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Fatty Liver Disease in Pakistan: An Underestimated Threat

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Lubna Kamani, MD, FCPS, MRCP(UK),
FRCP(London)



From Mentorship to Friendship: How WGO's Mentorship Program Fosters Global Connections

Sevda Aghayeva, MD, PhD

Misuse of Proton Pump Inhibitors: Time for PPI Stewardship



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Introduction

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are among the most commonly prescribed medications globally, and they have revolutionized the management of acid-related disorders, gastrointestinal bleeding, hypersecretory disorders, and other conditions.¹ PPIs are effective and appropriate for specific indications, but they are also widely used “off-label” for other purposes.² Overtreatment for functional dyspepsia, gastroesophageal reflux symptoms, stress ulcer prophylaxis in non-critically ill patients, and prophylaxis against ulcer/bleeding from stomach associated with corticosteroids, anticoagulants, and antiplatelets are the most frequent instances of inappropriate PPI use (Table 1).^{3,4} PPIs are generally well tolerated; nevertheless, treatment for more than four to eight weeks is rarely recommended.^{4,5} However, evidence also indicates that these drugs are used for longer than the recommended duration of therapy and higher than the recommended dose. Analyzing 65 studies in 23 countries, a recent systematic review of global trends and practices of PPI use identified over 28 million PPI users in the general population (nearly one-quarter of adults use a PPI). Nearly two-thirds of users were on high doses (\geq defined daily dose). 25% of users used PPIs for more than a year, and 28% used them for more than three years.⁶ The therapeutic inappropriateness associated with PPI

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use during the last three decades cannot be solely attributed to the replacement of histamine 2 receptor antagonists (H2RAs) with more potent PPIs. The utilization of PPIs is increasing in both Western and Eastern countries, as well as in both pediatric and adult populations, despite the fact that most of their indications have remained unchanged for many years.^{2,6}

Major contributors to the misuse of PPIs include the attitude of prescribing primary care provider who often view them as harmless and a one-stop solution for any gastric issue or drug-related adverse effect; the availability of PPIs over-the-counter; the practice of self-medication; the failure to establish a timeline for deprescribing PPIs after the recommended duration; and the availability of generic drugs that reduce cost. Misuse of PPIs can have serious repercussions, such as increased healthcare costs, adverse drug reactions, and gastric acid rebound after stopping the PPI.⁵ In this review we attempt to summarize the clinical ramifications of inappropriate use of PPIs and address the principles of deprescribing PPIs.

Clinical Ramifications of PPI misuse

Although PPIs have significantly transformed the management of specific gastrointestinal disorders, it is critical to recognise their limitations and recognize situations in which their application may be ineffective or even detrimental. In their prospective observational cross-sectional study of hospitalised patients in the emergency department, Nguyen et al. found that one-third of patients were using PPI inappropriately.⁷ Sattayalertyanyong et al. analysed PPI-using hospitalized patients in a study with a similar approach, and they found that nearly half of the patients had received prescriptions without a valid indication.⁸ According to a recent retrospective review, approximately 37.8% of patients

Most common situations of PPI inappropriate or overuse
Undifferentiated abdominal pain
Isolated lower gastrointestinal symptoms
Functional dyspepsia with no sustained response to PPI therapy
Stress ulcer prophylaxis in non-critically ill inpatients
Gastroprotection with single antiplatelet agent without additional risk factors of GI bleed
Gastroprotection with anticoagulant without additional risk factors for gastrointestinal bleed
Ulcer prophylaxis with steroids
First line therapy with pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT)
Co-prescription with bisphosphonates
Empiric treatment of laryngopharyngeal symptomatology
Co-prescription with antibiotics

Table 1: Most common situations of PPI inappropriate or overuse

admitted with lower gastrointestinal bleeding were started on a PPI during their stay. For those patients, 46% had no indication for a PPI and 85% had not been recommended to begin a PPI by GI consultants.⁹ Recent systematic review and meta-analysis on inappropriate use of PPIs in clinical practice globally analyzed 79 studies, including 20,050 patients, and reported that pooled proportion of inappropriate overuse of PPI was 0.60 (95% CI 0.55 to 0.65, I² 97%).¹⁰

PPIs are relatively safe drugs when used for short term with reported minor adverse effects including headache, rash, dizziness, and gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, abdominal pain, flatulence, constipation, and diarrhoea.¹¹ However, one clear risk with the short-term use is increased risk of enteric infections.¹² The majority of adverse effects associated with long term PPI use are due to desired drug effect that is increased gastric pH, hypochlorhydria and in some cases to achlorhydria. Over the last decade, numerous observational studies and meta-analyses have shed light on the long-term use of PPIs and potential risks in various patient populations. Prolonged administration of PPIs has been linked to a number of severe and infrequent adverse effects, such as stroke,

myocardial infarction, renal disease (including acute interstitial nephritis, acute kidney injury, and end-stage renal disease), hepatic disease (including spontaneous bacterial peritonitis, hepatocellular carcinoma, and hepatic encephalopathy), fractures and infections (including *Clostridium difficile* infection, community-acquired pneumonia, COVID-19), micronutrient deficiencies (hypomagnesemia, anaemia, vitamin B12 deficiency, hypocalcaemia), dementia, and neuroendocrine tumours and carcinomas of the gastrointestinal tract.¹³⁻¹⁵ Therefore, the long-term side effects of PPIs are a considerable concern for malnourished, aged, chronically ill, immunocompromised, and osteoporotic individuals. Inappropriate use of PPIs (overuse or misuse) raises healthcare costs and increases the risk of polypharmacy. Drug interactions are a crucial and frequently forgotten factor, and several studies have looked into the potential interaction between PPIs and antiplatelet agents. However, given the inherent limitations of observational studies and the subsequent meta-analysis that included these studies, we should exercise caution when extrapolating broad inferences about some of these associations with the existing level of evidence.

Deprescribing PPIs

Safe and effective PPI therapy requires awareness of best practice guidelines pertaining to PPI use on the part of primary care provider and relevant patient education.^{4,13} The “*primum non nocere*” oath is the first and most important precept of drug administration, and this also applies to PPIs. Deprescribing a drug refers to the clinically supervised procedure of discontinuing or reducing the dose of medication when it causes harm or no longer provides benefit. Inappropriate indication, the presence or risk of adverse events, drug interaction, drug-disease interaction or patient preference are all potential triggers for deprescribing PPIs. Deprescribing PPIs entails dosage reduction, discontinuation, or transition to ‘on-demand’ administration, guided by the principle of employing PPIs at their minimum effective dose for the shortest duration possible.^{3,4}

However, deprescribing can be difficult, especially when the drug, such as PPI, does not appear to have any visible side effects or takes a long time to exhibit them. Deprescribing PPIs in routine clinical practice is hampered by a number of factors, and there are

Indications for long term PPI use (>8 weeks)
Barrett’s esophagus
Peptic stricture
Zollinger-Ellison syndrome
Gastroprotection in long term users of NSAID/antiplatelets/anticoagulants/steroids with additional risk factors for GI bleed
Severe esophagitis (LA grade C and D)
Eosinophilic esophagitis
Refractory steatorrhea in chronic pancreatic insufficiency with PERT
Documented history of bleeding GI ulcer

Table 2: Indications for long term PPI use (>8 weeks)

still significant gaps in our understanding of the best deprescribing strategy in different clinical contexts. Given the scarcity of published deprescribing trials, the existing evidence is often of poor methodological quality.^{2,3,5} Deprescription becomes easier if the intended duration of therapy is discussed at the time of the first PPI prescription. Figure 1 explains steps of deprescribing PPIs.

Importantly, the first step is to re-evaluate the PPI indication on a regular basis and document the indication. The burden for reviewing falls on the patient’s primary care provider, but any clinician with time, knowledge, and determination, whether a cardi-

ologist, hospitalist, family physician, or nurse practitioner, can deprescribe PPIs. It is also crucial to note that deprescription is rarely urgent in most cases, and the decision to quit PPIs should be based simply on the lack of an indication for PPI usage, rather than anxiety about PPI-associated adverse effects. Long-term PPI medication may be justified if the benefit clearly justifies the possible risks. Patients with Barrett’s oesophagus (BE), severe esophagitis grade C or D, Peptic strictures, Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, eosinophilic esophagitis, history of bleeding GI ulcer, or bleeding risk with prolonged NSAID usage should continue taking PPIs or visit their treating physician before discontinuing them (Table 2).^{2,4,5,13}

It is imperative to allow the patient sufficient time to deliberate on the available options while also ensuring that they are assisted without coercion. If PPI use appears to be inappropriate, a discussion between the healthcare professional and the patient must ensue discussing contemplation and methods for deprescribing. Talking about “a trial of deprescribing” is an effective way to secure patient acceptance, as it reassures patients that the PPI can be reintroduced if symptoms return. Both dose reduction and abrupt discontinuation strategies have demonstrated comparable outcomes for deprescribing PPIs.^{4,13} The strategy should be tailored to each individual

