



Treatment of Palestinian Patients in an Israeli Hospital – No Prejudice, No Politics

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Learning Objectives

- **Describe the functions of a regional medical center in an area of conflict**
- **Recognize the difficulty experienced by a regional Israeli hospital, carrying out its mission in a region under constant threat of terrorism and missile attacks**
- **Assess the extent, distribution and results of the treatment of Palestinian patients in an Israeli hospital near Gaza.**

Background

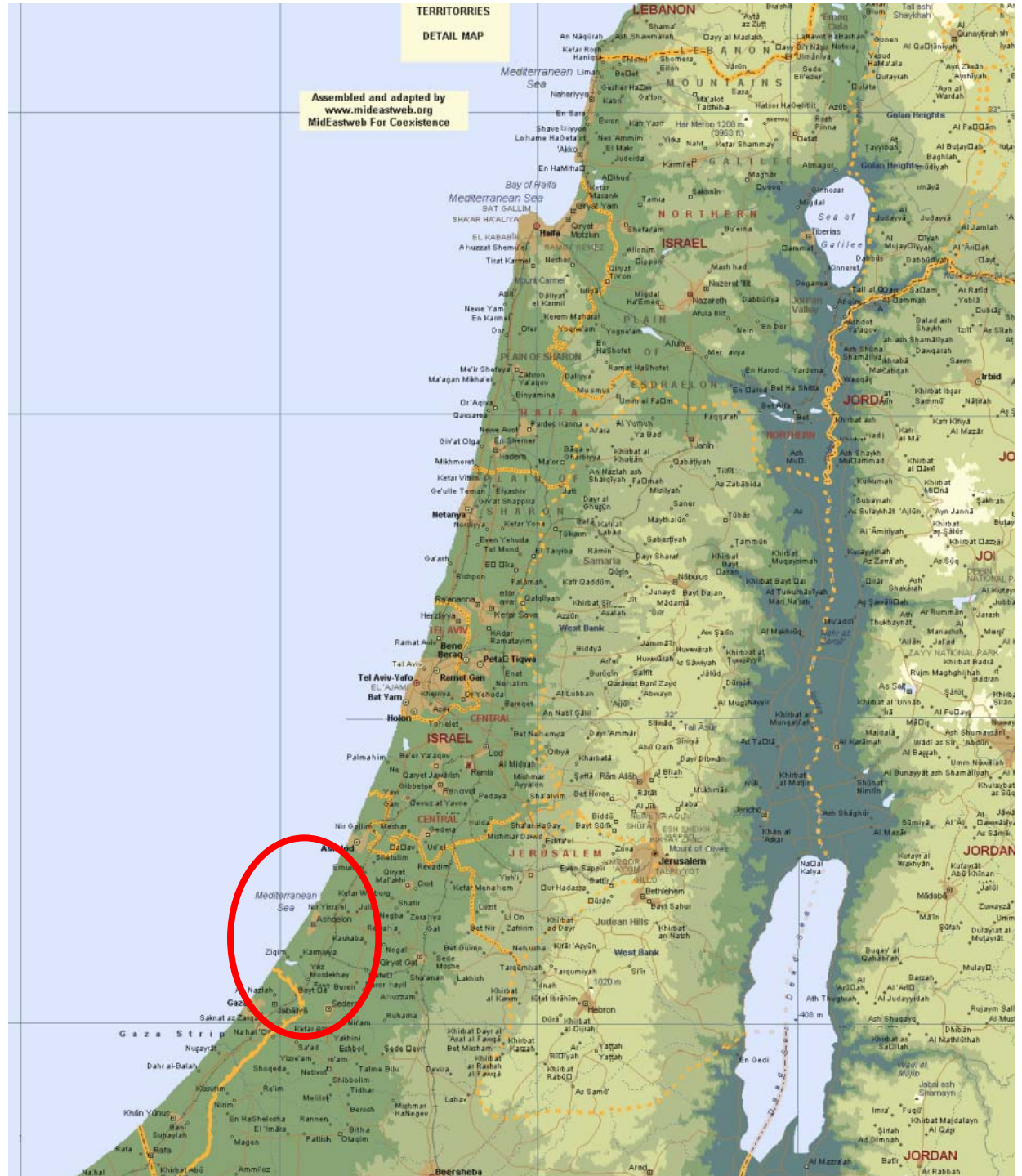
- The Israeli medical system consistently supports its Palestinian counterpart
 - public health services
 - emergency medical preparedness
 - bioterrorism
 - pandemic influenza & avian flu
 - critical medical care to Palestinians, through times of increased tension and relative quiet. Sick and wounded Palestinians are frequently transferred to Israeli hospitals for advanced medical care.
- Barzilai Medical Center, a 500-bed regional hospital in Ashkelon, 7 kilometers northeast of Gaza, is a frequent recipient of Palestinian patients.

Study Objective

- To describe the scope and distribution of medical conditions encountered while treating wounded and sick Palestinians from Gaza.
 - During the period: 1/2005 - 9/2007
 - At the Barzilai Medical Center in Ashkelon

