

AMMA JOURNAL VOL 7 ISSUE 3
DECEMBER 1998

The Role of Viagra Eye Drops in Australian Military Medicine.
President's Welcome to the 7th AMMA Conference

by
Nader Abou-Seif

Good morning and welcome to the 7th National Conference of AMMA. Why this title for a President's Address? As anyone who has been subject to the media of late has seen Viagra has recently been introduced to Australia. In keeping with tradition, this has been associated with a number of jokes - not all of which are suitable for public consumption. One of these is - Have you heard of the use for Viagra eye drops? It's for those who need to have a long hard look at themselves.

I suggest that the annual AMMA Conference provides us all with the opportunity and the venue to do just that.

If you ask anyone in the Australian Military Medical Community: What is the state of military medicine in Australia today? I believe that their answer would depend on the kind of day they had been having.

We have had a period of profound change within the military part of our community. Many people have reported uncertainty in the effect that the day to day changes will have on their abilities to carry out their primary roles.

What does this mean to us? Where does military medicine, in both the service and non-service communities stand?

Those of you who have heard me speak in the past may have noted a certain theme in my presentations. These are heritage, commitment and achievement. Those who attended last night's presentation on the Thredbo disaster would have heard terms familiar to us all - command and control, rapid mobilization, casualty evacuation. Modern health services owe a huge debt to practitioners of the art of military medicine.

EMST, medical evacuation, triage are things we all think of as having their roots in military medicine. Trauma surgery whether general, orthopaedic or maxillofacial has by its very nature a military nature to it. Modern nursing has its historical origins in the Crimea. Human Factors and ergonomics have their roots in safety management issues arising during the Second World War. Tropical medicine has developed with contributions ranging from those of Walter Reed to those of our own Malaria Research Institute.

AMMA is a relatively new organisation. In our short time we have attempted to provide a focus for the excellence that exists in the Australian Military Medical Community and also in the wider international arena. Our practitioners have served in numerous areas of the world. Providing disaster support, in fields of conflict, in a peace-monitoring role, in clinical situations often in the most difficult of circumstances and in research in all fields of military medicine both in and out of uniform.

This year's conference program promises to add to a growing tradition. We are fortunate to have as our guest speaker this year Captain Arthur Smith whose experiences and thoughts on Casualty management

will be of interest to us all. Research and training in the Armed Forces are highlighted, as are recent experiences during overseas deployments. We look at two extremes of stress management dating from the Boer War to the present day. As always lessons from history are not to be forgotten, for in looking forward we must take aboard the lessons of the past.

I look forward to joining with you in both the academic and social parts of this conference. Our traditions are young but solid and growing. Which brings me back to my opening remarks. The role of Viagra eye drops in Australian military medicine: we are getting bigger and better.

Thank you.