



HEAL UKRAINE GROUP

In Collaboration
with:



As the war in Ukraine continues to rage, we remain steadfast at HUG to address the acute and ongoing healthcare needs of the country. The will, determination, and fortitude of the Ukrainian people, along with their spirit and commitment, inspire us as a collaborative team. Ukrainians are fighting on behalf of all of us who believe in civil liberties, self-determination, and democracy. At HUG, we counter the deliberate destruction of healthcare infrastructure and personnel, caused by the Russian Army, via help for Ukrainian clinicians and medical facilities to both stabilize the current medical response and plan for the future. We accomplish this through supplying medical aid and, more sustainably, through provision of educational and training opportunities for Ukrainian physicians.

Please find updates about the Heal Ukraine Group programs and efforts below. The faces of Ukrainian patients and healthcare workers may be blurred to protect their identities during this time of war.

[All donations support medical relief and training for Ukrainian physicians.](#)

Cohort of Ukrainian Physicians Observe in Intensive Care Medicine and Infection Control at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital

In November, three doctors sponsored through the VIC HUG SAR observership program studied at Mass General Brigham with the aim to reduce mortality among ICU patients in Ukraine. Over the course of their three weeks here, mentors within Infectious Disease and Intensive Care Medicine covered topics such as: epidemiology, origin, and surveillance of antimicrobial resistance; judicious use of antimicrobials; multidrug resistant organisms (MDROs), including colonization in intensive care units (ICUs); guidelines, procedures, and practices to prevent spread of MDROs, including healthcare associated infections (HAIs); prophylaxis and treatment of MDROs; and antibiotic stewardship. The cohort of ICU observers included anesthesiologists Kateryna Bielka, an Associate professor and head of educational programming for residents, specializing in patient safety; Artem Yurovych, who is involved in quality improvement at his hospital in Ukraine; and Andrii Ryzhkovskyi, a post graduate student and assistant of his university's anesthesiology department, where he educates residents and doctors. Upon their return to Ukraine, this cohort of ICU doctors hope to create and implement selected protocols and algorithms (e.g. sepsis management and delirium management) at the local and national level; implement educational programs (CME) for health practitioners at Bogomolets National Medical University; introduce a national system for critical incidents reporting (through the Ukrainian Association of Anesthesiologists); popularize patient safety through work-shops and lectures at national congresses and conferences; and ultimately implement safe practices at local attendees' ICUs. Also in Boston in November was Nataly Lytvyn, MD (pictured), who was studying Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) with the goal of sharing her new skills through her YouTube and telegram channels.



Pictured above are recent HUG observers. From left to right, Dr. Andrii Ryzhkovskiy, Dr. Nataly Lytvyn, Dr. Mark Poznansky (Leader of the VIC HUG SAR observership program), Dr. Paul Currier (MGH Colleague), Dr. Artem Yurovych, Dr. Jacki Hart (Leader of the VIC HUG SAR observership program), and Dr. Kateryna Bielka.

Bringing it Back Home

Past scholars of the VIC-HUG-SAR observership program, totaling 55 to date from 25+ subspecialties, have achieved significant success Back Home in Ukraine. For our bimonthly newsletters, we highlight at least one of the accomplishments in their ongoing dissemination of knowledge and skills.

First ever Women in Medicine (WIM) Conference in Ukraine Organized and Led by [GMKA](#)

[VIC HUG SAR Alumni observers](#) were amongst the attendees, presenters, and coordinators with a special shout out to **Dr. Inesa Huivaniak**, Executive Director of GMKA Ukraine and **Dr. Kateryna Potopova**, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, GMKA Ukraine. Drs. Huivaniak and Potopova, general surgery and neurology specialists, respectively, both former Harvard observers through our program, put heart, soul, and mind into creating this event together with **Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk**, Founder and CEO of GMKA, leading a sizeable team and managing every detail.



Pictured is Dr. Douglas Davis, Neuroradiologist from Medical College of Wisconsin and Sponsor of WIM conference, Dr. Jacki Hart, Dr. Kateryna Potapova and Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk, co-founder of GMKA and the VIC HUG SAR observership program.

Second Annual Victoria Amelina Award Granted to Inesa Huivaniuk



In 2023, together with Jane Unrue of The Scholars at Risk Program of Harvard University, the Heal Ukraine Group (HUG) initiated an award in memory of Victoria Amelina, a novelist turned journalist who lost her life striving to record stories and data about crimes against humanity, particularly gender-based violence (GBV), committed during this horrific war.

In keeping with Amelina's dedication and legacy, selection of the awardee rests on demonstrating characteristics of bravery, selflessness, humility, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to advancement and recovery for Ukrainians.

For the 2024 award, the selection team assessed half-a-dozen well-qualified candidates nominated by clinicians and mentors from the [HUG consortium](#). Thus, the choice was challenging. To best facilitate the process, we formed a committee with members from HUG and Harvard SAR, hosts and mentors, along with [Oleh Kotsyuba](#) of the [Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute](#) and Askold Melnychuk, Founder of [Arrowsmith Press](#). Askold and Oleh both worked closely with Victoria when she was a fellow studying in Boston. Amelina's talents rivaled her altruism and her love of Ukraine.

Following much friendly deliberation, **Dr. Inesa Huivaniuk** emerged as the 2024 Victoria Amelina awardee. **Dr. Lesia Strilka** (recipient of the first annual Amelina award in 2023) [presented the](#)

[distinguished recognition to Dr. Huivaniuk](#) (jump to 4:35 -14:48 in the video to watch), alongside Drs. Jacqueline Hart and Nelya Melnitchouk, at the [first annual GMKA WIM Conference](#).

