



Dr. Jeffrey Schock of Tri-County Urologists, P.C., practicing in Oakland County, attended a course in Israel with 33 American and Canadian physicians and other health professionals. They took part in a training program on medical emergency and disaster preparedness.

Area doctor attends emergency training program in Israel

By VALERIE WEST
Of The Oakland Press

While making rounds, doctors visit a patient complaining of arm pain. After an examination, the patient is diagnosed with exposure to anthrax. The doctors move onto the next bed, where a patient cannot talk because of botulinum poisoning.

While these hospital situations seem real, they were actually simulations as part of a physician training program in Israel.

Dr. Jeffrey Schock of Tri-County Urologists, P.C. — which serves patients in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties — attended a five-day training program on medical emergency and disaster preparedness earlier this month, along with 33 other American and Canadian physicians and health professionals. The program is organized jointly by the Israeli Ministry of Health/Home Front Command, the Israeli Defense Forces Medical Corps and the American Physicians Fellowship for Medicine in Israel.

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Schock, vice chairman of the Urology Department at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills, learned about the program through the Web site www.apfmed.org, and for \$1,600 he received training, room and board. Schock expected the course to focus on trauma but was amazed at the inclusion of biological and chemical warfare drills, both in the field and at different hospitals and military bases.

"It was the best course I ever took," Schock said. "It seemed like a program in the U.S. we're not prepared for. God forbid we have another 9/11."

He said he was impressed with Israel's medical facilities, as well.

"The level of (Israeli) preparedness is mind-boggling," he said, adding that the hospitals are highly sophisticated.

Schock stayed in a Tel Aviv hotel during his simulation training, which consisted of mock military and terrorist attacks in both civilian and military settings for 12-14 hours each day.

Schock said that although his accommodation needs were well-met, he faced dangers when training in the field. In one such trip, the group traveled to the southern Israeli city of Sderot, where 30 minutes before their arrival, a rocket landed 100 yards from the access road. About two to four rockets hit the town daily, he said.

"The town has managed to survive; it's an everyday occurrence," he said, adding that a lot of these happenings can leave psychological effects on children and the society as a whole, but that life continues as normal for the residents.

Schock learned how to recognize patients who were exposed to biological threats, such as anthrax, and chemical threats, such as mustard gas. The training continued with isolating and evacuating victims. In some training, he wore a HAZMAT suit to simulate prevention of exposure.

"It's very difficult to take care of a patient with that garb on," he said.

He also learned the technique of "scoop and run," in which patients are taken directly from an ambulance to a hospital for treatment. In the United States, a patient would receive as much care as possible at the scene, he said. However, because of the possibility of further attacks in Israel, the patient must be moved immediately.

FYI

For more information about emergency and disaster preparedness training, visit www.apfmed.org.

Schock said he was able to use some of his training before his feet even hit U.S. soil. On his return flight home, he was the only physician aboard to help an air marshal who fell ill. The first thing that occurred to Schock was to find out what the man had been exposed to. After examining him and inserting an IV, Schock deemed that the man had the flu.

"That was supposed to be my chance to sleep," Schock joked.

Carol Ghatan, associate director for the fellowship,

said the training physicians receive can be useful in the United States, as well as in Israel.

"They are not only participating with simulations hands-on, but they are hearing lectures," she said. "They learn from it and bring it back here for emergency training and preparedness."

Physicians who complete the training are put on a contact list. If Israel has a declared emergency, these physicians can opt to volunteer to help.

"Each one of them comes back touched with what they saw," she said.

Schock is using his training to coordinate lectures for hospitals to prepare them for a mass casualty event. He said that as a country, the United States needs additional emergency preparation if an attack or disaster were to occur.

"We are not prepared," he said. "(In Israel) you see someone blown to bits, and they handle it right away."

Schock plans to go back to Israel in June and volunteer as a surgeon for two weeks and offer his services.

"I have to do what I can for my fellow man," he said.

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