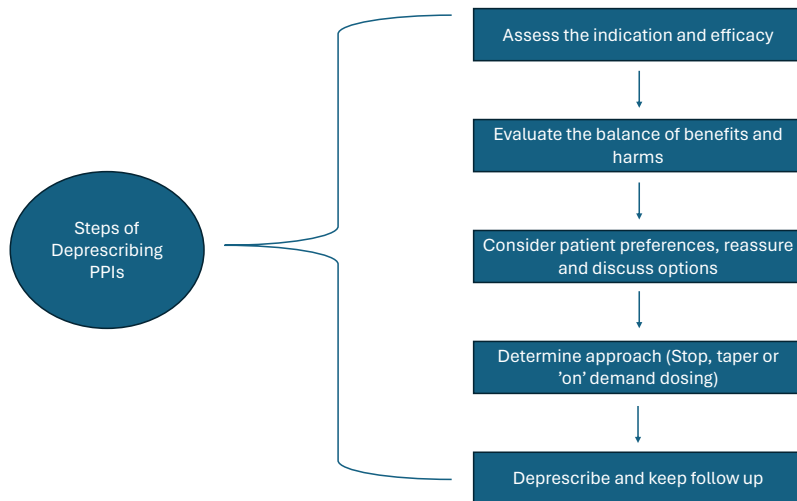


Figure 1: Steps for de-prescribing Proton Pump Inhibitors

and customisable. Patients on a twice-daily PPI should be considered for de-escalation to a once-daily dose of PPI, particularly those with GERD. In a trial of 117 individuals receiving higher-than-normal dosages of PPIs for GERD, 80% effectively transitioned to regular doses of PPI without substantial recurrence of symptoms or the need to increase the PPI dose.¹⁶

Patients who cease long-term PPI therapy should be informed that rebound acid hypersecretion may cause transient upper gastrointestinal symptoms. In lieu of continuous PPI therapy, the administration of H2RAs, neutralising antacids, lifestyle modifications or on-demand PPIs may prove beneficial in managing symptoms temporarily in such patients. Any recurrence of symptoms should be discussed with the patient during a four-week review following discontinuing PPI therapy.

There is an unmet need for high-quality, long-term evidence-based initiatives in deprescribing PPIs. Current evidence, albeit of low quality, suggests that deprescribing is harmless, with the benefits of reduced pill burden, lower health care costs, and potentially fewer long-term adverse effects.^{2,5}

Conclusion

Inappropriate and longer than recommended use of PPIs continues to contribute to the global epidemic of PPI misuse. Incorporating preventive measures at the time for prescribing PPIs for the first time can substantially reduce PPI misuse. These measures should consist of a clearly documented indication, a treatment duration plan, and a predetermined review date to re-evaluate the necessity for continued treatment. The decision to continue or deprescribe PPIs should be patient centric and based on evidence of risk or benefits. As prescribers, we should prioritize avoiding needless long-term prescriptions, particularly for patients who started PPI therapy

for inappropriate reasons. Deprescribing of PPIs requires a systematic approach and health care providers must be well versed with best practice guidelines in order to confidently explain the choice to patients.

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Message from the Editors



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Dear colleagues,

We are very happy to present yet another issue of our periodical *e-WGN*. As is true for our earlier publications, this endeavor also expresses the diversity of WGO in terms of contributions with input from across the globe. We are honored to have contributions to this issue from Pakistan, India, Portugal, Romania, USA, Argentina and so on.

We would encourage our readers to browse through the article by Drs. Jearth, Dutta and Sharma from India. For the first time in recent years, we in our *e-WGN* have addressed the concern regarding misuse of proton pump inhibitors (PPI). While nobody doubts the efficacy of PPIs in acid-peptic diseases, these along with antibiotics and glucocorticoids are also the most abused drugs across the world. The prescription of PPIs is increasing by almost 5% every year and, in the majority of cases, their uses are irrational. Each country needs to address this as a top priority. Correct indication, proper dosage and duration of therapy needs to be adhered to. We are in complete agreement with the

authors that there is an urgent need for PPI stewardship.

Fatty liver disease, however you refer to it, is a global health issue. It is interesting to note that it is increasingly recognized in country like Pakistan as well. Drs. Bhatti and Kamani from Pakistan have rightly emphasized the need to take all measures to prevent the disease from becoming an epidemic. They make important and critical suggestions to reducing risk factors and helping improve the overall health of the Pakistani population.

May 19th is celebrated around the globe as World IBD Day. This day's purpose is to focus on our fight against inflammatory bowel disease. The theme surrounding 2024 was "IBD has no borders." Some of our doctors within WGO went beyond their own borders and collaborated with colleagues and friends to put together a special celebration on this day. Professionals in Romania and Portugal organized their efforts with the support of WGO's IBD Committee and made it an important day for IBD awareness. Well done!

The Train the Trainers (TTT) program is the hallmark of WGO educational activities. Dr. Kelly Burak (Canada), Chair of WGO's TTT Committee deserves a big compliment for his passionate and innovative endeavor for continuously making our TTT program a great success. Dr. Bedini from Argentina has recorded the success of this meeting held in Mendoza, Argentina. She highlights the useful lessons learned and the cultural networking she was able to experience during her time with WGO and Train the Trainers.

This issue also provides the highlights of many recent meetings held around the world. The 43rd Annual General Meeting of Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology offers an interesting observation by Dr. Joseph Sung about artificial intelligence. He states, "AI won't replace doctors, but doctors who don't use AI will be replaced." Similarly, Dr. Bugti has given a glimpse inside of the 40th Annual meeting of Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology and GI Endoscopy. It is also interesting to note details of second annual meeting of Midwest Metabolic Clinical Symposium held in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. The uniqueness of this meeting seems to be collaboration between different medical specialists to discuss overlapping diseases with common pathogenesis.

As usual, we have included important forthcoming GI related events through our signature Calendar of Events. We are sure this may help in planning your potential visits to these academic programs. In our special section on women in leadership, we have specifically recognized women leaders within our WGO member

societies. It is heartening to note that so many women gastroenterologists are now leading their societies. It is a very healthy and welcoming trend to notice.

We are also happy to welcome Dr. Alexander Stockdale as new Director at WGO's Blantyre Training Center. We are sure with his passion & experience the next generation of physicians will benefit a lot.

As always, we would once again request you to contribute to this periodical. With diversity and large circulation, we feel this is a proper platform to showcase your viewpoints and academic contribution. Happy reading!

Dr. Mahesh K Goenka, India
 Dr. Nancy Fanous, Egypt



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Fatty Liver Disease in Pakistan: An Underestimated Threat



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Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) can vary from simple steatosis to nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) and has an increasing trend in the world, as well as in Asia.^{1,2} These pathological processes can lead to development of cirrhosis and/or hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) and are linked with several systemic disorders including colorectal cancer, cardiovascular and metabolic conditions.³ Based on limited data, it seems that about 5-20% people in Asia may have NAFLD, but it is multifactorial and based on location, gender, race and age.⁴ An absence of symptom and health alarm in the majority of patients with NAFLD makes its diagnosis and management more challenging.^{1,5} The term metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), originates from its predecessor, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).⁶

In a recent study conducted by Ghani et. al, NAFLD definition was used to investigate metabolic risk factors associated with this condition within the Pakistani population.⁷ The

study concluded that an overall prevalence of NAFLD was 14.8% higher among individuals aged 40 years and above (19.9%).⁷

Additionally, Pakistan is among the top three countries in type 2 diabetes mellitus prevalence and according to estimates, 26.7% population which estimates 33 million people are currently living with this disease.⁸ Moreover every one in four individuals living in Pakistan are suffering from obesity.⁹ This data is alarming and it is of utmost importance to implement both public and individual strategies against MASLD in Pakistan. The consequences of MASLD are vast and significantly impact public health and the health care system.¹⁰

MASLD not only increases the risk, but also enhances the pathophysiology of DM, cardiovascular diseases and CKD. Preventing MASLD and its associated complications urges comprehensive policy changes that includes public health initiatives and necessary educational measures. Multiple strategies can be implemented to combat the disease impact, including but not

limited to, public health awareness, school based interventions, improved facilities and effective implementation of public health policies. It is extremely important to increase public health awareness. Firstly, it is vital to increase public awareness about MASLD's possible risk factors, preventive strategies, signs, and consequences. Educational campaigns focused on wider health initiatives, and the involvement of health care professionals and local stake holders of communities can be effective communication tools. Moreover, promoting healthy lifestyle habits, like a balanced diet and regular exercise, is essential in alleviating the strain of cardiometabolic disorders and MASLD. Secondly, the establishment of educational programs in schools should be focused towards encouraging healthy habits, encouraging physical activity, and offering nutritious meals to children.

This approach directly addresses the rising issue of childhood obesity, which is also of much concern. Thirdly, an inclusive healthcare strategy is essential to holistically manage MASLD. This requires the fortification of primary healthcare services to ensure early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of cardiometabolic disorders. Healthcare professionals should undergo training in the identification and management of MASLD. The creation of specialized clinics is necessary to provide comprehensive care along with need of upgrading existing health care facilities, which is an uphill task in a resource-limited country like Pakistan. Encouraging a collaborative environment among healthcare professionals, researchers, and policymakers is crucial.

