

HEART TREATMENT NOT AVAILABLE IN THE UK BECAUSE OF FUNDING

Widow seeks to raise £6m in memory of her husband

BY SIMON YAFFE

JUST under a million people in the UK suffer from heart disease or failure.

And 10 to 20 per cent of them may benefit from stem cell therapy.

Twelve years ago, Jenifer and Ian Rosenberg set up their charity, called the Heart Cells Foundation.

Its aim is to create a new field of medicine — the ability to use a person's own stem cells to repair their heart. And the charity's goal is to make the treatment available for everybody.

Earlier this year, they were given the all-clear to start paying for the treatments, which costs around £10,000 a time.

Sadly, however, Ian was not around to see it. He died from heart failure, at the age of 70, in 2006.

The story of how the charity was set up began after the Londoner suffered a heart attack at the age of 39, but Ian, who had forged a successful career in the textiles industry, continued to work.



CHARITY: Jenifer and Ian Rosenberg

He became ill again when he was in his 50s, undergoing open heart surgery and was fitted with a defibrillator.

"Life was good until then," Jenifer, who enjoyed a prosperous career in fashion manufacturing, told the *Jewish Telegraph*.

"We had met in the south of

France in 1981 and married a year later.

"By 2000, Ian's heart problems became worse and he was becoming short of breath.

"His heart was not pumping sufficiently, so he built up fluid retention, as well. Only seven per cent of Ian's heart was working.

"It was obviously emotionally difficult. I am a positive person and so was Ian, so whatever problems came along, we would try to solve them."

In 2003, Ian was referred to a consultant cardiologist at St Bartholomew's Hospital, Anthony Nathan.

He was told he could be put on the waiting list for a heart transplant, but the chances of receiving a match were very slim.

"We had to look at other options," Jenifer recalled.

"Anthony recommended another cardiologist called Anthony Mathur, who was working at the London Chest Hospital."

Professor Mathur told the couple about a team at the Frankfurt University Hospital, which was conducting human trials, taking adult stem cells from bone marrow in the hip and injecting them

into the main artery of the heart.

Jenifer and Ian, together with Prof Mathur, travelled to Germany, where he underwent the procedure.

"Back then, it was pioneering treatment," Jennifer explained.

"After about a month, Ian could walk up and down the stairs in our house and we realised that his heart was working much better."

However, although the treatment was successful, it could not be made available in the UK due to lack of funds and red tape.

It had to be approved for NHS funding by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

"Ian was angry that this treatment benefited him, but other people with heart problems were not able to have it," Jenifer explained.

"The doctors told him that it would cost £6.5 million for it to happen in the UK, so we set about raising the money. Ian was so determined.

"We raised it through various donors, through trusts and charitable events."

Jenifer said that much of the funding also came from the Jew-

ish community — and 90 per cent of the trustees of the Heart Cells Foundation, which was set up in 2004, are Jewish, as is its fundraising committee.

Since the programme opened last year at St Barts, 50 stem cell therapies have been paid for by the charity, on top of the 300 patients they treated during their research trials.

In September, Gordon Foster, who took part in the Heart Cells Foundation-funded stem cell trials, becoming the first person to receive the pioneering treatment in the UK.

The charity has since secured funding to help a further 50 patients, with 37 already on the waiting list.

"Ian has left such a wonderful legacy," Jenifer continued.

"The treatment he had gave him three years where he worked hard and laid the foundations for the charity.

"Our long-term goal is to raise another £6 million, which will fund bigger trials. We want to get them rolled around the country — that is the dream."

www.heartcellsfoundation.com

Labour manifesto: We will support Palestinian recognition at the UN

THE Labour Party's manifesto was leaked four days early yesterday — and it pledges to tackle antisemitism within the party.

The manifesto, which the *Jewish Telegraph* has obtained, states: "Commissioning a report on our own Party was an unprecedented step in British politics, demonstrating a commitment to tackling prejudice wherever it is found.

"Labour is already acting on recommendations, including reform of internal disciplinary procedures to make them firmer and fairer, and expansion of training to tackle antisemitism.

"On a matter of such importance, Labour urges all democratic political parties to do the same."

The document, which is currently in draft form, as it has yet to be ratified by all parts of the party, also states that it is committed to a two-state solution for "secure Israel" and it will support "Palestinian" recognition at the UN.

It continues: "Labour is com-

BY ADAM CAILLER

mitted to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on a two-state solution, that means a secure Israel alongside a secure and viable state of Palestine.

"The expansion of Israeli settlements on the Palestinian West Bank is not only wrong and illegal, but represents a threat to the very viability of the hopes of securing a successful outcome of the peace process.

"We cannot accept the continued humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we will support Palestinian recognition at the UN."

According to sources, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's office have stated that there is "no witch hunt" over leaks, and that they are "pleased" it's out there.

Meanwhile, a student chosen to introduce Jeremy Corbyn at his local election launch has quit her senior post with a university Labour group after posting a series of racist, antisemitic and

homophobic tweets.

Bethany Barker was found to be posting tweets between 2012-2014, referring to the "n****r race", described a skull cap as a "Jew cap" and referred to another Twitter user as a "f****t".

Barker resigned as general secretary of Nottingham Labour Students once the tweets were uncovered.

The student group condemned her comments, saying they were "not representative" of the views of its members.

Barker said: "Some screenshots have resurfaced about what I said in the past.

"I'm absolutely horrified and beyond disgusted about these tweets and they are in no way representative of the views I hold now.

"I have no recollection of writing these tweets and I am unequivocally sorry for the shadow that has been brought over our society because of it.

"These views are in no way what I align with today and I am beyond upset that I could ever say such things."

THE world's oldest medical journal, *The Lancet*, has published a special edition focussing on health in Israel.

'Health in Israel: Progress and Challenges in a Region of Conflict' was guest-edited by Ben-Gurion University's Mark Clarfield.

Director of the Fuld Department of Medical Genetics at Shaare Zedek Professor Levy-Lahad co-authored a report entitled 'Medical Genetics in Israel's Diverse Population'.

He writes: "Mendelian (inherited) conditions are systematically curated through the Israeli National Genetic Database that includes 890 entries for Jews and 1376 for non-Jews.

"Diseases common in all white populations, such as cystic fibrosis, are also common in all Israelis.

"Regionally common diseases, such as thalassaemia, are frequent

Lancet puts the focus on Israeli health

in both Arabs and Jews of Middle Eastern origin.

"Prevention of these recessive diseases in all of the country's ethnic groups is the focus of Israel's national carrier screening programme, which is the most comprehensive in the world."

Other topics covered in the journal are digital health, maternal and child health in Israel and healthcare challenges of an ageing population in Israel.

Details: thelancet.com/series/health-in-israel

UJS appoints new members

THE Union of Jewish Students has appointed five new people to its team — three from Leeds J-Soc.

Daniel Rafael and Grace Diamond have been appointed J-Soc officers, while Sam Gold has joined the campaigns team.

The former of the

trio spent four months volunteering in Ghana where he worked to challenge the effects of poverty and promoted health and sexual education in the country.

St Andrews student Kathryn Rose and Bristol's Rebecca Flier have also joined the team.

JLC's new chairman

JONATHAN Goldstein has succeeded Sir Mick Davis as the new chairman of the Jewish Leadership Council.

Its membership elected sole candidate Mr Goldstein on Tuesday.

The 50-year-old has previously chaired the JLC's education division, Partnerships for Jewish Schools.