



THE  
GASTROENTEROLOGY FOUNDATION  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Non-Gain Trust IT4253/2006 ~ Established 2006*

Since its inception seven years ago, the Gastroenterology Foundation has raised over R13 million in the form of generous pledges from the pharmaceutical industry. It has sponsored 12 research grants, 40 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.

Much of its focus is on the continuing medical education of Gastroenterology and Hepatology fellows in training, those in teaching hospitals as well as private practice.

The Gastro Foundation sessions at the annual South African Gastroenterology Society conference (SAGES) are very popular and attract many participants.

In February 2010, the first post-graduate course for training fellows 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 has been repeated annually. In 2014, 19 faculty (of which 9 are heads of GI and Surgical departments) and 36 medical and surgical fellows attended the Spier post graduate weekend

In addition to the education of gastroenterology fellows, the Gastro Foundation has turned its attention to gastroenterologists and hepatologists in practice and in this regard has hosted a number of CME meetings in Gut microbiota, liver diseases, acid reflux disease, paediatric gastroenterology and inflammatory bowel disease. These take the form of Interest Groups and we host an average of 6 - 8 meetings per year.

The Gut Microbiome Interest Group has been inaugurated with the first meeting held at SAGES in September 2014 with Prof Eamonn Quigley giving the inaugural lecture.

A major advance is the collaboration with the American Gastroenterology Association in bringing the DDW post graduate course, held annually at the DDW meeting in the USA, to South Africa. This was held in Cape Town and will be hosted in Ghana in March 2015.

In addition, following meetings 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 Nigeria and Kenya. These will coincide with the SAGES meeting in Durban in August 2015.

With the inauguration of the 17<sup>th</sup> WGO GI training center in Lagos in April 2015 we are negotiating to host a 2 day post grad GI training program, as we do at Spier each year with the fellows, to coincide with the opening.

Two thousand and fifteen will see major advancements in the treatment of chronic hepatitis C viral infection and this year the annual Liver Interest Group meeting which will be held in Cape Town will be devoted entirely to viral hepatitis in Africa. We have invited 15 hepatologists from 12 different countries in sub Saharan Africa to this meeting. This will initiate an all Africa network with those interested and practicing hepatology.

With the additional focus in training that the Gastro Foundation has provided both nationally and internationally, Gastroenterology as a specialty has become a sought after sub specialty with more fellows in training. The focus on research has increased with more interest and attendance at our national meetings. The quality of the fellow in training has improved with a more confident and knowledgeable fellow. All fellows in training are supported to national and international meetings should they have an abstract for presentation internationally.

An important focus is our association with colleagues from neighboring African countries. We are accepting more African fellows for training and the first two African fellows have just completed certification in Gastroenterology.

The Gastroenterology Foundation of South Africa continues its proud commitment to the post graduate Gastroenterology and Hepatology training of fellows and of all gastroenterologists in practice. We have laid the foundation in South Africa for Hepatology - for the training, education and research of this subspecialty and we now plan to expand into the rest of Sub Saharan Africa.

The Gastro Foundation continues its efforts in upholding the standards of Gastroenterology & Hepatology teaching, creating and opening communications with national and International colleagues, raising sponsorship for local meetings and bringing interesting meetings to colleagues in Africa and Sub Saharan South Africa. An important role of the Foundation is to foster interest and education in post graduate gastroenterology and takes great pride in hosting the annual Weekend for Fellows in February each year.

We have these exciting plans, and hope to bring you even further interest in 2015 and beyond.

Sincerely  
Chris Kassianides  
Chairman