In summary it has become inevitable that we take necessary measures to prevent the spread of MASLD and prevent it from developing into an epidemic. Public awareness campaigns and thoughtful collaboration of relevant stake holders can effectively layout successful public health policies, which will have an everlasting impact on health and the well-being of the Pakistani population.

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On behalf of the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) and the Moroccan Society of Digestive Diseases (SMMAD), we invite you to join us and attend [GASTRO 2024](#), an international meeting that will take place in Marrakech, Morocco, from 7-9 November 2024 at the Hotel du Golf.

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Environmental Change and Digestive Health
Role of Social Media in GI Practice
Resistances of <i>H. pylori</i> in Africa

A few highlights of the comprehensive scientific program include:

Exceptional Plenary Lectures	World Café Networking Opportunities
Ultrasonography Training and Elastometry Hands-on Training Daily	Clinical Case Presentations and Discussions
Instructive Hands-on Endoscopy Workshops	Peer-reviewed Oral and Poster Sessions

A peek inside the scientific program topics:

Hot Topics on IBD	Autoimmune Liver Diseases	Coloproctology
Small Bowel	Hepatocellular Carcinoma	Hot Topics in Endoscopy
HBV Screening and Prevention	Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Liver MAFLD
Endoscopy – Artificial Intelligence	Gastric Disorders	Celiac Disease

by attendees and representatives from countries through the world. The meeting will also include interactive sessions and networking opportunities, concurrent sessions, pro-con sessions, symposia, hands-on training, abstract presentations, and special sessions. The full Scientific Program can be viewed on the [GASTRO 2024 website](#). All sessions will be presented in English; however, we will offer simultaneous translation from English to French.

Nicknamed the “Pearl of the South” and known as “the Red City,” Marrakech is a captivating Moroccan city renowned for its bustling souks, historic palaces, and vibrant cultural scene. Marrakech has an exceptional climate all year round. As you explore this fascinating city, you will find a variety of transportation options suited for your needs, whether navigating the lively city center or exploring the picturesque surroundings. Throughout the meeting, attendees will have opportunities to experience the many historic sites in and around Marrakech.

Getting to Marrakech is easy. The Marrakesh Menara Airport is the only airport in the city and is located only 20 minutes from the city center.



Whether you are traveling from Latin America, Africa, Europe, or Asia, the Marrakesh Menara Airport is serviced by major airlines, making it a prime global destination.

Registration is open and we invite everyone to participate in this premier international meeting, which will include a rich cultural and social program in the incredible and unforgettable destination of Marrakech. For complete details, please visit <https://www.wgosmmad2024.com>.



See you in Marrakech!

Meet the GASTRO 2024 Speakers



Alejandro Piscoya

Chief of
Gastroenterology
Hospital Guillermo
Kaelin de la Fuente

Peru



Amine Benkabbou

Professor
National Institut of
Oncology
Rabat

Morocco



Anahita Sadeghi

Associate professor
Tehran University of
Medical Sciences

Iran



Anita Afzali

Professor of Medicine
University of Cincinnati

United States



Anthony Buisson

MD, PhD
Professor, Head of
IBD Unit
University Hospital
Estaing, Clermont-
Ferrand

France



**Arsène Roger
Sombié**

Professor
University Joseph KI-
ZERBO
OUAGADOUGOU

Burkina Faso



Ayşe Nurdan Tözün

Professor Head of GI
Department
Acibadem MAA
University School of
Medicine

Türkiye



Christophe Cellier

Professor of
Gastroenterology
Hôpital Européen
Georges Pompidou
APHP Paris

France



Carolina Olano
 Professor of Gastroenterology the Universidad dela República (UDELAR) Montevideo President-elect WGO
Uruguay



Charlotte Costentin
 Professor of hepatology CHU grenoble alpes
France



Cihan Yurdaydin
 İstanbul Department of Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Koç University Medical School
Turkiye



Cristiano Spada
 Professor of Gastroenterology Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli IRCCS
Italy



Dan Lucian Dumitrascu
 Prof Iuliu Hatieganu University of medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca
Romania



Desmond Leddin
 Professor Dalhousie University
Canada



Geoffrey Metz
 Professor of Medicine Epworth Hospital
Australia



Georgiana Gilcă-Blanariu
 Assistant Professor Gastroenterology Department Grigore T Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy
Romania



Guilherme Macedo
 MD, PhD, Senior Consultant Hospital Sao Joao Porto
Portugal



Hans-Dieter Allescher
 Head of Center of Internal Medicin (ZIM) Klinikum Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Teaching Hospital of the LMU
Germany



Ihsane Mellouki
 Pr agrégé en hépato-gastroentérologie Chief of gastroenterology University hospital of Tangier
Morocco



Ikram Errabih
 Professor and Head of Service Hepato-Gastroenterology and Proctology Service "B", Ibn Sina University Hospital, Rabat
Morocco



Ismaiel Abdulrahman

Internal Medicine Specialist, Assistant professor; 2nd Department of Internal Medicine, "Iuliu Hatieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy

Romania



Jerome Boursier

MD PHD Professor Angers University

France



Jonathan Leighton

Professor of Medicine Mayo Clinic

United States



Laila Amrani

WGO- Rabat Training Center Co-Director Institut National d'Oncologie Université Mohammed V-Rabat

Morocco



Martina Müller-Schilling

Chair Internal Medicine University Hospital Regensburg

Germany



Mohamed Tahiri Joutei

Professor Hôpital Ibn Rochd Casablanca

Morocco



Mohamed Alborai

Associate professor of medicine and gastroenterology Al-Azhar University

Egypt



Monia Fekih

University hospital professor Head of department La Rabta Hospital, Tunis

Tunisia



Mustapha Benazzouz

Professor Rabat international university /riad annakhil international clinic

Morocco



Naima Amrani

Professor Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Mohammed V University - Rabat

Morocco



Selma Siham El Khayat

Prof of Nephrology, MD, PhD Nephrology department, UHC Ibn Rochd, Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, Hassan II University, Casablanca

Morocco



Serhat Bor

MD and Prof in Gastroenterology & Internal Medicine Ege University School of Medicine Div. Gastroenterology

Turkiye



Stella Smith
Prof/Director of Research
Nigerian Institute of Medical Research
Nigeria



Susana Lopes
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Hospital Sao Joao
Portugal



Tony Tham
Consultant Gastroenterologist
Ulster Hospital, Belfast
Ireland



Vivek Kaul
Professor of Medicine
University Of Rochester Medical Center
United States



Wafaa Badre
Professor
Morocco



Wojciech Marlicz
Professor, Consultant Gastroenterologist
Pomeranian Medical University, Department of Gastroenterology, Szczecin
Poland



Zeyad Sharaiha
Founding President AMAGE
Chairman of G/I unit Amman Hospital
Jordan

WGO's Blantyre Training Center Welcomes New Director



Dr. Alexander Stockdale, MBChB, MRes, PhD, DTM&H, MRCP, new WGO Blantyre Training Center Director.

As of August 24, 2024, Dr. Alexander Stockdale, MBChB, MRes, PhD, DTM&H, MRCP (Inf. Dis.), a senior clinical lecturer and consultant physician in clinical infection, microbiology & immunology, has accepted to be the new Director of WGO Blantyre Training Center in Malawi. Dr. Stockdale is a clinical researcher with an emphasis on viral hepatitis and HIV in Africa. From 2017 to 2029 he has worked in Blantyre, Malawi at the Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme. He served as part of the Wellcome Trust Clinical ThD Fellowship program, studying the epidemiology of hepatitis B and C and exploring opportunities to develop a viral hepatitis treatment program.

Throughout his career, Dr. Stockdale has accumulated a variety of experiences inside global medicine. He trained in Edinburgh and Cambridge, as well as previously served as a medical officer in rural Kenya. In Ghana (2013-2015), he was an NIHR academic clinical fellow studying HIV and hepatitis B co-infection. In 2015-2019 he continued his work as a Wellcome clinical PhD fellow in Liverpool and Malawi.

Dr. Stockdale is looking forward to working with WGO through MLW and Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He is eager to continue the engagement between WGO and these healthcare facilities to further develop training in hepatology for physicians in Blantyre, and across the greater area of Malawi. Previously, Dr. Stockdale has run annual training courses on the practical management of liver disease in Malawi. These programs have run for several years. He hopes to continue this initiative and expand upon this training, complemented with endoscopy training supported by WGO and the British Society of Gastroenterology.

It is WGO and Dr. Luis Carlos Sabbagh's pleasure to welcome Dr. Alexander Stockdale to the WGO Blantyre Training Center. Dr. Stockdale has been engaged member of WGO for the past few years and will continue his service with our Blantyre Training Center. The Training Center is to facilitate, educate, shape, and tone the participant's skills. These goals would not be possible without the dedication of a committed leader and the passion for educating the next generation of physicians!

Welcome Dr. Stockdale!



