

13 media highlights for Bar-Ilan research and initiatives



1

THE EXPERT ON THE PANDEMIC

Notable mentions: *CNBC*, *Fox News*, *Newsweek*, *Arirang News* (South Korea), *ABC* (Australia), *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia), *CNN* (Greece), *Globe and Mail* (Canada), *CBC* (Canada), *RTS* (Switzerland), *RTL* (Belgium), *BFMTV* (France), *TV5* (France), *La Razon* (Spain), *AFP/France24*.

Prof. Cyrille Cohen, Vice Dean of the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, Director of the Immunology Lab, and President of the Israel Society for Cancer Research, became a household name from the onset of the pandemic on account of his expert, congenial, and down-to-earth analysis of the different aspects of COVID-19. Since June 2021, Cohen was interviewed, quoted, or mentioned more than 1,000 times in digital, print, and broadcast media. Two-thirds of his appearances were in overseas media outlets.

2

COVID-19 AND VITAMIN D

Notable mentions: *Fox News*, *Yahoo News*, *Forbes*, *Der Spiegel* (Germany), *Daily Mail* (UK), *The Times of India*, *L'Independent* (France), *New York Post*, *Juedische Allgemeine* (Germany), *Israel Hayom*, *AJN* (Argentina), *Globo* (Brazil), and *Rai Alyoum* (in Arabic)

A joint Azrieli Faculty of Medicine/Galilee Medical Center study found that pre-infection deficiency of vitamin D is associated with increased disease severity and mortality among hospitalized COVID-19 patients. The study, led by Dr. Amiel Dror of the Azrieli Faculty, was the focus of 129 news articles and more than 5,000 tweets, and garnered an astonishing Altmetric score of 4,649. It also attracted the attention of U.S. Congressman Glenn Grothman, who contacted Dror for more information and later presented his findings to the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary.

3

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

Notable mentions: *The Hill* (US), *Fox News* (US), *Şalom* (Turkey), *Joods* (Holland), *New York Post*, *Daily Mail* (UK), *The Daily Wire* (US), *Vesti* (Russia), *DW* (Germany), *The Media Line*, *Enlace Judio* (Mexico), *RP* (Poland)

Prof. Haim Cohen, director of the Sagol Healthy Human Longevity Center in the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, and his team reported that transgenic mice express high levels of the SIRT6 gene, which promotes the repair of DNA double-strand breaks and is believed to have increased their life expectancy by an average of 30 percent. The research was called “amazing” by U.S. political commentator and media host Ben Shapiro, who boasts nearly eight million followers on Facebook and 3.4 million on Twitter. Cohen’s study was also ranked number three in the “Top 25 Health Sciences Articles for 2021” in *Nature Communications*, where it was accessed 60,000 times.

4

WHY DO WE GET TIRED?

Notable mentions: *The Daily Beast*, *La Razon* (Spain), *La Repubblica* (Italy), *Le Monde* (France), *ISNA* (Iran), *KIJK Magazine* (Holland), *Sputnik News* (Czech Republic), *Tekniikanmaailma* (Finland), *Science Times* (South Korea)

Prof. Lior Appelbaum of the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences and the Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center revealed that the PARP1 protein acts as antennae, signaling to the brain that it’s time to sleep and repair damaged DNA. The study, published in the journal *Molecular Cell*, also earned a favorable review in the journal *Nature*.

5

ENJOYING ENFORCED SOLITUDE

Notable mentions: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Clarín* (Argentina)

Studies led by Dr. Liad Uziel of the Department of Psychology found that during COVID-19 lockdowns, most people experienced benefits from the enforced solitude. *The Wall Street Journal* tweeted the findings to its more than 19 million followers, and renowned Harvard cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker commented on it in his Twitter feed.

6

DIABETES AND THE GALILEE

Notable Mentions: *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Jerusalem Post* podcast, *The Media Line*, *The Times of Israel*, *Juedische Allgemeine* (Germany), *KAN Radio*

Bar-Ilan University and The Russell Berrie Foundation announced the creation of The Russell Berrie Galilee Diabetes SPHERE, based at the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine in Safed. Created in partnership with national health-management organizations, regional hospitals, and local municipalities, SPHERE: The Social and Precision-Medicine Health Equity Research Endeavor is a pioneering effort to lower the Galilee's alarming rate of diabetes morbidity.

