

## Four years on and over 90 Fellowships awarded

Established in 2008, the Daniel Turnberg UK/Middle East Travel Fellowship scheme provides opportunities for early career biomedical researchers coming from, or proposing to visit academic institutions in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories or the UK. These one month visits enable aspiring academics to meet experts within similar fields of research, learn new techniques and, most importantly, develop plans for continuing collaborations.

Despite the economic and political problems facing many of these countries in recent times it has been good to see that the number of applications from those countries most obviously affected has increased.

In meeting many of the successful award holders we have been made aware of their high level of enthusiasm and appreciation of the opportunities provided by the scheme.

Their individual stories have been uplifting and a number have gone on to continue joint activities with their host departments. New partnerships have been established and benefits have spread well beyond the short period of the fellowship awards. Examples of the scheme's successes are provided overleaf along with details of the award holders from the last two rounds of funding.

### Lord Turnberg FMedSci

#### Awards at a glance

- 95** Applications received in 2012
- 30** Travel fellowships awarded in 2012
- 96** Travel fellowships awarded since the scheme's launch

The scheme was established by the Academy in partnership with Lord and Lady Turnberg in memory of their late son Daniel, a doctor and researcher with a keen interest in fostering links between the UK, Israel and the Middle East. The scheme was designed to help further these ambitions.

Feedback received shows that the scheme is fulfilling an unmet need. Award holders commented that the short-term nature of the award is extremely enabling, allowing them to spend time away whilst still fulfilling work and family commitments. Many have used their fellowship as 'seed corn' for further research collaborations, including longer term research fellowships. Whilst a number of award holders note the difficulties they have in raising funds for their research at home, it is heartening to hear how vitally important they feel these visits have been for their continuing collaboration and future research.



**Dr Daniel Turnberg**

**"This scheme has successfully facilitated the development of networks and partnerships between the UK and the Middle East. It forms part of the Academy's wider international strategy to enable excellent people to move and collaborate across international boundaries."**

**Professor Sir John Tooke PMedSci, President, Academy of Medical Sciences**

We believe that the connections made between the UK and the Middle East are vitally important in helping to expand scientific knowledge and contribute to the development of sustainable international relationships. With your help, the number of awards made can be expanded. For further information or to make a donation, please contact:

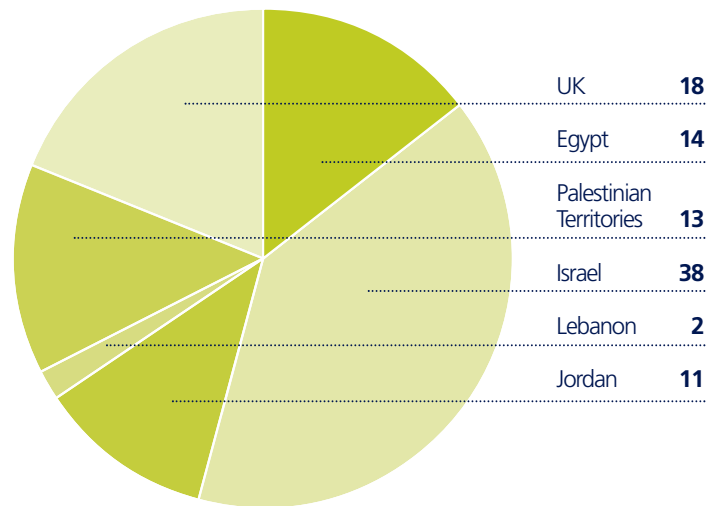
**Sarah Porter, Fundraising Manager, Academy of Medical Sciences, 41 Portland Place, London W1B 1QH  
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## Diversity of awards

Applications have been received from researchers across all countries eligible to apply and this is reflected in the broad geographic spread of awards. Approximately half of all travel fellowships made thus far have been awarded to women.

The range of research interests of successful award holders has been incredibly diverse and many award holders are developing multidisciplinary collaborations.

