



Introducing America's best doctor: Israeli Uri Elkayam

By Karin Kloosterman

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Pregnant women are at a greater risk of a heart attack. Although not common enough to worry most doctors - some may never see such a patient in their lifetime - Israeli Prof. Uri Elkayam, 64, has found the issue critical enough to have made it his specialty.

Doctors from across America, and the world, now turn to Elkayam whenever they see risks and concerns in their pregnant and post-partum patients.

Originally from Tel Aviv, where he studied medicine at Tel Aviv University, Elkayam has for the past 27 years been working in America. Today he is the director of the Heart Failure Program and professor of medicine and obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he runs a successful clinic that specializes in both pregnancy and heart disease and congestive heart failure.

Although he comes back to Israel about four times a year to visit colleagues and family, Elkayam is firmly planted in the United States, where his patients and colleagues in the medical community appreciate him dearly. So much so in fact, that Elkayam has been voted as one of the "Best Doctors in America" eight years straight by the medical community.

The doctor's doctor

"It's a book where physicians are asked what doctors they would send a patient or their relatives to. It's a fairly legitimate list, since it's a peer-reviewed list," Prof. Elkayam tells ISRAEL21c modestly. And his clinical research has earned him similar acclaim, appearing in popular American newspapers like the *Washington Post*, and top medical journals where he is on the advisory and editorial boards.

One of his specialties is congestive heart failure, which he says, "affects about five million Americans. And this phenomenon is increasing by the minute. Correlated with age and the aging population, it is the number one discharge diagnosis in the US for the over 65 population," he tells ISRAEL21c.

His second specialty, the uncommon condition of heart disease in pregnancy, came to him when working on a book with a fellow Israeli and medical school graduate Dr. Gleicher Nobert, who founded the Center for Human Reproduction in New York.

"The way it started is that I wanted to be an obstetrician... we started working on a book [Cardiac Problems in Pregnancy] and published the first book on heart disease and pregnancy."


Authority on pregnancy and heart disease

According to the book's publisher: "Recent medical advances have made pregnancy possible for women with heart disease and saved lives. Completely revised and expanded, the latest edition of this successful and authoritative clinical guide provides step-by-step treatment methods in a clear and organized manner."

Today, Elkayam runs one of the most prominent clinics of its kind in the world, where women with heart conditions come to him before they get pregnant, as do women who have heart disease induced by pregnancy: "Yes, I get phone calls and emails on a weekly basis from people all over the world," he says by phone while visiting Israel.

As for family life, Elkayam is married and has a grandchild and three children, one in Israel who works at Teva Pharmaceuticals and two others in the US, a musician and a jewelry designer.



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