A Train the Trainers Testimonial: Taking a Deeper Look Inside TTT Mendoza



Marianela Bedini, MD

Gastroenterologist
Sanatorio Moreno, Rafaela
Santa Fe, Argentina

My name is Marianela Bedini. I am from Cordoba City, Argentina. I was glad to participate in the TTT course which took place in Mendoza, Argentina in August 2023. This course was excellent because it perfectly combined both theoretical and practical content. I think that the team work was designed to be both innovative and dynamic in order to apply

the topics discussed in classes and combined with the feedback given by partners and teachers in charge.

The experience I had with TTT allowed me to change my perspective and see the learning process as a way in which the teacher guides the student in the knowledge building. The fact that we were allowed to share meetings and classes with colleagues

from not only my country but also different countries was an extremely enriching experience. It was enriching from a personal and professional perspective, since it encourages collaborative work and builds a bridge between teachers from different areas and backgrounds.

I believe that the word that best describes the TTT course is “inspiring,” due to the fact that it facilitates the acquisition of the teaching tools which allows a teacher to give their best in the process as an instructor. All things considered, this makes me want to improve my day-to-day work. Finally, I would like to thank all the Train the Trainers faculty and staff for this great opportunity.



Train the Trainers faculty and participants gather for a group photo in Mendoza.

From Mentorship to Friendship: How WGO's Mentorship Program Fosters Global Connections



Sevda Aghayeva, MD, PhD

Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
University of Pennsylvania
Baku, Azerbaijan

WGO has been a leading organization that guided many GI professionals in their clinical career, also supporting and connecting colleagues from all over the world under one umbrella. It provides numerous training opportunities, as well as academic resources, guidelines, and novel medical updates.

I have been following WGO since the very beginning of my career, however, I have never had a chance to participate in any of the offered programs and projects. Two years ago, when at the peak of my clinical career

I decided to deviate my path towards science, I felt that my knowledge in this area of expertise was scarce, and I needed someone with broad experience to navigate me. I had found an application for a mentorship program and was lucky enough to receive a message saying that I have been assigned to a mentor – Prof. Richard Hunt.

From the first seconds I googled the name, I was fascinated by the scientific significance of Prof. Hunt and his endless achievements in the field of gastroenterology. Joining on-

line sessions and having conversations about research projects, possible perspectives and emerging opportunities was a priceless opportunity to learn and develop my knowledge. Struggling with the proper way of creating study designs, writing professional articles, as well as trying to conduct studies with no or little funding were problems to be fixed. Prof. Hunt's valuable opinion always showed me the right way. His wisdom, guidance and support have been invaluable to me. Prof. Hunt's advice and insights have been instrumental in my personal and career growth, and it was an incredible feeling to know that I had a prominent mentor whom I could rely on when having questions or doubting some ideas. He shared his stories, opinions and ideas, along with evaluating mine.

After some time, other than discussing research and career, we were also cheering for each other's achievements and were happy about good news. I was very lucky to welcome Prof. Hunt in Baku last summer and it was my utmost pleasure to show him Azerbaijani culture, architecture, and traditions.

WGO's mentorship program devoted me not only a helping hand as a researcher but also a great friendship that am very honored to have.



Dr. Aghayeva poses for a photo with her mentor Prof. Richard Hunt.

WGO Salutes Women in Leadership in our Member Societies

Argentina

Dr. Maria Giovanna Porfilio Gularte
President; Federacion Argentina de Gastroenterologia



Argentina

Dr. Estela Veronica Parra Wirth
Secretary; Federacion Argentina de Gastroenterologia



Argentina

Dr. Silvina Goncalves
Secretary; Sociedad Argentina De Gastroenterologia (SAGE)



Azerbaijan

Dr. Gulnara Aghayeva
President; Azerbaijan Gastroenterologists and Hepatologists Society



Azerbaijan

Dr. Sevda Aghayeva
Secretariat; Azerbaijan Gastroenterologists and Hepatologists Society



Belarus

Dr. Julia Gorgun
Secretary; Byelorussian Gastroenterology Association



Belgium

Dr. Isabelle Colle
President; Vlaamse Vereniging Voor Gastroenterologie



Bosnia

Dr. Renata Tamburic
Secretary; Association of Gastroenterologists & Hepatologists of Bosnia & Herzegovina



Canada

Dr. Laura Sly
Secretary; Canadian Association of Gastroenterology



Chile

Dr. Claudia Defilippi
President; Sociedad Chilena de Gastroenterología



Chile

Dr. Pamela Yaquich
Secretary; Sociedad Chilena de Gastroenterología



Costa Rica

Dr. Marianela Alvarado Salazar
President; Asociación De Especialistas En Gastroenterología Y Endoscopia Digestiva De Costa Rica



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Cote d'Ivoire

Dr. Thérèse Ndri Yoman
President; Société Ivoirienne de Gastro-entérologie et D'endoscopie Digestive (SIGEED)



Cuba

Dr. Mirtha Infante Velazquez
President; Sociedad Cubana de Gastroenterología



Democratic Republic of the Congo

Dr. Jacqueline Nkondi Nsenga
Secretary General; Congolese Association of Gastroenterology, D.R. Congo



Dominican Republic

Dr. Claralí Almonte Núñez
Vice President; Sociedad Dominicana de Gastroenterología



El Salvador

Dr. Marisabel Valdéz Muñoz de Cuéllar
President; Asociación de Gastroenterología Y Endoscopía Digestiva de El Salvador



Estonia

Dr. Riina Salupere
President; Estonian Society of Gastroenterology



Finland

Dr. Tuire Ilus
Secretary General; Finnish Society of Gastroenterology



France

Dr. Isabelle Rosa
Vice President; Société Nationale Française de Gastro-Entérologie



France

Dr. Sabine Roman
Secretary General; Société Nationale Française de Gastro-Entérologie



Ghana

Dr. Mary Afihene
President; Ghana Association for the Study of Liver and Digestive Diseases



Greece

Dr. Konstantina Paraskeva
President; Hellenic Society of Gastroenterology



Guatemala

Dr. Regina Liggoria
Vice President; Asoc. Guatemalteca de Gastroenterología, Hepatología Y Endoscopía Gastrointestinal



Iceland

Dr. Sunna Gudlaugsdottir,
President; The Icelandic Gastroenterology Society



Iraq

Dr. Nawal Mehdi Firhan Alkhalidi
Vice President;
Iraqi Society of Gastroenterology



Ireland

Dr. Orla Crosbie
President; Irish Society of Gastroenterology



Italy

Dr. Patrizia Burra
Secretary General;
Società Italiana Di Gastroenterologia Ed Endoscopia Digestiva



Lithuania

Dr. Goda Sadauskaite
President;
Lithuanian Society of Gastroenterology



Lithuania

Dr. Ilona Savlan
Secretary General;
Lithuanian Society of Gastroenterology



Mali

Dr. Sanra Déborah SANOGO ep. SIDIBE
Secretary General;
Societe Malienne Des Maladies de L'Appareil Digestif (SOMMAD)



Malaysia

Dr. Ida Normiha Hilmi
President-Elect;
Malaysian Society of Gastroenterology & Hepatology



Montenegro

Dr. Brigita Smolovic
President;
Gastroenterohepatology Association of Montenegro (GAM)



Netherlands

Dr. Andrea E. Van Der Meulen-De Jong
President; Nederlandse Vereniging Voor Gastro-entologie



Netherlands

Dr. W.M.U. van Grevenstein
Vice President;
Nederlandse Vereniging Voor Gastro-entologie



New Zealand

Dr. Catherine Stedman
President; New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology Inc.



Nicaragua

Dr. Martha Josefa Sequeira Suarez
Secretary; Sociedad Nicaragüense Gastroenterología Y Endoscopia Digestiva (SONIGED)



North Macedonia

Dr. Dafina Nikolova
Secretariat;
Macedonian Society of Gastroenterohepatology



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Pakistan

Dr. Nazish Butt
General Secretary;
Pakistan Society of
Gastroenterology & GI
Endoscopy



Paraguay

Dr. Carolina Miranda
President; Sociedad
Paraguaya De
Gastroenterología



Paraguay

Dr. Nadia Lima
Vice President;
Sociedad Paraguaya De
Gastroenterología



Philippines

Dr. Arlinking Ong-Go
Secretary; Philippine
Society of
Gastroenterology



Portugal

Dr. Marilia Cravo
Vice President;
Sociedade Portuguesa de
Gastroenterología



Puerto Rico

Dr. Karma Amral
Secretary; Asociación
Puertorriqueña de
Gastroenterología



Serbia

**Dr. Aleksandra
Pavlovic-Markovic**
President; Association
of Serbian
Gastroenterologists



Serbia

**Dr. Milica Stojkovic
Lalosevic**
Secretary General;
Association of Serbian
Gastroenterologists



Spain

**Dr. Maria Pellisé
Urquíz**
President; Asociacion
Española de
Gastroenterologia (AEG)



Spain

**Dr. Miriam Mañosa
Ciria**
Secretary; Asociacion
Española de
Gastroenterologia (AEG)



Spain

**Dr. Inmaculada
Fernández**
Vice President; Sociedad
Española De Patología
Digestiva (SEPD)



Spain

**Dr. Carolina
Malagelada**
Secretary General;
Sociedad Espanola De
Patologia Digestiva
(SEPD)



Sweden

Dr. Annika Bergquist
President; Swedish Society for Gastroenterology



Tunisia

Dr. Monia Fekih
President; Tunisian Society of Gastroenterology



United Kingdom

Dr. Helen Steed
Secretary; British Society of Gastroenterology



United States of America

Dr. Amy S. Oxentenko
President-Elect; American College of Gastroenterology



United States of America

Dr. Maria T. Abreu
President; American Gastroenterological Association



Uruguay

Dr. Virginia Gonzalez
Vice President; Sociedad de Gastroenterología Del Uruguay



Venezuela

Dr. Carla Dias
President; Sociedad Venezolana de Gastroenterología



Yemen

Dr. Jameela Al Rabeei
Secretary; Yemen Gastroenterological Association



Zambia

Dr. Violet Kayamba
President; Zambia Association for Gastroenterology & Nutrition (ZAGAN)