Geographic spread of 96 awards, by home country



### Areas of study include:

Autism	Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology	Ophthalmology
Biochemistry & Genetics	Haematology	Paediatric Movement Disorders
Cancer Genotyping	Mechanical Engineering	Periodontology
Clinical Pharmacology	Mental Illness	Surgery
Dermatology	Molecular Biology	Synaesthesia
Endocrinology	Neurology	
Foetal Medicine		

## Making it happen

The scheme benefits from the generous support of a number of donors, charitable institutions and funding bodies, whose contributions are vital to its ongoing success. We are grateful to the Wellcome Trust, the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust and the Royal College of Physicians for their continued support and would like to extend our thanks to the following organisations and institutions for their generous contributions over the last two years:

The A and S Burton Charitable Trust	Pears Foundation
The Dowager Countess Eleanor Peel Trust	Samuel Sebba Charitable Trust
Division of Surgery, Imperial College London	Royal College of Surgeons of England
Homestead Charitable Trust	Robert Gavron Charitable Trust
Isaac and Julia Haskel Trust	Steinberg Family Charitable Trust
Kohn Foundation	Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation

We are extremely grateful to all these, and many other individual supporters, who have made this scheme possible.

“The Royal College of Physicians is pleased to support this scheme to develop ongoing links between researchers in the UK and the Middle East. Schemes such as this complement the Royal College of Physicians' efforts to extend our global reach, ultimately aiming to improve the quality of patient care.”

**Professor Tim Evans FMedSci, Academic Vice President, Royal College of Physicians**

Each fellowship award costs approximately £3,500. With your help we can continue to support aspiring researchers and increase the impact that this scheme is having. For further information or to make a donation, please contact the Academy's office:

[sarah.porter@acmedsci.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.porter@acmedsci.ac.uk), +44 (0)20 3176 2150

## Signs of continuing collaboration

Over 60 award holders have now undertaken visits between the UK and the Middle East. Highlights of some of the subsequent collaborations developed are included below.



### **Professor Jeremy Hall, UK**

Professor Hall, a psychiatrist based at the University of Edinburgh, visited the Brain and Behaviour Laboratory at the University of Haifa, Israel in 2010 to study aspects of psychiatry. Two years on, Professor Hall notes:

"I continue to collaborate actively with the group I visited as part of my travel fellowship award and returned for a further visit in 2011. I am involved in several joint projects with them and also help out on the scientific advisory board of the institute I visited. Altogether very satisfactory."

"I was able to spend a significant amount of time at a world leading centre for the study and treatment of heart muscle diseases. During my time there I was exposed to advanced techniques including genetic and pharmacological testing not yet available in Israel. By observing the cutting edge of this field, I have subsequently been able to initiate two new research projects, which I hope will lead to significant advances in our ability to diagnose and treat patients."

### **Dr Donna Zfat-Zwas, Israel**

Visited the London Heart Hospital to study heart muscle disease.

"The Daniel Turnberg Fellowship is a pioneering fellowship in the field of medical sciences among various schemes which usually fund citizens/residents of USA or EU countries."

### **Dr Rula Abdul-Ghani, East Jerusalem**

Visited the University of Southampton to study the genetic basis of breast cancer.

"The connections I made during my fellowship enabled me to establish two ongoing collaborations working on a rare genetic disorder."

### **Dr Shay Ben Shachar, Israel**

Visited St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, to study the genetic basis of inherited disorders.



### **Dr Iyad Ali, Palestinian Territories**

Dr Ali, a biochemist from An-Najah National University, Palestinian Territories, visited the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Essex, in 2011. He comments:

"During the visit I learned many new techniques which I have applied to my experiments since returning. I am currently developing a research project based on the experience I gained during the fellowship and am working to establish an understanding with my host institution to develop future collaborations."

"In contrast to many other long term schemes which don't fit with my current professional and personal situation, this scheme offered me the opportunity to undertake a short term visit, to learn from one of the best teams at one of the most recognised medical centres in the world."

### **Dr Malena Cohen, Israel**

Visited the Royal Brompton Hospital, London, to study Cystic Fibrosis.

"This visit was a turning point in my career and was beneficial for me in many aspects."

### **Dr Asmaa Mohammed, Egypt**

Visited the Churchill Hospital, Oxford, to study bleeding and clotting disorders.



**Dr Christine Pullar, UK**

Dr Pullar, a Senior Lecturer based within the Department of Cell Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Leicester, visited the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, in 2012 to study optimal wound healing. Following her visit, she comments:

“In the current economic climate, collaborations between countries are essential for successful research programmes and I am extremely grateful to the scheme for opening new possibilities for my research work and that of my institution.

The fellowship allowed me to visit the laboratory of Professor Abdo Jurius who has a major interest in my research area. We now have plans to publish a couple of papers collaboratively and will submit a grant to the Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon to initiate a new collaborative project to be conducted across both laboratories.”

**Dr Asaad Mohamad Shereef, Egypt**

In November 2011 Dr Shereef, a haematologist from the University of Cairo, Egypt, visited the Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre at the Royal Free Hospital, London, to study haematological diseases. He notes:

“The visit enabled me to develop new skills and build on my existing knowledge. It also enabled me to develop professional relations for future research collaborations.”