Study area

- ~7km = 4 miles
- ~1500 missiles/year
- 1 regional medical center

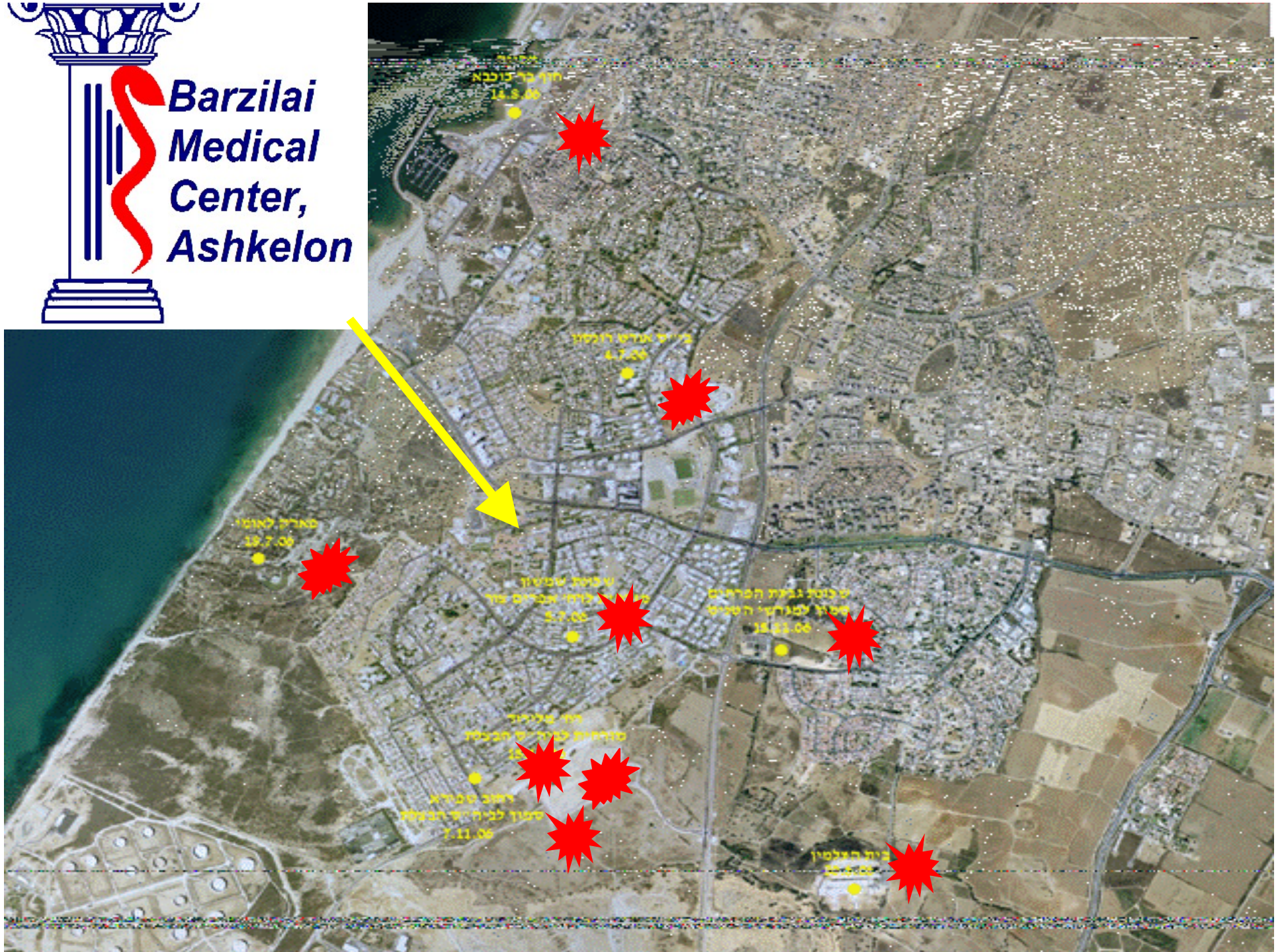








**Barzilai
Medical
Center,
Ashkelon**



Distribution of patient characteristics

- 1/2005 - 9/2007
- 441 Palestinian patients
- Age:
 - mean 33y,
 - range 0-85,
 - 30%<19, 17%<10y
- Gender M:F 336(76.2%):105 (23.8%)
- Case-mix
 - Acute and chronically ill / trauma
 - Obstetrics and perinatology
 - Complex clinical cases
 - Including Palestinian victims of Palestinian terrorism
 - Including proven and suspected terrorists

Distribution of patient characteristics

- 80.7% - emergency admissions
- Mostly acute conditions:
 - 32.4% acute trauma
 - 28.8% acute medical events
 - 35.8% chronic conditions
- Infectious diseases – 8.8%
- Orthopaedic – 32.0%
 - Elective – 33.3%
 - Acute – 66.7%
- Cardiovascular disease – 9.1%
- Ophthalmologic conditions - 20.0%
 - Elective – 43.2%
 - Acute – 56.8%

Gender differences

- 3 times more males than females
- Length of stay slightly higher in females, $p=0.087$
- More acute admissions among males, 83.3% vs 72.4%, $p=0.016$
- More acute trauma admissions among males, 38.1% vs 14.3%, $p<0.0001$

Outcomes

- Discharged – 94.3%
- Mortality – 5.6%
 - acute non traumatic conditions (10.2%)
 - acute traumatic conditions (4.9%)
 - chronic conditions (3.2%)
- Length of stay:
 - mean 10.9 days
 - 56.5% < 7d

Hospital in a Conflict Zone

Public Relations Challenges

- **Dilemmas encountered while treating wounded and sick Palestinians under the ongoing threat of Qassam missiles and acts of terrorism**
- **Challenges in communicating information to the public.**
 - **How to inform the Israeli population that Palestinian "adversaries" are treated in Israeli hospitals, and are at times prioritized ahead of Israeli patients.**
 - **Public knowledge that Palestinian patients are often treated in Israeli hospitals:**
 - **May serve as an important PR asset.**
 - **Can be a bridge to peace.**
 - **Will place Palestinian patients at risk for violence by radicals.**

BMC - building defenses against missiles from Gaza



Hammas terrorists

Palestinian flag

**A Palestinian child...
in the Maccabi Tel Aviv
basketball team uniform**

**There is hope, even
at the darkest hour**