Inesa's tireless actions evoke the principle of "Bringing it Back" to Ukraine with her vision, fortitude, and commitment to progress for healthcare delivery and medical practice in her beloved country. [While a HUG Observer in Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital \(BWH\)](#), Inesa's primary focus during her three months of study involved learning enhanced recovery after surgery (ERAS) pathways, amongst other skills and techniques, that reduce length of hospital stays and improve clinical outcomes. Inesa has been piloting ERAS and additional approaches to improve surgical quality and safety since her return to Ukraine.

On a personal note, Inesa was forthcoming and spoke candidly about gender inequities in surgical training in Ukraine. She is highly motivated to shift these trends. With that in mind, she worked closely with **Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk** and colleagues from [GMKA](#) to develop online courses on both the [Principles of General Surgery](#) and [Patient-Doctor Communication](#), and to dream up the first ever [WIM conference in Ukraine](#), which had 250 attendees. Dr. Huivaniuk has been working diligently to bring each of these initiatives to fruition, overseeing every single detail. Her intent is to now conduct the WIM conference annually. With Inesa's foresight and her collaborative spirit, she is well poised to continue disseminating evidence-based and best practices to improve medical care and its delivery throughout Ukraine.

Inesa carries traits that emulate [Victoria Amelina](#) and do justice to the writer's laudable memory. We are eager to see how Inesa continues to pay these values forward.



Pictured is Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk, co-founder of GMKA and the VIC HUG SAR observership program, Dr. Lesia Strilka (2023 Victoria Amelina award recipient), Dr. Inesa Huivaniuk (2024 Victoria Amelina award recipient), and Dr. Jacki Hart.

Reflections by Dr. Jacki Hart

Seeing Ukraine with Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk Brought Joy and Insights



Pictured from left to right is Dr. Jacki Hart, Leader of the VIC HUG SAR observership program, Dr. Sofiya Hrechukh, Psychiatrist and Dr. Kateryna Potapova, Neurologist and Harvard-HUG observer alumnae at the Women in Medicine Conference in Ukraine.

Traveling with **Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk** to Ukraine in November was my third visit since the start of the Big War. Each time, getting to and being in country feels increasingly familiar. Given my recent trip in July, I didn't anticipate returning to Ukraine this soon. Under the circumstances, the process of getting there isn't easy -- planes, trains, and automobiles -- along with hours upon hours at passport control to cross into and out of the country amid an active war.

When Nelya and **Dr. Inesa Huivaniuk**, one of our star Harvard-HUG-GMKA-SAR observers and this year's Victoria Amelina award recipient (see above), invited me to join them for the [first-of-its-kind Women in Medicine \(WIM\) Conference in Ukraine](#), I was intrigued yet hesitant. In addition to the considerable energy and time commitment, the potential risk may be compounded by frequent travel to the region; naturally, that worries my family. Despite my initial pause in returning to Ukraine a few months after my last trip, I knew it would be worthwhile. It always is and, like previous trips there, replete with new insights and observations.

Agreeing to attend and participate in [the inaugural GMKA WIM conference](#) firsthand now allows me to confer with Nelya, Inesa, Dr. Kateryna Potapova (another excellent former HUG observer, neurologist, and the GMKA Ukraine Development Director), and other colleagues about next steps in efforts to promote gender equity in Ukrainian healthcare. This discrepancy has an interesting twist in Ukraine because there are MANY female doctors, though concentrated almost exclusively in non-surgical, non-procedural oriented specialties. Plus, there are few women in leadership roles in healthcare.

To begin to counter this imbalance, the [GMKA WIM conference](#) hosted 250 attendees spanning a gamut of specialties including (though not limited to) radiology, neurology, psychiatry, surgery, oncology, etc., from a variety of disciplines and sectors: academia, government, private medical practice, military, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many former HUG observers were present, and the conference provided an excellent forum to network and generate ideas for collaboration.

With the overarching theme of highlighting gender disparities and addressing gender equity, the sessions, almost exclusively in lecture format with the occasional panel discussion, also concentrated around reforms in medical education and healthcare delivery; nurturing, establishing, and promoting leadership; career advancement; applying principles of evidence-based medicine; and skill development including public speaking, contract negotiation, and application of research techniques. The methods of knowledge transfer ranged from high level presentations of complex data to teaching of specific applicable techniques to be used in clinical settings and in one's specific practice.

This trip, in general, was even more personal than previous visits. During the conference, I met many from the robust GMKA Ukraine team and saw a host of HUG observers – past and prospective, some of whom I had only met via zoom before this trip. In particular, I had the delight of presenting alongside **Dr. Sofiya Hreuchuk**; in addition to being a treasured colleague, Sofiya has become a dear friend. Thus, meeting Sofiya's family (replete with cat and dog) and spending time eating top-of-the-line sushi and being introduced to mulled cherry wine with her were particular trip highlights.

Similarly joyous, as well as unexpected, was having the unique experience of seeing **Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk**'s native country through her eyes, so to speak. Memorable moments included seeing the region and the home where Nelya lived until age 18 as well as the medical school where she spent her first year, sparking her distinguished medical career.

Best of all was spending time with Nelya's wonderful aunt and uncle – both with illustrious medical and dental careers themselves. We had the opportunity to tour the regional disaster training center for Ivano-Frankiv as well as a dispatch center. Nelya's uncle is the Medical Director of Emergency Services for that entire oblast (region). This exceptional experience reinforced the resolve and innovation that so many Ukrainians carry as the fight for their country, their sovereignty, and their special heritage.



Pictured is Dr. Nelya Melnitchouk with her aunt, Natalia, and uncle, Myron.

Thank you to our partners, [Harvard Scholars at Risk](#), the JMR Barker Foundation, and the many philanthropists who donate to our VIC - Scholars at Risk Ukraine fund to help to support our ongoing efforts to improve medical care for Ukrainians.

[Donate Here](#)