

Saint James Hospital Group teams up with TheSynapse

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I have known Dr Wilfred Galea since when, at the young age of nineteen I used to meet doctors in order to promote the services being offered by Saint James in Zabbar. This was the early nineties.

Over the last thirty years, what was acceptable practice in terms of healthcare standards is unthinkable now, let alone acceptable. The public hospital moved to a new modern facility, the number of consultants working in the private sector has mushroomed and today patients have a far broader choice of specialists to choose from as compared to those days. Access to training and development has also improved significantly ensuring that the quality of our medical professionals remains very high and local healthcare standards are now at par, or even better, than some of our European counterparts.

The healthcare scene has gone through a revolutionary process indeed, and of which we, as Saint James Hospital Group, form an integral part. Saint James Hospital developed from a converted house in Żabbar into becoming Malta's leading private healthcare provider with two first class hospitals, one in Sliema and the recently opened one in Tal-Barrani, Limits of Żejtun, the latter replacing the Żabbar hospital. The Saint James Hospital Group also encompasses a specialised ophthalmic centre of excellence in Birkirkara, the operation of a leading private laboratory, an import and medical distribution company, and an out-patient clinic in Burmarrad.

In 2005, the Saint James Hospital Group also took the ambitious decision to explore the international markets, namely Libya and Hungary. We were successful in setting up healthcare facilities in both Tripoli and Budapest, both of which are still active although unfortunately the Libya operation suffers the consequences of political instability in the region.

This development was an evolving process during which we encountered numerous challenges of every sort, then and now, as is common with any other business I suppose. In our desire to develop and improve, we faced financial, recruitment, innovation, management and clinical challenges. Some complex, others less so. Today's ever-changing business realities require us to be able to react in a timely manner in order to always be ahead in the clinical field as the world of medicine continues to evolve and technology paves the way to new and exciting horizons.

This all comes at a cost, and prices for services in private hospitals have increased significantly over the years as a direct consequence of this. This is where private medical insurances also play a pivotal role. This sector also evolved from having one predominant player to a wide range of insurance providers offering various products and services to their clients nowadays. It is to my view that this service should be



better supported by Government in the form of, for example, tax rebates in order to encourage more demand, directly resulting in lessened pressures on the national health system, fewer waiting lists and an improved service for those who truly cannot afford private healthcare. Naturally, even more challenging is the fact that private hospital operators continue to operate against a completely free government service that seems to defy financial logic. It remains to be seen whether such unique and recurrent expenditures will be sustainable in the long run.

Going back to the private healthcare sector, we feel the need to set up channels through which private family doctors have more accessibility to the Saint James Hospital services such that referrals and feedback on patients referred is received in a complete and timely manner allowing the referring doctors to safely manage the follow up and care of their patients.

Dr Galea remains one of those medical practitioners who has been relentless in pursuing his dream to provide added value to the medical profession. I have followed the development of TheSynapse internet portal and magazine from conceptual stage to implementation. Their quality and the value of the contribution from the respective members is unique and guarantees their excellent standard.

Dr Galea and TheSynapse team are now taking this to the next level by introducing an e-learning site, CME30.eu, which is a unique and fantastic tool for doctors to have access to Continuing Medical Education and earn CME points. Medical education is an area which is very close to our Group values and is one of the pillars in which we continue to invest in and promote further. We are therefore very happy to announce that as part of this ongoing interest, Saint James Hospital Group has partnered with TheSynapse and CME30.eu in order to support ongoing medical education for the medical profession.

We believe that together we can achieve more, and this key partnership will be duly beneficial for all parties involved, particularly the medical profession itself in making continued medical education more accessible to one and all.