



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.

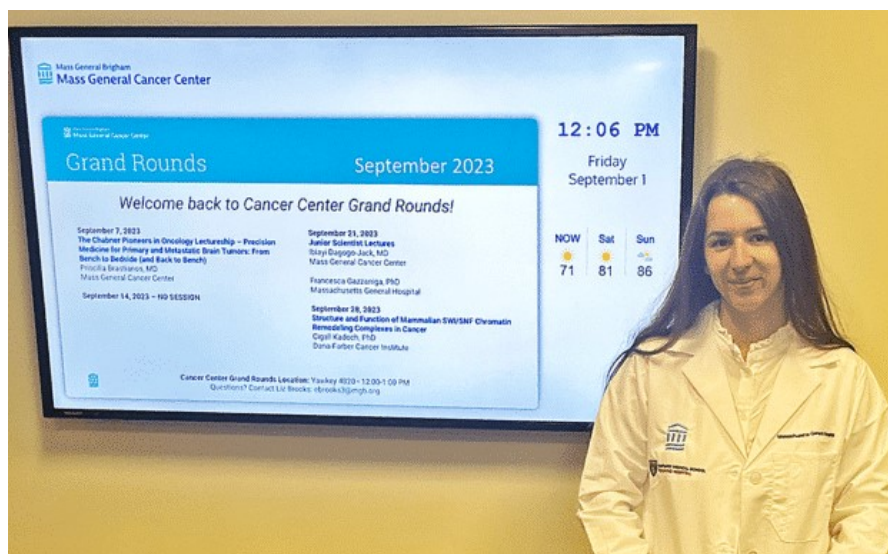
[All donations support medical relief and training for Ukrainian physicians.](#)

Dr. Arkadii Vodanyk, Infectious Disease Specialist, recently published data on antimicrobial resistance trends in Ukraine - "[Resistance is reality: findings from the first Ukrainian cumulative antibiogram](#)" with Dr. Mark Poznansky, and other colleagues from MGH including Dr. Erica Shenoy and Dr. Sarah Turbett.

Bringing it Back Home

Past scholars of the VIC-HUG-SAR observership program, totaling 48 to date from 19 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.

Observer Dr. Olha Kostenchak-Svystak Continues to Confer with MGH Mentor, Dr. Thomas Spitzer, on Patient Diagnoses, Expanding Treatment Protocols Available for Ukrainian Colleagues



Pictured is Dr. Olha Kostenchak-Svystak at MGH back in September of 2023.

Last September, Dr. Olha Kostenchak-Svystak, Hematologist at Mukachiv municipal hospital, spent one month in Boston at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) under the mentorship of Dr. Thomas Spitzer, Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Director Emeritus of the Bone Marrow Transplant Program. During her observership, Dr. Kostenchak-Svystak learned of the leading-edge strategies for autologous and allogeneic bone marrow and peripheral blood stem cell transplantation, and observed the standardized protocols for treating and managing patients with acute and chronic

hematologic malignancies. One year later, Dr. Kostenchak-Svystak is still in touch with Dr. Spitzer, consulting with him on complex cases and advising on the diagnosis of rare and challenging diseases, including just recently the diagnosis of a young patient with large granular lymphocytic leukemia (LGL), a rare type of chronic leukemia which manifests in two different types – T-cell large granular lymphocytic leukemia (T-LGL) and chronic lymphoproliferative disorder of NK cells (CLPD-NK). Diagnosis is completed through analysis of a series of blood tests and genetic tests. With the help of Dr. Spitzer, Dr. Kostenchak-Svystak and her colleagues successfully diagnosed the patient with LGL leukemia of the NK cell origin and are now treating the patient under his remote supervision and guidance.

Though the primary focus for these observerships was centered on the development and learning of needed practical skills and knowledge to expand and optimize the delivery of medical care in Ukraine, the opportunity to network and build lasting relationships has been invaluable to the Ukrainian physicians.

In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Kostenchak-Svystak is supporting a quality improvement project with [GMKA](#) focused on an anticoagulation stewardship, a multidisciplinary approach to anticoagulation (prevention and treatment of blood clots) management that spans the continuum of care and includes coordinated, efficient, and sustainable patient, clinician, and system-level initiatives designed to achieve optimal anticoagulant-related health outcomes and minimize avoidable adverse drug events. The group is gradually translating evidence-based and peer reviewed resources for doctors to apply in specific cases such as anticoagulation in cancer patients or those with kidney disease, and guidance on appropriate prescribing, dispensing and administration of anticoagulants (medications for treating and preventing blood clot formation) and related agents, and creating a checklist for treating and managing patients to optimize the provision of patient monitoring and clinical responsiveness. On top of this, Dr. Kostenchak-Svystak is focused on patient education, and recently presented on the topic at the Anticoagulation Forum back in August.



Dr. Thomas Spitzer, MGH and Dr. Olha Kostenchak- Svystak exit interview.

Sunflower Camp: Compassion & Coping Skills Create Cultural Connection



Pictured is Dr. Jacki Hart at Sunflower Camp for Ukrainian Refugee Children in Warsaw, Poland, with camp staff, displaced mothers, and campers.

En route home from Ukraine, following time spent with colleagues from First Medical Union Lviv, Unbroken, Christian Medical Association, Catholic University of Ukraine, and the Regional Psychiatric Hospital, Dr. Hart had the opportunity to visit Sunflower Camp for Ukrainian Refugee Children in Warsaw, Poland. Thanks to the camp Co-Founders and dear partners from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ellen and Gary Wasserson, Jacki was introduced via WhatsApp to the Camp Co-Directors, Anna K from Ukraine and Jagna from Poland.