**Dr Alexander Buell, UK**

Dr Buell, a research fellow based at the University of Cambridge, spent four weeks at the University of Tel-Aviv, Israel, in 2011, working on physical and biochemical structural studies of dipeptides relevant to Alzheimer’s research. Dr Buell notes:

“My visit was scientifically and personally very enriching and marked the beginning of a promising collaboration. It was agreed that the project, which turned out to be larger than anticipated, will be continued in the framework of collaboration after my return to Cambridge. We will split up the work and parts will be done in Tel Aviv by Dr Alder-Abramovich and her students, and parts in Cambridge, by me and my team.”

“It was a unique opportunity to learn from outstanding scholars and be exposed to new people and ideas. It has been both an exciting and fruitful experience for me and I believe it also contributed to the ongoing collaboration between the Schneider Children’s Medical Center, Israel, and Professor Williams’ team in Oxford. I hope in time it will have a positive effect on the well-being of children and adolescents in Israel.”

**Dr Ayala Uri, Israel**

Visited the University of Oxford to study Cognitive Behaviour Therapy in children and adolescents.

**Dr Mayyada Wazaify, Jordan**

Dr Wazaify, an Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice based at the University of Jordan, visited the University of Bath in 2010 to participate in a project studying the misuse of over-the-counter drugs in community pharmacies. The collaboration facilitated the establishment of the Ideal Pharmacy Lab (IPL) at the University of Jordan. A year and a half on, Dr Wazaify reports:

“The visit really opened the door for collaborations. We hosted a return visit to build on the research proposal designed during my initial fellowship. This has resulted in a skeleton plan for four further projects. We are now exploring the formal procedures of establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between both universities to support future exchanges and collaboration.”



## Fellowship recipients 2012

Name	Home institution	Visiting institution	Area of research
Dr Mohamed Abdel-Rahman Hassanein	Suez Canal University, Egypt	Sheffield Hallam University, UK	Toxicology
Dr Ibrahim Afaneh	Al-Quds University, Palestinian Territories	Leeds University, UK	Clinical Nutrition
Dr Riaz Akhtar	University of Liverpool, UK	Nour Al-Haya Eye Center, Egypt	Vascular Stiffening & Ocular Biomechanics
Mrs Lilach Akiva-Kabiri	Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel	Goldsmiths, University of London, UK	Synaesthesia and Neurological Disorders
Dr Mutasem Taha Al-Hawamdeh	University of Jordan, Jordan	University of Nottingham, UK	Computer-aided Drug Design and Discovery
Dr Esam Ali	Sohag University, Egypt	University of Leicester, UK	Forensic Medicine and Clinical Toxicology
Dr Amin Aqel	Mutah University, Jordan	Health Protection Agency, London, UK	Molecular Microbiology
Mr Vadim Axelrod	Tel Aviv University, Israel	University College London, UK	Cognitive Neuroscience
Dr James Canavan	King's College London, UK	Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel	Inflammatory Bowel Disease
Dr Itzik Cooper	Sheba Medical Center, Israel	King's College London, UK	Epigenetics of Alzheimer's disease
Dr Sally Eldeghaidy	Suez Canal University, Egypt	University of Nottingham, UK	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging
Dr Abdelraouf Elmanama	Islamic University, Gaza, Palestinian Territories	University of Salford, UK	Microbiology
Dr Azmy Faisal	Alexandria University, Egypt	Imperial College London, UK	Cardiopulmonary Physiology
Dr Roy Gilbar	University of Leicester, UK	Tel Aviv University, Israel	Bioethical and Social Aspects of Genetics
Mr Graeme Glass	University of Oxford, UK	Technion R&D Foundation, Israel	Molecular Biology
Dr Amr Hegazy	Nour Al-Haya Eye Center, Egypt	University of Liverpool, UK	Ophthalmology
Ms Livnat Jerby	Tel Aviv University, Israel	University of Glasgow, UK	Metabolic Modelling
Dr Orit Karminsky	Ariel University Center of Samaria, Israel	University of Aberdeen, UK	Cannabinoid CB2 Receptor in ADHD and Tourettes Syndrome
Mrs Genela Morris	Haifa University, Israel	University of Reading, UK	Neuroscience
Dr Mohammad Obaidat	Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan	Royal Veterinary College, UK	Food and Zoonotic Pathogens
Prof. Ghanem Oweis	American University of Beirut, Lebanon	Institute of Cancer Research, UK	Surgical Technology and Ultrasound
Dr Yuval Ramot	Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Centre, Israel	University of Manchester, UK	Dermatology
Dr Assaf Rokney	The Hebrew University, Israel	University of East Anglia, UK	Molecular Epidemiology of Pathogenic E. Coli
Prof. Suhair Saleh	Applied Science University Amman, Jordan	University of Abertay Dundee, UK	Bacterial Biofilms and Drug Resistance
Dr Amira Senbel	University of Alexandria, Egypt	Imperial College London, UK	Cardiovascular Pharmacology
Dr Shani Shenhar-Tsarfaty	Tel Aviv Souraski Medical Center, Israel	University College London, UK	Stroke, Metabolic Syndrome and Cognition
Dr Ghadeer Suaifan	University of Jordan, Jordan	King's College London, UK	Biomedical Analysis
Dr Noa Vardi	Tel Aviv Community Mental Health Center, Israel	University of Cambridge, UK	Autism
Dr Petra Vetter	University of Glasgow, UK	The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel	Vision Science
Dr Abdel Naser Zaid	An-Najah National University, Palestinian Territories	University of East Anglia, UK	Drug Development

