



# SURGICAL NEWS

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The College of Surgeons of Australia and New Zealand

# Victorian Urologist advances the field of Andrology



at the prestigious Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the New York Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Centre, he has worked to improve the surgical treatment and management of erectile and voiding dysfunction, Peyronie's disease and male infertility.

In 2011, Mr Katz was awarded the Ian and Ruth Gough Surgical Education Scholarship as well as the Australian Urological Foundation Travel Grant when he was accepted into this overseas Fellowship position.

He has collaborated on a new technique for penile implant surgery, improved microsurgical techniques for harvesting sperm and started one of Victoria's first Andrology clinics at a major public hospital.

Mr Katz said he had received great support from other Urologists upon his return from the USA and approximately 15 per cent of his private patients are referred to him by fellow Urologists. He said that he feels privileged and humbled when he receives these referrals from his colleagues who request his sub-specialty expertise in managing patients.

He said the surgical treatments and management of male sexual health and infertility issues were gradually catching up with a demand that has been largely over-looked, particularly in the public health system.

"Unfortunately in the past the surgical management of such issues as infertility, erectile dysfunction or certain

The first Victorian Fellow to complete an international Fellowship in Andrology, sexual and reproductive medicine, prosthetics and male infertility has now created his own Fellowship to teach other Urologists similar skills.

Victorian Urological and Prosthetic Surgeon Mr Darren Katz, in collaboration with his senior colleague Mr Christopher Love, has established the first Andrology Surgical Fellowship in Australia, a position currently held by Israeli urologist Dr Ohad Shoshany.

Dr Shoshany had completed a 12 month infertility

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fellowship in Chicago, but wanted to undertake the inaugural fellowship with Mr Katz and Mr Love to broaden his experience in prosthetic urology as well as further enhance his microsurgical skills.

Since Mr Katz has returned from his year-long Fellowship

penile disorders has not been a major part of our training as Urologists because most urological training takes place in public hospitals and these conditions rarely make it through the outpatient waiting list, let alone onto an operating list!" he said.

"That means that some men have suffered for years from conditions that can actually be treated."

To overcome this deficit, Mr Katz spends a considerable amount of time attending conferences, giving presentations and coordinating workshops to explain the developments that have been made in the field, as well as new procedures and new thinking around men's sexual health and fertility.

Together with Mr Love, they developed the Minimally-Invasive No Touch (MINT) technique for penile implant surgery. Mr Katz said research had now shown that their technique has an infection rate of less than 1 per cent, compared to around 5 per cent indicated in most other series not using this technique.

"Using the MINT technique, the entire three-piece implant can be inserted via a single 3cm incision hidden just below the pubic bone with patients discharged after just one night in hospital," he said.

"We have presented our MINT technique at the National Urological Conference (USANZ) and internationally at the American Urological Association Conference, in China at the World Meeting in Sexual Medicine, and at the Sexual Medicine Society of North America.

"We have also had several visiting Urologists from Australia and abroad who have come to Melbourne to observe how this procedure is performed."

Mr Katz and Mr Love are also investigating the use of Low Intensity Shock Wave Lithotripsy for the treatment of mild to moderate arteriogenic erectile dysfunction.

Now in the process of running a small trial through their clinic in Melbourne, the procedure works by applying sound waves to the penis over a six week course of treatment with evidence suggesting that it recruits stem cells and initiates angiogenesis to improve blood flow.

However, over and above all the technical developments that have been made in the field of Andrology, Mr Katz said the most exciting local developments have been made in the field of male infertility management. He said that while research showed that about 50 per cent of infertility in couples trying to conceive involved a male factor, most infertile couples were managed by gynecologists with the focus first placed upon the woman before the man's fertility was investigated.

"I have seen women being put through multiple investigations before their male partners are even brought in for basic tests," Mr Katz said.

"However, while making changes to established practices

in any field of medicine or surgery is very difficult, over the last few years I have made a concerted effort to engage with the IVF fertility specialists through speaking at conferences, registrar training weekends and face-to-face meetings.

"I try to explain the importance of early engagement with a Urologist who has an interest in male infertility and microsurgery when dealing with an infertile couple and these specialists are now seeing the tangible positive outcomes for couples when utilising such interdisciplinary collaboration.

"There is now a well-established interdisciplinary referral network in Victoria, not previously present, which I believe has truly advanced the management of male infertility in this state.

"At times I have spent up to four hours in the operating room searching for viable sperm in patients who were previously told that there was no hope, but then nine months later I receive a thank-you card and a picture of a newborn and that is hugely rewarding."

– With Karen Murphy

RWS

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