Once there, Dr. Hart spent two jam-packed days with 30 children between the ages of 6 and 16 years old, Anna K, Jagna, and their whole team. Staffed by Ukrainian teachers and a Ukrainian psychologist who is trained in Trauma Informed Care and conducts individual sessions with each child; the kids learn martial arts, dance, art therapy, and enjoy many field trips throughout the city. A Montessori school provides the space along with breakfast, lunch, and snack. The intentional programming, setting, and tone set by the (mostly) Ukrainian practitioners create warmth and welcoming and develop strength. For the broad range of children, the objectives to foster joy and cultivate resilience resound. During her few days at Sunflower, Jacki spent group and individual time with the children as well as one-on-one time with mothers, several of whom shared harrowing stories of fleeing occupied territory.

The resolve to remain connected to their heritage – both the children and their moms – was inspiring. The Ukrainian families, living far from home as refugees in Poland, have an essential responsibility: keep their Ukrainian culture alive for themselves and for future generations. The pride in doing just that, despite the challenges as “outsiders” in Warsaw, was palpable. *“An uplifting way to conclude [her] trip,”* Dr. Hart relays, *“with many lessons learned.”*

HUG-Sponsored EMDR Training in Ukraine Optimizes Culturally Appropriate Treatment of Trauma and PTSD



Pictured is the EMDR team and military psychologists at the Space for Defenders VYBIR, Ukraine. Ted Olejnik and Oksana Nakonechna are pictured in the middle, right to left.

In an effort to address the mounting mental health demand for the people of Ukraine, both military and civilian, HUG supported scholarships to train psychotherapists via the Eye Movement and Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) program and curriculum designed by Oksana Nakonechna and her colleagues from [EMDR Ukraine](#). For background, EMDR is an evidence-based psychotherapeutic practice used to treat trauma-related conditions like post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through bilateral stimulation, wherein the traumatic memory is accessed and reprocessed with new adaptive beliefs.

The EMDR team is continuing iterations of their lecture training with military psychologists focused on treating military soldiers and their families. Oksana and her colleagues, including [Ted Olejnik, LICSW](#), a retired US Marine and certified social worker focused on mental health and PTSD, held a meeting with military psychologists on battlemind training, a psychological training program designed to build soldier resiliency by strengthening self confidence and mental toughness. From his own experience coping with the consequences of combat injuries and traumatic stress from 24 years of service in the army, Ted taught the group of psychologists how to increase psychological resilience and effectively reduce negative outcomes to combat stress for themselves and for their patients. In addition, he shared his experience treating combat veterans and active duty

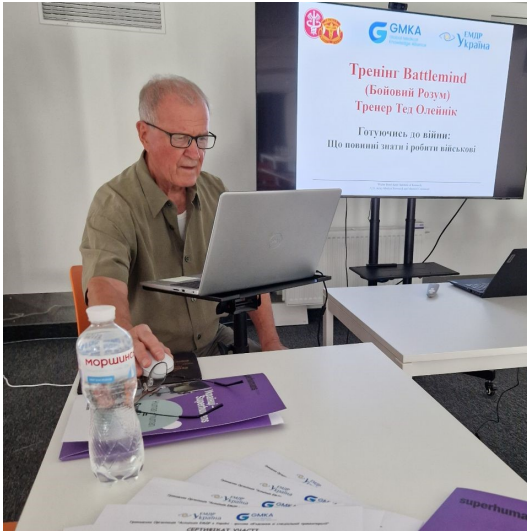
military members with EMDR, beginning back in March of 2003. Ted emphasizes that EMDR as a modality aligns incredibly well with military culture and time demands being a practical, flexible, cost effective, and potentially quick therapy for managing symptoms of trauma and PTSD.

In addition to in person lectures, the team has held online trainings, including one just recently with [Donald deGraffenried, LCSW](#) on “EMDR Brief Treatment with Homicide Survivors: A Community Treatment Model”. Focus now remains on planning for a second round of training with Ted and Donald to continue educating psychologists and psychotherapists to effectively help patients reprocess traumatic experiences and return to a life of normalcy.

“I have been treating veterans with EMDR therapy for 20 years. In the hundreds of veterans I have treated, only five dropped out of treatment. All the veterans I treated felt relief from their traumatic experiences and were able to successfully reintegrate with family and society.” - Ted Olejnik



Pictured to the left is Ted Olejnik sharing his story as a veteran, overcoming combat and traumatic stress, and his path to using EMDR to treat PTSD. Forty military personnel attended the lecture sponsored by HUG, GMKA, and the Medical Support Foundation for Military.



Pictured above is Ted Olejnik and the EMDR team speaking on battlemind training and approaches to employing this methodology in soldiers to overcome trauma and stress from the war.

Three Neurosurgeons from First Medical Union of Lviv Observe and Learn Clot Extraction from MGH Experts



Pictured in scrubs Drs. Victor Salo, Oleksandr Holub and Andrii Netliukh (left to right), Neurosurgeons from Ukraine who spent two weeks at MGH, from September 30th to October 11th, observing in the Department of Neurosurgery. On the right, they spend time exploring Boston with host family, Susan and Westy.

Thank you to our partners, [Harvard Scholars at Risk](#), the 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](#)