

Lecture in Moscow

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A delegation of senior Russian psychiatrists actively participated in the 14th Triennial Conference of the Israel Psychiatric Association, in Tel-Aviv, May, 2012. Academic Professor Alexander Tigianov, Director of the Center of the Academicians of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, The Mental Health Research Center, where I was employed 25 years ago, was among the participants. Prof. Tigianov invited me to visit the Research Center in Moscow and to present the results of the research investigation of our group in Israel. Following his return to Russia, Prof. Tigianov indeed sent me an official invitation to lecture, and I graciously accepted.

Thus 25 years after making Aliya from the Soviet Union to the State of Israel, I returned to Moscow for the first time. The reception was amazing. Department Heads, leading researchers, the Director, Deputy Director and Scientific Secretary of the Research Center were all invited to hear me speak. Even before the lecture began the participants expressed great interest in Israeli psychiatry and asked many questions.

My lecture was on the subject of augmentation therapy with substances that are not standard anti-psychotic agents for the treatment of schizophrenia patients, beginning with various older strategies such as mood stabilizers, anti-depressants, and benzodiazepines, and with neurosteroids (pregnenolone, DHEA); bexarotene and L-theanine. I presented results of studies performed in collaboration with Prof. Vladimir Lerner from Beer Sheva Mental Health Center and Dr. Anatoly Kreinin from Tirat Carmel Mental Health Center. I presented data that have been previously published only in part. The lecture was about an hour and a quarter long, and it was followed by a full hour of questions. Following the lecture there was a lovely reception with a festive atmosphere.

I presented an additional lecture at the Russian Ministry of Health, which has a well-known Research Center and clinical and treatment facilities on Potashnia Street No. 3. Prof. Mosolov, a leading investigator in psychopharmacology is the Head of a number of departments in that facility. In addition, Prof. Mosolov is the Head of the Moscow Psychiatric Association, and he arranged the seminar during which I spoke. Here too, my hour long lecture was followed by an hour of questions. My lecture was videotaped and will be uploaded to the center's website.

Contrary to Israel, where department heads are involved in the academic aspects of psychiatry and in research, in Russia running a department and conducting research are two separate positions, filled by two different professionals.

I visited the various departments and inquired about legislation concerning the mentally ill, and I found the laws in Russia to be very similar to those in Israel. Our Russian colleagues expressed great interest in Israeli psychiatry. The atmosphere was warm and sociable. It is important for

me to note that both institutes that I visited were not involved in hospitalizing individuals who opposed the Bolshevik regime, and ethically both were “clean” during that historical period.

It was interesting to visit my country of birth as an invited speaker in prestigious institutions where I was once employed, and it was great to return home to Israel.