

**Professor Yonah Amitai, 1947-2021**

The Collegium Ramazzini mourns the death of our dear friend and long-term Fellow of the Collegium Ramazzini, Professor Yonah Amitai of Israel, who died on October 16, 2021 at the age of 74.

Prof. Yonah Amitai was a dedicated pediatrician and public health physician. He was a Professor in the Department of Management at Bar-Ilan University. He served also as Director of Department of Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health in the Ministry of Health. He was a member of the Board of Public Health Services. He was a Renaissance man whose life’s work combined expertise in public health, pediatrics, toxicology and pharmacology as a researcher and a beloved lecturer.

### Prof. Amitai studied medicine in Bologna, Italy, and continued his studies in Israel at the Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University, graduating with honors in 1973. He served as a resident in pediatrics at Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hashomer, Israel from 1973 to 1978. He was a fellow in toxicology at Children's Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School from 1984 to 1986. He was an assistant professor at Rush Medical School, Chicago from 1989 to 1990. In 2001, he obtained an MPH degree from the Braun School of Public Health at Hebrew University, Jerusalem

### In 1990 at the completion of his training, Prof.Amatai returned to Israel and for the remainder of his long and distinguished career was a staff physician at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, where he headed the Department of Pediatrics and a Consultant in Toxicology to the Hadassah Medical Organization. He served with distinction in the Israeli Defense Forces, including service in the Yom Kippur War. He retired at the rank of major.

Prof. Amitai made a number of important contributions to medicine and public health. In his work as a toxicology fellow at Children's Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School, he made significant contributions to the prevention of childhood lead poisoning. In Israel and around the world, he contributed to the protection of adults and children from exposure to hazardous chemicals. In the field of pediatric preventive medicine, Prof Amitai introduced treatment with folic acid before pregnancy and in the early stages of pregnancy to prevent birth defects. At the same time, he led research in the field of water desalination and its effect on public health, raising the importance of adding magnesium to drinking water in the public agenda.

In addition to his 25 years of working in hospitals, Amitai has worked for many years as a pediatrician in community clinics. He was the first pediatrician in Elon Moreh in Samaria. He worked in community clinics with Bedouin children in the Sinai and with the Navajo Indian tribes in the United States.

The Collegium Ramazzini mourns the passing of our Fellow, Prof Yonah Amitai. May he rest in peace.