

KONFERENČNÍ ABSTRAKT / CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

AGILITY IN ACTION - THE IDF MEDICAL CORPS' STRATEGY IN THE "SWORD OF IRON" WAR

Michael Malkin

Military Medicine Academy, Medical Corps, Israel Defense Forces

This presentation provides an exploration of the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) medical response during the "Swords of Iron" war, focusing on the strategies and innovations that enabled an extraordinary casualty survival rate exceeding 93%. The IDF employed cutting-edge approaches to combat casualty care, saving lives in one of the most challenging operational environments in recent history.

The presentation will delve into the IDF's systematic response to more than 5,000 injured soldiers during the conflict, detailing key interventions such as the use of tourniquets, freeze-dried plasma (FDP), and whole blood transfusions in the field. These life-saving measures were combined with over 700 air evacuations, facilitating rapid treatment even in high-intensity combat zones. The IDF's medical corps demonstrated a highly adaptive system, focusing on immediate pre-hospital care to stabilize injured personnel before evacuation to civilian hospitals, as the IDF relies heavily on Israel's national healthcare system rather than dedicated military hospitals.

A major theme is the integration of medical personnel into front-line combat units. Physicians and paramedics were embedded in nearly every company and in some cases even platoons, due to the complexity of the battlefield, delays in evacuation, and the rising lethality of modern weapons. This deployment strategy allowed for rapid medical intervention, significantly improving survival rates.

In addition to tactical medical interventions, the presentation will highlight lessons learned and their application during this war. These lessons include the critical role of first responders and laypeople in providing initial life-saving care, the importance of forward-positioned medical personnel, and the effectiveness of protective gear when used properly. Special attention will be given to the IDF's rapid adaptation to evolving battlefield conditions and its ability to implement new medical protocols in real time.

Finally, the presentation will offer insights into the ethical and leadership challenges faced by military medical professionals in conflict zones. The IDF Medical Corps, working closely with the national civilian medical system, is not only focused on treatment but also on ensuring the well-being of personnel in extreme conditions. This presentation provides a comprehensive overview of the IDF's approach to military medicine, emphasizing leadership, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to saving lives amidst the chaos of war.

Keywords: Combat Casualty Care; Whole Blood Transfusion; Military Medical Strategy; Casualty Survival Rate