

## **Gastro Foundation AGM report 2015**

The Gastroenterology Foundation of South Africa approaches its 10th anniversary and continues its tradition of contributing towards the post graduate training of fellows and to providing continuing medical education to practising Gastroenterologists and Hepatologists in South Africa and in Sub Saharan Africa. In addition, the Gastro Foundation encourages and provides support towards research in this field. A major focus over the last 18 months has been the collaboration with Sub - Saharan colleagues and the expansion of our activities into Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Foundation hosts a number of CME meetings in the form of interest groups in a broad range of subjects such as gut microbiota, liver diseases, acid reflux disease, paediatric gastroenterology and inflammatory bowel diseases. We host an average of 6 - 8 meetings per year.

The Gastro Foundation has raised over R15 million in the form of generous pledges mostly from the pharmaceutical industry. It has sponsored 13 research grants, 41 travel awards to fellows in training for international travel and 246 local travel awards. It has also awarded a three year travelling scholarship to the United States completed in 2011 and sponsored a travelling fellowship to Oxford in 2013.

In February 2010, the first post-graduate course for fellows in training was held at Spier over three days, and twenty-five fellows and many of the heads of departments throughout the country attended. This proved to be very successful and as a consequence has been repeated annually with great success. The 2015 meeting attracted 35 GI/Hepatology and paediatric fellows and 15 faculty members.

A major advance is the collaboration with the American Gastroenterology Association (AGA) in bringing the DDW post graduate course, held annually at the DDW meeting in the USA, to South Africa on an annual basis. The most recent was held in Cape Town at the Colorectal/SAGES meeting in September 2014 and was repeated in Ghana in March 2015. In August 2015 the DDW post graduate GI course that was held in Washington DC in May will be hosted in Durban at the ASSA SAGES meeting.

In addition, following discussions in Vienna in October 2014 at the United European Gastroenterology week (UEGW) with Nigerian and Kenyan colleagues and in collaboration with members of the European Association for the Study of Liver (EASL), we plan to host a number of post graduate courses in hepatology in Sub Saharan Africa.

The Gastro Foundation supported the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) opening of the Lagos WGO Training Centre in April 2015 by hosting post graduate training programs over 3 days to 30 training fellows and 50 practising Hepatologists in Nigeria and West Africa. The meeting began with an afternoon devoted entirely to an update on recent advances in Hepatology and in particular on the recent advancements in the treatment of viral hepatitis C.

This initiative is an extension of a liver interest meeting held in November 2014 in Cape Town. 2014 has seen major advancements in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C viral infection. The annual Liver Interest Group meeting of 2014 was devoted to viral hepatitis B and C in Africa. An all Africa network was initiated with 15 hepatologists from 12 different countries in sub Saharan Africa attending the first ad board meeting. This proved to be an enormous success not only in the intellectual content presented but in initiating a network of colleagues throughout Sub Saharan Africa.

This group of Sub Saharan Hepatologists is the start of a core group of Hepatologists in Africa which will ultimately implement guidelines on the screening detection and treatment of HCV and HBV infections. To complement the meeting in West Africa (the Lagos meeting) we plan to hold a meeting on the east coast of Africa (the Nairobi meeting) in the first quarter of 2016 with further meetings in Lagos Nigeria in Mid 2016.

Planned meetings for 2015 and beyond -

**Liver Interest Group meeting**

Saturday 5 December 2015

Vineyard Hotel, Cape Town

The liver interest group meeting for 2015 will be devoted to the Alcoholic liver disease, Non Alcoholic liver disease (NAFLD) and an entire session on an update and current treatment of HCV and HBV and HIV co-infection. Dr Gyongyi Szabo, President of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) has been confirmed as the international speaker

Apart from the usual Interest Group meetings, we have these highlights planned for 2016 and beyond:

Kenya : First quarter 2016 –

GI/Hepatology update in the form of the DDW post grad course and Best of EASL

SOGHIN : Nigeria June 2016

DDW post graduate course together with Best of EASL

SAGES South Africa August 2016

Liver cancer and viral hepatitis symposium in honor of Prof Michael Kew

Confirmed international speakers – Dr Jay Hoofnagle(USA), Dr Massimo Pinzani (UK), Dr Adrian Di Bisceglie (USA) and Prof Geoff Dusheiko (UK)

2017 AMAGE meeting