43rd Annual General Meeting cum Scientific Meeting of The Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology



Wai-Keung Leung, MBChB, MD, MRCP, FRCP (Edin), FRCP (Lond), FHKCP, FHKAM (Medicine)

Immediate Past President, Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology
Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation Professor in Gastroenterology
Department of Medicine, School of Clinical Medicine, The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong SAR, China



Siew C Ng, MBBS (Lond), PhD (Lond), FRCP (Lond), FRCP (Edin), AGAF, FHKCP, FHKAM (Medicine)

President, Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology
Croucher Professor in Medical Sciences
Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Department of Medicine and Therapeutics
Faculty of Medicine, Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong SAR, China



Wai-Kay Seto, MBBS(HK), MD(HK), MRCP (UK), FRCP (Edin, Glasg, Lond), FHKCP, FHKAM (Medicine)

Organizing Chairperson, 43rd Annual Scientific Meeting and Vice President, Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology
Clinical Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Clinical Medicine, The University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong SAR, China



Rashid N Lui, MBChB (CUHK), MRCP (UK), FRCP (Lond), FHKCP, FHKAM (Medicine)

Chairman, Public Affairs Committee, Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology
Associate Consultant and Head (Clinical Service)
Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Department of Medicine and Therapeutics
Prince of Wales Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong SAR, China



Professor Joseph Jao-Yiu Sung, Dean of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Senior Vice President (Health & Life Sciences), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

versity, Singapore. He joins a list of 26 Honorary Fellows of our Society, all of whom are doyens in the field of Gastroenterology.

Professor Sung delivered a captivating lecture on “AI for GI: opportunities and challenges” delving into the promise of harnessing artificial intelligence in the field of gastroenterology on the one hand and the potential ethical and legal issues that may arise on the other. Artificial intelligence applications in gastroenterology (GI) and endoscopy are already here, with the introduction of computer augmented vision including computer-assisted detection (CADe) and diagnosis (CADx), natural language processing which can help with data extraction from electronic medical records, and generative artificial intelligence (AI). Broader applications such as inputting multiple parameters for upper GI bleeding patients into a machine learning model to predict clinical outcomes already outperform traditional clinical risk scoring systems. These technologies may also help pathologists, such as analyzing whole slide imaging for gastric metaplasia to assist in the diagnosis and risk stratification. However, he also highlighted that one of the challenges of any

The 43rd Annual General Meeting cum Scientific Meeting of the Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology (HKSGE) was held on 21 March 2024 at Cordis Hong Kong, with Professor Walter WK Seto serving as the organizing chairperson. The annual scientific meeting was well attended with more than 160 healthcare

professionals joining the event.

During the meeting, the Honorary Fellowship, our Society's highest honor, was bestowed upon our distinguished guest, Professor Joseph Jao-Yiu Sung, Dean of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Senior Vice President (Health & Life Sciences), Nanyang Technological Uni-



The presentation of the Honorary Fellowship.



Dr. Shun-Fung Sze presenting on “Two patients with chronic diarrhea.”



Panelists discuss important topics inside of the meeting.

new technology are their unexpected consequences. Unfortunately, AI governance is lagging behind the rapid advances in AI technologies. To alleviate concerns from various stakeholders such as the public and governments, Professor Sung suggests five key elements to help ensure trust. These elements include that efforts are made to ensure AI tools possess a degree of explainability, continuous feedback for transparency and improvement, maintaining the autonomy of both the physicians and patients using AI tools, and the importance of respecting and promoting patients’ values. To conclude, Professor Sung believes that

“AI won’t replace doctors, but doctors who don’t use AI will be replaced.”

This was followed by an interesting case presentation on “Two patients with chronic diarrhea” by Dr. Shun-Fung Sze. The panel discussion was led by Dr. Wai-Cheung Lao, Dr. Polly WY Lam, Dr. Yiu-Keung Ma and Dr. Karen LY Mak. The patients presented with non-specific GI symptoms with abdominal pain and diarrhea. The computed tomography of the abdomen revealed curvilinear mesenteric vein calcifications and thickening of the affected colonic wall. Colonoscopy showed dark violaceous or purplish bluish colonic mucosa. Colonic biop-

sies showed mucosal crypt atrophy, stromal hyaline change, intimal thickening and hyaline change of mucosal venules, and hyaline change and calcification in the mesenteric venous walls. The final diagnosis of idiopathic mesenteric phlebosclerosis was made. The discussion focused on the need for a high index of suspicion, and the association of this condition with long term use of Chinese herbal medicine/medicinal liquor especially those containing gardenia fruit.

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The Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology and GI Endoscopy Marks Its 40th Year of Annual Meetings: PSG Summit 2024 Quetta



Mahrukh Ali Bugti, MD, MRCP, FCPS

Consultant Gastroenterologist
 Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Medical Complex
 Quetta, Pakistan



The Quetta Valley (Balochistan, Pakistan)

Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology and Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (PSG), a member society of World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) and Asian Pacific Association of Gastroenterology (APAGE), celebrated its 40th anniversary from April 19 - 21, 2024 in the scenic city of Quetta, Pakistan.

The conference was preceded by the pre-conference endoscopy workshop where esteemed national and international endoscopists performed both basic and difficult endoscopic procedures, coupled with dialogue by the experts on each case for the management of the patients.

The procedures included basic esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD), colonoscopy, stricture dilatation (corrosive and peptic), achalasia balloon dilatation, duodenal stenting and advanced interventions such as

endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) assisted biliary dilatation, biliary stenting and pancreatic duct stenting. All these procedures were performed free of cost to help non-affording patients. There were two important short lectures on loop handling and polypectomy for the post-graduate trainees.

This was followed by a workshop for endoscopy nurses and technicians to achieve excellence in patient care during endoscopy. The main objec-

tives of this session were presentation of an overview of endoscopy, review of various aspects of patient care in the endoscopy suite, discussing scope and accessory disinfection, and providing hands-on experience and practical demonstration of endoscopy. Around 50 endoscopy nurses and technicians countrywide participated in the workshop. The post-workshop feedback from the participants was positive and satisfactory.

The theme of the scientific program this year was “Advancement in the Practice of Gastroenterology and Gastrointestinal (GI) Endoscopy: A Local Perspective.” Both national and international faculty participated (including guest speaker Prof. Mustafa Arain from the American College of Gastroenterology) and delivered outstanding talks on various aspects



The pre-conference Endoscopy Workshop at Aria Institute of Medical Sciences, Quetta.

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Various photos from the PSG Summit 2024 in Quetta.

of gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary diseases.

The conference constituted symposiums with subjects including the disorders of the gut-brain axis, pancreaticobiliary disorders, standardized care pathways for GI and hepatobiliary malignancies, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and non-IBD colitis, standardized approach on GI emergencies, advancement in therapeutic endoscopy, liver diseases, endotherapy, women and child care in GI and hepatology, and other miscellaneous topics.

The renowned international and local gastroenterologists presented their enlightening lectures to the audience and postgraduate trainees followed by an informative discussion in the question-answer session.

Apart from the scientific lectures, the highlights of the summit included presentation of the PSG guidelines for constipation, expert panel discussion on the improvement of the curriculum of GI for the fellowship training and the PSG Super League quiz grand finale.

We received a total of 75 abstracts from within and outside the country from the trainees and young gastroenterologists. A total of 20 abstracts (eight oral and 12 posters presentations) were awarded with travel bursaries and accommodation. The abstracts covered a wide spectrum of topics including general GI, hepatology, pancreaticobiliary, basic endoscopy, advanced endoscopy, and artificial intelligence in endoscopy. All the remaining abstracts were selected for poster presentations to foster the culture of research in the country and encourage the trainees and young gastroenterologists by appreciating their efforts. The experts listened to all the presenters individually followed by questions regarding their research. The top three oral and poster presenters were awarded cash prizes, and two other posters were included in honorable mention to appreciate the trainees.

