



Issue No. 10 for Academic Year 2013-14

February 23, 2014

1

The 5th Brain and Behavior meeting of the Haifa Forum for Brain and Behavior titled "Good stress, Bad stress and Very Bad stress" was held on campus last week and was organized by Prof. Gal Richter Levin and Dr. Mouna Maroun from the *Sagol Department of Neurobiology*. The event attracted many leading brain researchers from Israel and abroad who participated in panel discussions and lectures over the three day event. Two highlights of the event were the awarding of prizes on behalf of the Institute for the Research of Psychological Pressure to 4 students who published articles on brain research, and a poster presentation of research projects where three researchers received prizes for outstanding posters.



2

Typhoon Haiyan which swept through the Philippines in November 2013, was one of the fiercest storms to ravage the country since the 1970's. Dr. Tammy Bar-On, a faculty member at the Graduate School of Creative Arts Therapies and Yael Avinat a student at the school, traveled to the Philippines with the IsraAID Organization to help with the rehabilitation efforts in the country. They spoke to children about grief and loss and created children's books dealing with grief with them.



3

Congratulations to Prof. Nurit Yirmiya. She is the first woman to be elected as the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space. Prof. Yirmiya received her undergraduate degree from the University of Haifa's Departments of Philosophy and Psychology. Her main areas of research are cognitive, emotional, social and genetic aspects of autism and the risk factors involved.

[Haaretz Article](#)



4

The Division for External Relations and Resource Development recently hosted the Researchers' Night Consortium on campus. The Consortium which is made up of various research institutes and science museums met to discuss the 2014 Researchers' Night and to draw conclusions regarding the very successful 2013 event. The Consortium chose the topic of Neurosciences as the main theme for the 2014 event and has forwarded its recommendation to the European Commission who sponsors the event.



5

The ethnic divide in Israel is generating interest in an unlikely source: Iran. Researchers at the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies were surprised to learn that the Channel 10 series produced by Amnon Levi titled "The Ethnic Demon" generated much interest in Iran. The Ezri Center operates the TeHTel website (Tehran-Haifa-Tel Aviv) and translates many articles to Farsi and posts them on the website. In recent months it was the ethnic divide between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Israel that generated a great deal of interest. This interest received wide media attention in Israeli news outlets and Dr. Soli Shahvar interviewed on this issue.

**6**

If you thought this year is worrying in terms of lack of rainfall please take note of the following data: The Land of Israel has experienced droughts lasting for hundreds of years in the past, this is explained by Dr. Michael Lazar of the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences, who managed the scientific drilling at the Dead Sea a few months ago. These findings were found at a scientific drilling in the depth of 460 meters under the basin of the Dead Sea. It allowed researchers to examine the climatic conditions in our area in the last 250,000 years. The findings show that the Dead Sea basin dried up once or twice in the past because of the above mentioned droughts. The findings were published in the [Jerusalem Post](#).

**7**

Prof. Rachel Lev Wiesel, Director of the School of Creative Arts Therapies, unveiled worrying findings at the Beer Sheba Conference for Children's Welfare: only 18% of Jewish children affected by abuse, and less than 5% of Arab children affected by abuse, shared their ordeal. This received widespread media attention in Israel.

**8**

Prof. Fruma Zachs from the Department of Middle Eastern History reviewed the status of women in Syria in light of the ongoing civil war in the country. This review appeared in a YNET article by Dr. Yaron Friedman. Prof. Zachs claims that the women of Syria went through three phases during the civil war: at first many women participated in the demonstrations, however, in the second phase, when the protests turned violent, women were subjected to arrests, torture and murder. In the third phase, when the civil war fully developed they did not take to the streets but participated from home through propaganda and distribution of YouTube videos.

**9**

In an article in the [Jerusalem Post](#) Prof. Daniel Statman from the Department of Philosophy shared the evolution of the petition initiated by faculty members of Israeli Universities regarding the state of African refugees in Israel. He shared that he wished the petition to incorporate reasoning taken from the Jewish religion and biblical texts but this was met with great opposition from his colleagues.

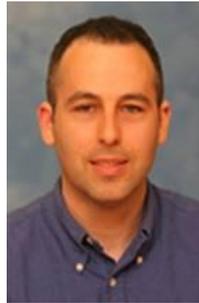
**10**

Dr. Lital Keinan Boker from the School of Public Health stated that "when looking back through time it seems the cancer cases are on the decline amongst the Jewish population, and recently the Arabic population. This is contrary to the data published recently by the International Agency for Research on Cancer." Dr. Keinan Boker was quoted in a Maariv article on International Cancer Day.



11

Following the Knesset Economic Affairs Committee's decision to impose serious limits on Alcohol advertisements on the web, Dr. Tal Zarsky from the Faculty of Law commented that the best solution is to move towards self regulation: "Sites such as Facebook and Instagram are already self regulating because they have an interest to avoid unseemly activities within them". This received wide attention in the Israeli press.



12

A new report published by Prof. Sammy Smooha from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Prof. Asad Ghanem from the School of Political Sciences and Dr. Huhad Ali from the College of Western Galilee shows that raising the election threshold will help the Arab parties as it will make the Arab population band together and makeup a unified party. The report was submitted to the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. This was published in the Israeli media.



13

Prof. Gad Barzilai, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Prof. Shulamit Almog, also from the Faculty of Law published an article in the Haaretz newspaper about the role of the justice system in social protest: "The proper response to social unrest is not penal punishment but a redesigning of a just public policy. The central role of the justice system is not to punish but to allow a democratic discourse where social rights and protest have a central role."

