



Effects of Genetic Factors and HLA on the Severity of COVID-19 in the Armenian Population

Interview with Frieda Jordan PhD

Co-Founder and President of the
Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR)

Dr. Frieda Jordan is the co-founder and president of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), a pan-Armenian nonprofit organization established in 1999 to bring the hope of life-saving bone marrow stem cell transplantation to thousands afflicted by life-threatening blood-related illnesses. Her volunteer leadership of the ABMDR is built on a lifelong career in immunogenetics. After earning a PhD in biochemistry from Kings College London University, Dr. Jordan headed the Laboratory Services of the Anthony Nolan Research Center at the Royal Free Hospital in London. Subsequently she was appointed Associate Director of the HLA and Immunogenetics Laboratory at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, in Los Angeles. Since 2000, she has managed the DNA Molecular Typing Division at Foundation Laboratory, also in Los Angeles. Through her work with ABMDR, Dr. Jordan has promoted health awareness and quality healthcare in Armenia, Artsakh, and Armenian communities across the globe. As importantly, she has raised the international stature of the Republic of Armenia's expertise and impact in the healthcare field. In 2009, Dr. Jordan and her colleagues launched the ABMDR Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Armenia. In 2013, the Center performed Armenia's first-ever autotransplantation procedure, and, in 2014, launched its cord blood banking division to help save more lives. The scale and scope of ABMDR's mission have grown consistently. Presently the organization works in 42 countries across four continents. To date, it has recruited over 31,000 donors, identified 5,517 patients, and facilitated 38 bone marrow transplants.

Dr. Vicken Sepilian is a Reproductive Medicine specialist and is the founder and director of American Fertility Specialists Medical Group. He is double board-certified in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, as well as Obstetrics and Gynecology. Dr. Sepilian has been an active member of the Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS) holding multiple leadership positions, including serving as the President from 2009 to 2013. Dr. Sepilian served as the Chairman of the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress and currently is the President of the Armenian Medical International Congress (AMIC), a nonprofit organization with chapters all over the world, with the aim of coordinating global efforts in improving healthcare in Armenia. Passionate about community education, in 2008, Dr. Sepilian launched the "Your Health" educational TV program aimed at sharing with the community the latest and most important healthcare topics. Since 2008, the show has been making house calls to tens of thousands of viewers helping educate them on preventative care and healthy lifestyles. In 2010, Dr. Sepilian, alongside other civic leaders and the former Mayor of the City of Glendale co-founded the Glendale Health Festival. Dr. Sepilian worked closely with city and state officials and local hospitals to organize this large-scale event with the aim to improve the health of the community. Dr. Sepilian is a strong believer that success and wealth are measured by life's experiences and human interactions and that true happiness and purpose are achieved by giving. Cherished memories include debates about life and death with Dr. Jack Kevorkian, delivering pens to students in villages in Sri Lanka and teaching chess to orphans in Nepal.