There was a PSG award ceremony to honor the services of many esteemed gastroenterologists in the field of GI and hepatology. The awardees of best mentorship in GI training were Prof. Altaf Alam, Prof. Zaigham Abbas, Prof. Sherbat Khan, and Prof. Javed Iqbal Farooqi. The awardees of excellence in GI training and endoscopic services were Prof. Saad Khalid Niaz and Prof. Ghias Un Nabi Tayyab. All awardees received their recognition and awards from the president of PSG, Prof. Sher Rehman, and legendary gastroenterologist Prof. Wasim Jafri. The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Prof. Wasim Jafri for his great clinical and academic services for gastroenterology and hepatology. He concluded the award session with his remarkable words, "Start thinking of others, don't think of yourself and you will be blessed heavenly with the passage of time, and nobody can deter that."

The conference was concluded by



Receptients of the PSG Awards for mentorship in GI training and excellence in GI training and endoscopic services.



Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Prof. Wasim Jafri. The picture below shows Prof. Wasim Jafri with renowned gastroenterologists that he has trained



Mahrukh Ali Bugti, MD, MRCP, FCPS (Scientific Committee Co-Chair)

the remarks from the chair organizing committee, Dr. Daud Ghilzai, followed by the distribution of certificates to the members of the organizing team. It was a great learning and satisfying experience for me to be a part of the Scientific Committee as the Co-Chair. We as a team received many appreciative remarks from the speakers and participants for arranging a very well-organized meeting

with diverse and excellent scientific content. Overall, it was an extraordinary learning experience for everyone present at the summit. The participation was diverse; the participants had registered from all over the country and the attendance was great.



Nominate Today

Women in GI Submission Form

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Recognizing Women Worldwide

Midwest Metabolic Clinical Symposium Celebrates a Second Annual Meeting



Paula Zdanowicz, DVM, MPH

Education Manager
Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology
Saint Louis University
St. Louis, Missouri, USA



From left to right: Dr. Michael Trauner (Professor & Chair of Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Medical University of Vienna, Austria), Dr. Wing-Kin Syn (Director of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Saint Louis University and Co-director of the Liver Center), Dr. Ravi Nayak (Chair of the Department of Internal Medicine at Saint Louis University School of Medicine and SSM Health SLUCare Physician Group), Dr. Joel D. Schilling (Associate Professor of Medicine & Pathology & Immunology, Medical Director of Heart Transplant Program, Center for Cardiovascular Research, Washington University School of Medicine), Dr. Scott Isaacs (Endocrinologist, Diabetes & Endocrinology Clinic of Georgia; Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine, Emory School of Medicine), Dr. Michael Fuchs (Professor of Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University, Chief of Gastroenterology, Central Virginia VA Health Care System), Dr. Ajay Jain (Chief of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition, Saint Louis University)

The annual Midwest Metabolic Clinical Symposium celebrated its second year with record high registration and sponsorships. The international symposium was organized and chaired by Dr. Wing-Kin Syn, the Director of the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Saint Louis University and Co-director of the Liver Cen-

ter. This two-and-a-half-day event brought the healthcare community together to gain specialty-specific insight on the multidisciplinary approach to metabolic disease. Experts from across the globe presented sessions focusing on current and emerging best practices for the management of obesity, diabetes, non-

alcoholic fatty liver disease, cardiovascular disease, pediatric metabolic diseases, PCOS, and the impact these metabolic disorders have on renal and COVID outcomes.

Attendees were introduced to current and new treatment strategies to address these multiple overlapping disorders (with common pathogenic mechanisms) with the aim to improve knowledge of physicians, other clinical and non-clinical health care professionals, and bring attention to these common disorders to raise awareness for the need for early identification of those at highest risk.

At the heart this is truly an international meeting with many attendees joining from outside our home state of Missouri, including Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington as well as Brazil, England, Germany, Israel, and Spain. They represented professionals from various backgrounds including MDs (general internal medicine, GI, hepatology, pulmonology, family medicine, endocrine, geriatrics, renal, hematology, primary care, cardiology, critical care, psychiatry), RNs, APPs, psychologists, PharmDs, as well as students in training and industry representatives. The Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology looks forward to planning next year's Symposium.



Celebrating IBD Day 2024 - Focus on Young Gastroenterologists' Education on Disease Burden



Georgiana Gilca-Blanariu, MD, PhD

Member, WGO IBD Committee
Gastroenterology Department, Faculty of Medicine
Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy
Gastroenterology Department
Sf Spiridon County Clinical Emergency Hospital
Lasi, Romania



Susana Lopes MD, PhD, FACC

Chair, WGO IBD Committee
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Anca Trifan MD, PhD, FRCP

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Sf Spiridon County Clinical Emergency Hospital
Lasi, Romania

World IBD Day is celebrated each year on 19 May, aiming to raise awareness on the disease, improve engagement of governments and healthcare professionals and show support to the patients facing the challenges of this type of chronic diseases. World IBD Day was created in 2010 during Digestive Disease Week in the United States and is coordinated by the European Federation of Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis Associations (EFCCA). Currently, it is celebrated worldwide, being led by IBD patients' organizations, covering more than 50 countries on five continents.

In the context of healthcare disparities, leading to asymmetries in IBD care and access to various types of treatments and monitoring for IBD patients, this year's celebration followed the theme of "IBD Has No Borders." The aim was to bring together patients and healthcare professionals around the world, while improving understanding of the disease impact, beyond financial considerations, which vary among different countries. Moreover, attention was drawn to the socio-professional impact of the disease and to acknowledging the IBD implications on aspects such as presenteeism and invisible disability.

Education of healthcare professionals is essential in optimizing patient care, including these social aspects of the disease burden. Together, the Department of Gastroenterology from the Grigore T Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy Lasi, and the Sf Spiridon County Clinical Emergency Hospital in Lasi, Romania, organized an IBD Day Celebration in



Prof. Georgiana Gilca instructing a room full of trainees on the importance of World IBD Day.



Profs. Georgiana Gilca and Anca Trifan gather for a group photo to commemorate the World IBD Day activities.

Lasi on 20 May. This event would also not have been possible without the support it received the WGO IBD Committee. The educational event was structured using a case-based approach, involving active learning with cascade cases. The target audience was represented by the gastroenterologists in training from the Department of Gastroenterology at Grigore T Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy Lasi, with the participation of 42 gastroenterologists in training.

The event included an introductory part with tips and tricks from experts. We welcomed as a special guest Professor Susana Lopes, Chair of the IBD Committee of the World Gastroen-

terology Organisation, followed by two interactive case-based sessions dedicated to Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. The sessions were created to tackle several clinical settings relevant and potentially challenging in the daily practice, such as IBD during pregnancy, infectious complications of IBD, severe acute colitis, treatment choice in bio-experienced patients. Moreover, to highlight the impact of disease burden on patients' life, the case discussions also included aspects related to the psychosocial burden of IBD and invisible disability, which is sometimes difficult to relate to for physicians.



Digestive Disease Week® (DDW) 2024 Recap: Key Highlights



Loren Laine, MD

DDW Council Chair
Yale School of Medicine
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

[Digestive Disease Week® \(DDW\)](#) 2024, held in Washington D.C. and online on May 18–21, attracted more than 14,000 attendees, marking its highest attendance since the pandemic. DDW showcases the best science and clinical advances in gastroenterology, hepatology, endoscopy and GI surgery, making it the premier digestive disease meeting in the world. This comprehensive program is jointly sponsored by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD), the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) and the Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract (SSAT).

The event drew attendees from across the globe, demonstrating its international appeal. Of the total participants, 64.8% were from the United States while 35.2% were from a total of 116 countries, emphasizing the event's worldwide reach. The top 10 countries represented include United States, Canada, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Brazil, China, Australia, South Korea and Germany. This diverse presence enriched the event and fostered an exchange of ideas on an international scale. The turnout highlighted DDW's ability to connect professionals worldwide and promote learning through international collaboration.

DDW offered a breadth of programming unparalleled in our field, providing diverse opportunities for learning and engagement. The meeting included 430 sessions and [5,763 oral and poster abstract presentations](#) highlighting the latest clinical advances, cutting-edge research and the newest technological innovations. [DDW Tracks](#) allowed attendees to create a self-curated program tailored to their individual interests and roles. Attendees were able to customize their educational experience with a curriculum encompassing topical lectures, research presentations, Hands-On Workshops, Meet-the-Professor sessions, and invaluable one-on-one knowledge sharing with colleagues and experts. Networking sessions and special events facilitated connections and collaboration among peers across the world. This approach ensured attendees could explore all aspects of digestive health, facilitating innovation and exploration in the field.

One of the yearly highlights is the Best of DDW session, in which the top abstracts submitted to the four sponsoring societies are chosen for presentation by a representative from each of the four societies. Thus, in a single session, attendees hear the top research of the year summarized and placed into context by an expert in the field. Here is a sample of one of the 2024 Best of DDW abstracts from each society:

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases

- “Studying the therapeutic benefits of innate immunity stimuli in hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)”
- Longyue (Lily) Cao, MD, PhD, Boston Children’s Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts
- Summary: This study showed that immunization with hyperactivated dendritic cells reduced hepatocellular carcinoma growth and lethality in a mouse model, potentially mediated by increased robustness and longevity of antigen-specific T cells.

