

Meet the EIM Leaders



Name:

Naama Constantini, MD

Background:

Family and sport physician
Former swimmer and a swim coach
Mother of seven active children

What is your current work position and title?

Director of the sport medicine center of Shaare Zedek Hospital, affiliated to the Hebrew University

How and when did you get involved with EIM?

Being a grandchild of one of the very first female physicians in the world, who was a pediatrician and a sport doctor in Germany in the early twenties, I was raised with the love of sport. I have engaged in and promoted physical activity and exercise all my life, especially since I became a doctor. Being a member of ACSM since 1991, joining the EIM initiative was a natural step.

Last May, Israel joined the prestigious global EIM Network and, since then, we have combined our work with the EIM concept.

How do you promote EIM through the work that you do?

I have divided our work in to several levels:

1. Personal/one on one level: Consulting every patient that enters my room with regard to physical activity and exercise, no matter if they are healthy or unhealthy.
2. Training health professionals: We deliver EIM courses to physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, dietitians and medical students. For example, this year we ran two 60 hour courses for physiotherapists who treat cancer patients (one in a rehabilitation pediatric hospital and one general under the Israeli Cancer Association). Another unique course was delivered to family medicine residents who will support medical students that work with the elderly. In the southern district of Israel we ran 5 courses for public health nurses who work in mother care stations and in schools. This 32 hour course included lifestyle changes through exercise and nutrition lectures that will be delivered later to young mothers and school girls.

3. **Community:** We are currently working on several community projects, such as “Steps for quality of life” where EIM-educated physiotherapists promote PA to cancer patients during their daily treatment in 18 hospitals in Israel. Another project, which we did as a pilot this year and ended up being a huge success, was with the elderly. First year medical students helped recondition old people, who were released from hospitalization, through exercise training. This project will continue next year and will likely be spread to other programs around the country.

How has EIM influenced the work you do professionally and those you work with (your patients/clients/colleagues)?

Personally, I am extremely proud to be part of the EIM family. This title brings me, my university and Israel a big honor, as well as the challenge to promote physical activity to all people.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced in introducing and/or implementing EIM where you work?

I have recently moved from one hospital to another so there are many new opportunities. The challenge is on both sides of the coin: to make workers understand that PA should be part of their life, to persuade management to invest money and time helping their workers integrate PA and exercise as part of their lives during and after working hours, and to supply the appropriate setting (fitness room, office equipment, showers etc.).

What are some of the successes that have you seen implementing EIM into your work?

Observing physicians and other health professionals recommend PA after completing our courses and referring their patients, if necessary, to receive professional help.

What advice do you have for early career professionals wanting to promote and develop careers related to EIM?

First of all – do what you preach!! One has to be active and truly believe in exercise in order to convince others to do the same. Second, learn from others instead of inventing the wheel. Many people all over the world do great EIM-related projects. Learn from their success as well as challenges.

Good luck to all!