senior citizens and kidney dialysis patients throughout the world.

Dr. Shraga Shany of the Toor Institute, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, together with Prof. David Galinsky, head of the Geriatrics Dept. of Soroka University Hospital in Beersheva found that many nursing home residents suffer from an inadequate supply of Vitamin D3 which is the bone-building form of Vitamin D manufactured by the body. These elderly patients lack D3 even after receiving a sufficient supply through such foods as fish, margarine, and exposure to natural sunlight.

After treating nursing home patients over a six-week period with supplementary doses of Vitamin D, Dr. Shany and Dr. Galinsky found that although the patients absorbed a significant amount of the compound, their kidneys did not manufacture sufficient Vitamin D3 to promote the healing of bones. Their research also clearly demonstrated that the body's ability to produce the essential requisite amount of Vitamin D3 declines with age.

Ben-Gurion University's researchers have also found a link between the kidney's ability to process metabolites from Vitamin D in order for the body to absorb calcium, and success in creating compounds which can use the calcium to build bones. Dr. Shany suggests that treatment of kidney patients with the new synthetic medicine to encourage bone-repairing functions will necessitate application of the drug which imitates the calcium-providing effects of Vitamin D.

It became apparent that a synthetic form of Vitamin D2 would assist elderly patients to overcome their high susceptibility to bone fractures and kidney disorders as well. Another research team at BGU headed by Dr. Shany and Dr. R. S. Kestenbaum together with Dr. Yitzhak Meller and Prof. G. Torok of the Orthopedics Dept. of the Soroka University Hospital discovered that an increase of this form of Vitamin D applied directly at the site of the fracture, helps speed the bone healing process — indicating an exciting and important break-through in this area of treatment.

Interestingly also, the successful manufacture of this synthetic vitamin might also prove important in treating Bedouin mothers and infants in the Negev desert who, according to Dr. Shany, evidence unusual difficulty in producing this bone-restoring compound through natural body processes. The Bedouin's high susceptibility to bone ailments may, finally, and for the first time, be greatly reduced.

A total of \$3 million is being invested in drug research at Teva Pharmaceutical Industries in conjunction with its affiliate, Yeda, the high technology commercial research arm of the Weizmann Institute. The new drug is called 24, 25 dihydroxy Vitamin D3 and will be marketed worldwide for the treatment of osteoporosis, the bone disease common among old people and kidney dialysis patients. Clinical tests of the drug are already under way in Israel and overseas, the results of which are eagerly awaited in medical circles worldwide.

LETTERS

Dear Michael,

I was one of the over ten thousand people who attended the Ingathering for Holocaust survivors in Washington, D.C., last April. One of the most forceful messages that was transmitted in both word and deed is the fact that for many survivors, the nightmare of those horrible years continues to the present day. Thousands of survivors gathered for one week with primary goal, searching for hints and clues about the possible survival of loved ones. It started with the identification labels which all the participants had pinned to their coats, and could be seen on the bulletin boards with requests for information regarding names, and was acutely obvious on the people's faces as they glanced at each other, hoping that somehow fate would repay them for their patience by returning someone they had presumed perished.

It is because of this human tragedy that the Chamber of the Holocaust in Jerusalem recently established a computerized directory of Holocaust survivors, the first comprehensive collection of its kind in the world. Its purpose is to serve as a repository of all known survivors and its success depends on our ability to bring its existence to the attention of as many people as possible. It will help survivors track down their missing loved ones, and will hopefully reunite families which have suffered from the curse of uncertainty.

We are therefore turning with a heartfelt plea to all of your readers: Rabbis, community and lay leaders, organizations and individuals and all those who are either survivors themselves or know survivors, with a request that they contact us in Jerusalem so that we can send them the questionnaire form.

Sadly, we no longer have the luxury of time and patience, as the day is soon approaching when the generation of "survivors" will have passed on entirely. That is why it is so urgent that all possible respondents contact us as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
David Landeau
Executive Director,
Chamber of the Holocaust
P.O. Box 6426
Yerushalayim 91063, Israel

NEW YORK (WNS) — The appeal from a one-year sentence for Kiev refusenik Lev Elbert was denied, according to the Student Struggle For Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews. The 35 year-old engineer asked authorities that his wife be given permission to receive kosher canned meat from abroad to give him in prison. He was sentenced on May 25 by a local Kiev court for alleged refusal to submit to an army reserve callup. He refused on the grounds that this would subject him to a secrecy designation which would further block his immigration to Israel. He was not jailed after the May 25 trial but now must begin serving a labor camp sentence.

American Scouts To Spend Summer Touring Israel

IRVING, Tex. — Scouts of various religious and ethnic backgrounds will spend five weeks visiting Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Bethlehem, Haifa and other spots of interest beginning July 17.

Rabbi William H. Kraus, director, Jewish Relationships, Boy Scouts of America, said the group will participate in camping as well as sightseeing and learning about Israel's people and their customs.

The trip begins with orientation seminars in New York. Kraus said BSA youth made their first trip to Israel in 1961. The last Boy Scout excursion was in 1977. He said Scouts will be housed with Israeli Scouts and their families, and will have the opportunity to live and work on a kibbutz.

This year the trip is the joint venture of the Boy Scouts and the National Jewish Girl Scout Committee of the Synagogue Council of America and is open to ages 14 through 18.

"It's an educational trip and is designed to encourage the exchange of ideas and friendship with the Tsofim, the Israel Boy and Girl Scout Federation," Kraus said. Israeli Scouts make a similar visit to America each year.

Other travel highlights this summer include a visit to the Dead Sea, an oasis in the desert, shopping in ancient bazaars, exploring Elijah's Cave, visiting the Western Wall and seeing an archeological digging site.

The American Scouts are due to return to the United States in mid-August.

Multi-Volume History of The American Jewish Experience Planned

The American Jewish Historical Society has established a special committee to explore the publication of a multi-volume history of the American Jewish experience. The project is part of a series of new initiatives and innovative programs culminating in the Society's celebration of its centennial in 1992.

Professor Henry L. Feingold of Baruch College, Chairman of the Society's Academic Council, in making the announcement, emphasized that the history will strengthen the survival potential of American Jewry and will provide a much needed information resource for the American Jewish community.

Founded 91 years ago, the American Jewish Historical Society is located on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham, MA., where it maintains its library-headquarters containing over 6,000,000 manuscripts, 70,000 volumes, and thousands of photographs, portraits, newspapers, and other research materials relating to the history of Jews in America. Since 1893, it has published a distinguished quarterly journal, now titled AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY, as well as books, pamphlets, exhibit catalogues, and newspapers.

JERUSALEM (WNS) — The Treasury printed another seven billion Shekels last June, bringing to 13 billion Shekels the amount of new currency printed since April. In making the announcement, however, the Treasury promised not to exceed the 70 billion Shekels expected to be printed up to the end of the current fiscal year, a factor that contributes to the country's galloping inflation.

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