American Gastroenterological Association

- “Metabolomic signature of ultra-processed food intake in association with colorectal cancer risk”
- Mengxi Du, PhD, RD, MPH, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts
- Summary: Ultra-processed foods are reported to increase the risk of a number of diseases, including colorectal cancer, and this study identified a metabolomic signature of ultra-processed foods and the association of the signature with colorectal cancer risk.

American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

- “Rectal nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for post-endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography pancreatitis (PEP) prophylaxis and risk of acute kidney injury (AKI)”
- Heiko Pohl, MD, VA Medical Center, White River Junction, Vermont and Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine, Hanover, New Hampshire

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- Summary: The randomized trial compared cold vs. hot endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR) for polyps ≥ 20 mm and found that recurrence rate was markedly higher with cold EMR (28 vs. 14%, $p < 0.001$) without definite safety benefit documented (hospitalization, transfusion, need for surgery or colonoscopy within 30 days of 2.1 vs. 4.3%, $p = 0.10$).

Society for Surgery of the Alimentary Tract

- “Oral microbiome signatures as potential biomarkers for gastric cancer risk assessment”
- Shruthi R. Perati, MD, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine, Newark, New Jersey
- Summary: This study raises the possibility that exploring the oral microbiome using a mouthwash sample could offer a simple, non-invasive method for early detection and prevention of gastric cancer, identifying specific bacterial profiles associated with cancer and pre-malignant conditions.

Another key component of DDW was the [bustling Exhibit Hall](#), where attendees could explore the latest innovations in the digestive health world, with offerings from over 300 industry partners. This dynamic space featured interactive booths, live demonstrations and presentations from

internationally known experts. The opportunity to connect directly with industry leaders provided attendees with the ability to learn about the newest cutting-edge technologies and innovative products, gaining insights into the latest advancements shaping the future of digestive health.

As we reflect on the success of DDW 2024, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the planners, attendees, speakers and industry supporters who made this event a resounding success. Your dedication and contributions have elevated the field of digestive

diseases, fostering a vibrant exchange of knowledge and innovation.

Looking ahead, we are [excited to announce DDW 2025](#). Mark your calendars for May 3–6, 2025, as we gather in San Diego, California, and online, to continue pushing the boundaries of digestive health. We look forward to another impactful and inspiring event next year with the theme “Be Gutsy.” Together, let us embrace courage and curiosity as we explore new ideas, perspectives and collaborations.



Prof. Hanna Aberra (Rwanda), Tony Tham (Ireland), and Anita Afzali (USA) gather at WGO's booth at DDW 2024.



WGO appreciates opportunities like DDW 2024 to connect with members from all parts of the world. Prof. Guilherme Macedo (Portugal), Geoffrey Metz (Australia), Carolina Olano (Uruguay), and Wojciech Marlicz (Poland) came together at WGO's booth.

UEG Week 2024 - In Vienna and Online: October 12 – 15, 2024



Keep up with the latest & greatest scientific advancements

Enjoy the best of both worlds where we will deliver one event but allow two experiences, both in Vienna (Messe Wien) and virtually. The scientific program features scientific highlights in extremely interactive ways. In every session, delegates have the opportunity to interact in real-time via our Q&A tool both in-person and virtually.

Interdisciplinary sessions cover new approaches to diagnosis and treatment, and place major emphasis on innovative, technical advances in the non-invasive management of gastrointestinal and hepatic disorders and translational/basic science. This includes state-of-the-art lectures on all the subjects. UEG Week 2024 will also feature various topic highlights such as:

- **Advances in Clinical GI & Hepatology:** Our clinically oriented one-day symposium within the meeting, focusing on **metabolic disorders** this year.
 - Our **Opening Session** on Sunday, October 13 is the official start of the scientific program showcasing state-of-the-art lectures and our most prestigious awards such as the Top Abstracts and Research Prize presentations. Both in-person and virtual delegates will have the opportunity to ask questions.
 - **ESGE Live Endoscopy:** During the ESGE Live Endoscopy on Tuesday, October 15, top international experts will demonstrate cutting-edge techniques alongside basic procedures transmitted directly to UEG Week in Vienna and your living room. The newest developments in 4K definition diagnostic endoscopy will be showcased alongside state-of-the-art therapeutic interventions like EMR, ESD, POEM and hepatobiliary endoscopy.
- The most important feature of UEG Week is science. This is recognized in the program through the large number of abstract sessions devoted to original research. These sessions allow lively discussions about the best original research submitted to UEG Week and provide delegates an opportunity to hear about GI and liver research both in Europe and worldwide before it is published.
- **The 3 Crash Courses** allow clinicians to get an update on a topic of their daily clinical routine.
 - **The Mistakes in... sessions** provide professionals with specialist tips and know-how beyond textbook knowledge. The presentations focus on common errors and infrequent mistakes that have a high clinical impact on patients and daily clinical practice.
 - **Never Waste Good Disaster sessions** feature tandem talks about possibly averted mistakes and wrong decisions during daily clinical practice. Included topics are approached from different angles, with outstanding experts and memorable confessions.
 - **3 sessions focusing on Disease Primers** are another offer stressing the importance of translational work for both basic scientists and clinicians.

Post Graduate Teaching Program - Keep on track with your training

Our PGT is a dynamic, live, two-day, in-person and virtual educational experience. It focuses on the relevance for the clinical day-to-day business and provides profound updates on the latest developments in GI and hepatology topics. The PGT follows a three-year curriculum, with 2024 covering year one. Our PGT Task Force has recently updated the curriculum to keep this educational course on track with recent evidence in different fields of gastroenterology. This reworked curriculum will start within 2024.

Improve your hands-on skills at UEG Week

The Hands-on Program at UEG Week offers excellent training for practical minded gastroenterologists. The Endoscopy Hands-on Program provides a unique opportunity for skill enhancement, first-class learning, and professional discourse at no additional costs.

Nurse Program

In cooperation with ESGENA we have introduced a dedicated program relevant for nurses in gastroenterology and hepatology, taking place on Saturday and Sunday. ESGENA has also collaborated with EASL and N-ECCO to develop specialized sessions on liver and IBD topics in nursing. In addition, together with other experts, nurses will co-chair the Live Endoscopy Sessions on Tuesday during the UEG Week Program.

Industry Exhibition & Industry Symposia

The industry exhibition is the place for delegates to get updates on new therapies and the latest product innovations available in the world of digestive health. Join us in-person in Vienna 2024, where we will feature the world's top pharmaceutical and medical device companies.

When attending the Industry Symposia, you get updates on the latest data, research and therapies from the pharmaceutical and medical device industry. Don't miss the chance to view these lively symposia led by top experts.



For more information, visit the UEG website! ueg.eu/week

WGO Guidelines Update

Guidelines in the *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology*

The *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology (JCG)* is the official publication platform for the World Gastroenterology Organisation's Global Guidelines in the English language. This collaboration also covers WGO society news in each issue, as well as WGO review articles in the *JCG*. Additionally, WGO is represented in the *JCG* Editorial Board. The Obesity and Probiotics & prebiotics Guidelines were recently published in the *JCG* and available for viewing at <https://journals.lww.com/jcge/pages/default.aspx>.

Obesity Guidelines Translations

Thus far in 2024, WGO has released the executive summary of the updated Obesity Guideline in Mandarin and Portuguese translations. This is in addition to the English and Spanish versions published earlier. These guidelines can be viewed and downloaded at <https://www.worldgastroenterology.org/guidelines/obesity>.


Roughly 1.5 billion people live with obesity worldwide. This disease can exert appreciable adverse effects on virtually all aspects of a person's life – physical, psychological, and socioeconomic. Empirically linked to several-year reductions in both quality-adjusted-life-years and lifespan, it confers increased risks for

a host of life-altering and potentially life-threatening comorbidities including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and at least 13 forms of cancer. Yet only a small minority of patients seek formal treatment, and few achieve meaningful sustained weight loss or the amelioration of obesity-associated comorbidity. One major reason for this is woefully inadequate knowledge among the public and primary healthcare providers regarding various treatment options that have been proven effective.

WGO worked in partnership with the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders (IFSO) on this publication. This joint effort provides clinicians with a tool to use when dealing with those who struggle with obesity. The guideline was led by Drs. Scott Shikora (USA), Reem Sharaiha (USA), Kevin P. White (Canada), Guilherme Macedo (Portugal), James Toouli (Australia) and Lilian Kow (Australia). Prof. Macedo is the immediate Past President of WGO (2021-2023) and Prof. Toouli is also a Past President of WGO (2013-2015).