# Fellowship recipients 2011

Name	Home institution	Visiting institution	Area of research
Dr Atiyeh Abdallah	King's College London, UK	An-Najah National University, Palestinian Territories	Haematological Malignancy
Ms Majdoulin Abughali	Birzeit University, Palestinian Territories	University College London, UK	Molecular Cell Biology
Dr Amal Al-Bakri	University of Jordan, Jordan	Queen's University Belfast, Ireland	Pharmaceutical Microbiology
Dr Iyad Ali	An-Najah National University, Palestinian Territories	University of Essex, UK	Reactive Oxygen Species
Dr Mohammed Salem Alsbou	Mutah University, Jordan	Royal Liverpool University Hospital, UK	Clinical Pharmacology
Dr Shereef Asaad Mohamad	Cairo University, Egypt	Royal Free Hospital NHS Trust, UK	Haematology
Dr Guy Ben Simon	Sheba Medical Center, Israel	Imperial College London, UK	Ophthalmology and Lacrimal Duct Physiopathology
Dr Hilla Ben-Pazi	Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Israel	Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, UK	Paediatric Movement Disorders
Mr Alexander Buell	University of Cambridge, UK	Tel Aviv University, Israel	Biochemistry; Molecular Mechanisms of Protein Mis-folding
Mrs Liat Goldberg	Sheba Medical Center, Israel	University of Cambridge, UK	Experimental Therapeutics of Leukaemia
Dr Debra Goldman-Wohl	Hadassah Medical Center, Israel	Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK	Molecular and Developmental Biology of the Placenta
Dr Nancy Hakooz	University of Jordan, Jordan	Newcastle University, UK	Genotyping of Drug Metabolising Enzymes
Dr Pauline Jamieson	University of Edinburgh, UK	Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel	Hormones and Stress Physiology
Mrs Kerin Nevo-Dinur	Hebrew University Jerusalem, Israel	University of Oxford, UK	Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
Dr Son Preminger	Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel	University College London, UK	Neuroscience/Brain Research
Dr Christine Pullar	University of Leicester, UK	American University of Beirut, Lebanon	Cell Physiology/Cell Biology of Skin
Miss Gemma Robinson	University of Leicester, UK	Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel	Receptor-mediated Signalling and Proteomics
Dr Jennifer Scott	University of Bath, UK	University of Jordan, Jordan	Pharmacy Practice– Substance Misuse
Dr Kirsty Shearer	University of Aberdeen, UK	Ariel University Center of Samaria, Israel	Retinoic Acid Signalling and Mental Disorders
Dr Sahar Sheta	Cairo University, Egypt	King's College London, UK	Foetal Medicine
Dr Tomer Shlomi	Israel Institute of Technology, Israel	Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, Glasgow, UK	Metabolic Modelling
Dr Polina Stepensky	Hadassah University Hospital, Israel	Great Ormond Street Hospital, UK	Paediatric Haemato-oncology
Dr Asaf Wilensky	Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center, Israel	University College London, UK	Periodontology/Gum Disease
Mrs Elham Youssef-Elabd	National Research Centre, Egypt	University of Liverpool, UK	Obesity, Diabetes and Metabolism
Dr Donna Zfat-Zwas	Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center, Israel	University College London, UK	Congestive Heart Failure/Echocardiography