7

OUT OF AFRICA, TO THE JORDAN VALLEY

Notable mentions: *Live Science* (US), *Archaeology Magazine*, *ABC* (Spain), *Wiener Zeitung* (Austria), *Audiatour* (Switzerland), *The Express Tribune* (Pakistan), *AJN* (Argentina), *NTV* (Turkey), *Correio Braziliense* (Brazil), *Haaretz*, *Independent* (UK), *Ynet*

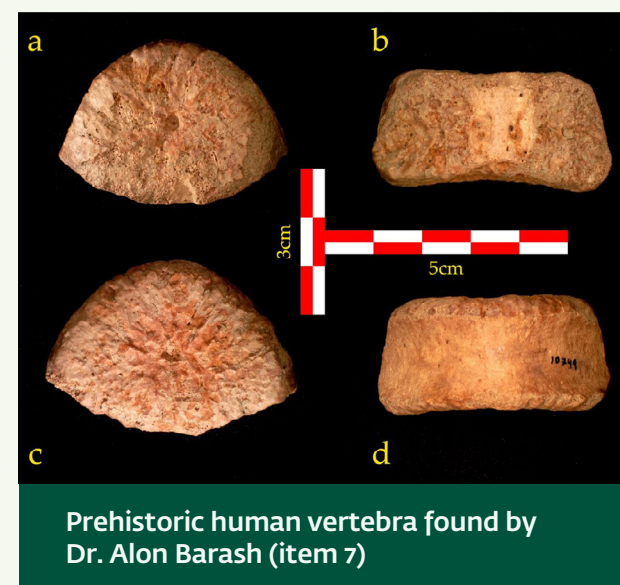
A prehistoric human vertebra discovered in the Jordan Valley now offers the earliest evidence of human presence in Israel. Determined to be approximately 1.5 million years old, the bone also proves the existence of different species of migrating hominins. The research was led by Dr. Alon Barash of the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine together with colleagues from Ono Academic College, the University of Tulsa, and the Israel Antiquities Authority.

8

"LONG COVID" AND A DOUBLE DOSE

Notable mentions: *NPR* (US), *The Washington Post*, *The Times* (UK), *USA Today*, *Nature*, *ANSA* (Italy), *Spektrum* (Germany), *La Vanguardia* (Spain)

A study led by Prof. Michael Edelstein of the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine found a significant reduction in the most commonly reported, long-term symptoms of COVID-19 among individuals infected with the virus and vaccinated with at least two doses as compared to non-vaccinated, previously infected individuals. Separately, Edelstein was interviewed by the French-Jewish newspaper *Actualité Juive* (France) about RIVER-EU, an international consortium he co-directs that is studying how high vaccine uptake among the Israeli-Arab population can provide a model for improved access to MMR and HPV vaccines among underserved populations.



9

EARLY INDICATORS OF AUTISM

Notable mentions: *Newsweek*, *Autism Parenting Magazine*, *Israel 21c*, *Sputnik News* (Greece), *Israel Central Committee of Uruguay*, *WION* (India)

A study by Dr. Hanna A. Alonim of the Louis & Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work and the Mifne Center in Rosh Pina showed that autism can be identified as early as the first year of life, and that bridging the gap between early detection and therapeutic intervention may significantly reduce the severity of life-long developmental deviations. The study was granted a prominent mention in a *Forbes* article in honor of Autism Awareness Month.

10

NEW THINKING ON NEURONS

Notable Mention: *AI with AI* (a podcast produced by the US Center for Naval Analyses), *Times of Israel*

Research led by Prof. Ido Kanter of the Department of Physics and the Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center indicates that the time-lag for re-excitation of a neuron—the building block of our brain—is up to ten times longer than assumed for more than a century. In another study, Kanter showed that just one single neuron can realize deep learning algorithms, which previously required an artificial complex network consisting of thousands of connected neurons and synapses, a discovery expected to have important implications on future AI hardware architecture.

11

DID THE EXODUS HAPPEN?

Notable mentions: *The Jerusalem Post International Edition*, *Alliance* (France), *Guame* (Brazil), *Mosaic Magazine*, *JNS*, *Cleveland Jewish News*, *St. Louis Jewish Light*

Prof. Joshua Berman of the Zalman Shamir Bible Department found strong evidence to support the story of the Exodus from Egypt, even leading a recent tour group to the relevant sites. Berman was also featured on the cover of *The Jerusalem Report*, which interviewed him about his book *Ani Maamin* (Maggid, 2020).

12

SPOTTED HYENAS AND SOCIAL TIES

Notable mentions: *Science*, *Die Welt* (Germany), *El Pais* (Spain), *The Daily Mail* (UK), *Infobae* (Argentina), *Haaretz*, *Sveriges Radio* (Sweden), *LON Radio* (Holland), *ORF* (Austria)

Dr. Amiyaal Ilany of the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences led a massive study of data collected over the course of 27 years that sheds astounding light on the nature of social networks, rank, and survival among spotted hyenas.

13

MOROCCANS IN ISRAEL

Notable mention: *Le 360* (Morocco), *Yabiladi* (Morocco), *Israel Netz* (Germany), *Qualita Radio* (French), *Aurora* (Spain), *Israel Hayom*, *L'Economiste* (French)

The Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage hosted a two-day conference on "Jewish Law and Culture in Morocco," the first Israel-Morocco academic parley to be held since the signing of the Abraham Accords. The center also signed an agreement for cooperation with the Moroccan Center for Studies and Research in Hebraic Law.



Prof. Joshua Berman in Egypt (item 11)