In addition to the summary, the “Methodology and results of a joint IFSO-WGO Delphi Survey of 94 intercontinental, interdisciplinary experts in obesity management” paper is also available in Portuguese and Mandarin on WGO's website. The translated articles are entitled as “Metodologia e resultados de uma pesquisa Delphi conjunta IFSO-WGO de 94 especialistas intercontinentais e interdisciplinares no tratamento da obesidade” and “IFSO-WGO 联合对 94 名洲际、跨学科肥胖管理专家进行德尔菲调查的方法和结果。”

NOW AVAILABLE IN PORTUGUESE: WGO'S GLOBAL GUIDELINE ON OBESITY



Obesidade

2023

Equipe de Revisão

Scott Shikora (EE.UU)
Reem Z. Sharaiha (EE.UU)
Kevin P. White (Canada)
Guilherme Macedo (Portugal)
James Toouli (Australia)
Lilian Kow (Australia)

Calendar of Events

Due to uncertainties of scheduling from the COVID-19 situation, please check the WGO Meetings and Events Calendar for the latest updates at <https://www.worldgastroenterology.org/meetings/meetings-and-events-calendar>

WGO RELATED EVENTS

GASTRO 2024

When: November 7-9, 2024

Location: Marrakech

Country: Morocco

Organizer: WGO and Société Marocaine Des Maladies de L'Appareil Digestif (SMMAD)

Website: <https://www.wgosm-mad2024.com>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Australian Gastroenterology Week 2024 (AGW2024)

When: September 14, 2024 - September 16, 2024

Location: Adelaide

Country: Australia

Organizer: Gastroenterological Society of Australia

Website: <https://agw.gesa.org.au/>

EUS ENDO International Live Course 2024

When: September 19, 2024 - September 21, 2024

Location: Parc Chanut

Country: France

Organizer: Dr. Marc Giovannini

Website: <https://eus-endo.org/>

COLDA 2024 - Conference on Liver Disease in Africa

When: September 19, 2024 - September 21, 2024

Location: Cairo

Country: Egypt

Organizers: Society on Liver Disease in Africa and AME

Website: <https://academicmedicaleducation.com/hepatology-meetings>

24th Congress of Gastroenterology

When: September 19, 2024 - September 21, 2024

Location: Shenyang

Country: China

Organizer: Chinese Society of Gastroenterology

Website: <https://csgd2024.sciconf.cn/en/web/index/21883>

20th ISDE World Congress for Esophageal Diseases

When: September 22, 2024 - September 24, 2024

Location: Edinburgh

Country: Scotland

Organizer: The International Society for Diseases of the Esophagus (ISDE)

Website: <https://isde-congress.net/>

Semana Digestiva de la Asociacion Colombiana de Gastroenterologia

When: September 24, 2024 - September 26, 2024

Location: Bogota

Country: Colombia

Organizer: Asociacion Colombiana de Gastroenterologia

Website: www.gastrocol.com

XVI Congreso Paraguayo de Gastroenterología y Endoscopia Digestiva

When: September 25, 2024 - September 27, 2024

Location: Asuncion

Country: Paraguay

Organizer: Sociedad Paraguaya de Gastroenterología

Website: <https://www.spge.org.py>

UEG Week 2024

When: October 12, 2024 - October 15, 2024

Location: Vienna

Country: Austria

Organizer: UEG

Website: <https://ueg.eu/week>

ACG 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting & Postgraduate Course

When: October 25, 2024 - October 30, 2024

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Country: United States

Organizer: American College of Gastroenterology

Website: www.gi.org/

JDDW 2024 - Japan Digestive Disease Week 2024

When: October 31, 2024 - November 3, 2024

Location: Kobe, Japan

Organizer: Organization of JDDW

Website: <http://www.jddw.jp/english/index.html>

Xth CSG Congress with International Participation

When: November 7, 2024 - November 10, 2024

Location: Dubrovnik

Country: Croatia

Organizer: Croatian Society of Gastroenterology

Website: www.hgd.hr

18th Educational and Discussion Gastroenterological Days**When:** November 14, 2024 - November 16, 2024**Location:** Carls Bad**Country:** Czech Republic**Organizer:** Czech Society of Gastroenterology**Website:** <https://www.gastrodney.cz/>**GastroEndo 2024****When:** November 12, 2024 - November 14, 2024**Location:** Montevideo**Country:** Uruguay**Organizer:** Sociedad de Gastroenterología del Uruguay**Website:** www.gastroendo2024.uy/ind.html**KDDW 2024****When:** November 14, 2024 - November 16, 2024**Location:** Seoul**Country:** Korea**Organizer:** Korean Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (KSGE)**Website:** <https://www.kddw.org/>**The Liver Meeting 2024****When:** November 15, 2024 - November 19, 2024**Location:** San Diego, California**Country:** United States**Organizer:** AASLD**Website:** <https://www.aasld.org/the-liver-meeting>**Semana Nacional de Gastroenterología 2024****When:** November 15, 2024 - November 19, 2024**Location:** Merida, Yucatan**Country:** Mexico**Organizer:** Asociación Mexicana de Gastroenterología**Website:** <https://www.gastro.org.mx/ eventos/2024/semana-nacional-de-gastroenterologia>**Asian Pacific Digestive Disease Week 2024****When:** November 21, 2024 - November 24, 2024**Location:** Bali**Country:** Indonesia**Organizer:** Asian Pacific Association of Gastroenterology (APAGE)**Website:** <https://www.apdwcongress.org/>**SBAD 2024****When:** November 21, 2024 - November 24, 2024**Location:** Salvador, Bahia**Country:** Brazil**Organizer:** Federação Brasileira de Gastroenterologia**Website:** www.sbad.com.br**NZSG-NZgNC Annual Scientific Meeting 2024****When:** November 27, 2024 - November 29, 2024**Location:** Claudelands, Hamilton**Country:** New Zealand**Organizer:** New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology**Website:** <https://nzsg.org.nz>**44th Panhellenic Congress****When:** November 28, 2024 - December 1, 2024**Location:** Athens**Country:** Greece**Organizer:** Hellenic Society of Gastroenterology**Website:** www.hsg.gr**ISGCON 2024****When:** December 4, 2024 - December 7, 2024**Location:** Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**Country:** India**Organizer:** Indian Society of Gastroenterology**Website:** www.isg.org.in**Saudi Digestive Disease Forum 2024****When:** December 14, 2024 - December 16, 2024**Location:** Jeddah**Country:** Saudi Arabia**Organizer:** Saudi Gastroenterology Association**Website:** www.saudigastro.com**2025 Annual Meeting****When:** February 6, 2025 - February 8, 2025**Location:** Lillehammer**Country:** Norway**Organizer:** Norwegian Gastroenterology Association**Website:** <https://www.legeforeningen.no/foreningsledd/fagmed/norsk-gastroenterologisk-forening/>**Joint CDDW™-CLM Conference 2025****When:** February 25, 2025 - March 2, 2025**Location:** Quebec City, Quebec**Country:** Canada**Organizer:** Canadian Association of Gastroenterology and Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver**Website:** <https://cddw-clm.ca/>**28th Annual Meeting****When:** March 12, 2025 - March 14, 2025**Location:** Madrid**Country:** Spain**Organizer:** Asociación Española de Gastroenterología (AEG)**Website:** <https://www.aegastro.es/>**2025 Annual Meeting of the Philippine Society of Gastroenterology****When:** March 12, 2025 - March 15, 2025**Location:** Grand Hyatt**Address:** Manila, Philippines**Organizer:** Philippine Society of Gastroenterology**Website:** <http://psgastro.org>

The 55th Annual Meeting of GEST

When: March 22, 2025 - March 23, 2025

Location: Taipei

Country: Taiwan

Organizer: The Gastroenterological Society of Taiwan

Website: <https://www.gest.org.tw>

APASL 2025

When: March 26, 2025 - March 30, 2025

Location: Beijing

Country: China

Organizer: Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver

Website: <http://www.apasl2025beijing.com/>

Semana Digestiva 2025

When: May 28, 2025 - May 30, 2025

Location: Porto

Country: Portugal

Organizer: Sociedade Portuguesa de Gastrenterologia

Website: www.semanadigestiva.pt

WGO Member Societies Submit Your Event

Are you a WGO Member Society wanting to share your event with WGO readers? Visit <https://www.worldgastroenterology.org/forms/submit-event.php> to submit your event for publication in WGO's website conference calendar as well as the quarterly *e-WGN* calendar of events!



DONATE TODAY

Contributions to WGO support and expand the educational, training, research, and awareness programs and initiatives of WGO by strengthening the reach of WGO to areas in the world that benefit directly from the education offered through programs such as Training Centers, Train the Trainers, World Digestive Health Day, Global Guidelines, and international meetings such as the World Congress.

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Available in 7 languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Turkish, and Portuguese), this online international hub provides Healthcare Professional with the latest scientific news and data about microbiota including the Institute's exclusive content such as Microbiota magazine, thematic folders, continuing medical education (CME) courses and interviews with experts. Check them out!

<p>Accrediting training on microbiota</p> <p>Research on microbiota is advancing! Benefit from accrediting courses to learn about microbiota.</p> <p>► Access accrediting courses</p>	<p>Infographics to share with your patients</p> <p>Download original graphic material to explain to your patients the role of the microbiota in their daily health.</p> <p>► Discover all the Biocodex infographics</p>	<p>An expert magazine "Microbiota"</p> <p>Read our Microbiota magazine with exclusive content written by leading microbiota experts.</p> <p>► Read the Microbiota Mag</p>
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Navigate through this hub of knowledge: www.biocodexmicrobiotainstitute.com/pro