

Dear GHASSA colleagues

The 2018 DDW meeting was held in Washington DC during the first week of June and attracted over 20000 attendees. Once again, the meeting created an opportunity to update oneself on all areas of GI Hepatology and to continue talks aligning the Foundation with a number of associations both in Europe and the USA which have included the AGA, EASL and the UEGW. An important addition to the Foundation's repertoire of 'The best of' is the addition of the ASGE Post graduate course which was presented at the DDW this year and which will be hosted at the SAGES meeting in South Africa in August, and throughout SSA in 2018 and 2019.

Another first, announced at this DDW is the visit in August 2018 by the American Association of the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) to SSA in conjunction with the Ghana Association for the Study of Liver and Digestive diseases (GASLIDD). Preceding the GASLIDD meeting is a two-day meeting hosted by the AASLD with the hope that this will evolve into an annual event in various cities throughout SSA. This meeting will be preceded by a SSA Foundation facilitated and Olympus sponsored two-day GI Endoscopy meeting which will include the best of the ASGE post graduate course on the first day followed by a Colonoscopy dedicated upskilling program on the second day. Further meetings are planned in Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Khartoum throughout 2018 and 2019.

EASL continues their visits to SSA with an EASL best of meeting planned in Johannesburg SA in November 2018. The meeting will comprise aspects of autoimmune liver diseases together, cirrhosis, decompensated liver disease and liver transplantation.

In addition, a pilot study looking at the potential use of capsule endoscopy as a screening tool in patients from SSA with low grade abdominal pain who do not fit the criteria for IBS is currently planned in Kenya in collaboration with Cristiano Spada from Milan and coordinated by Eric Murunga in Nairobi. I hope preliminary findings will be available towards the end of 2018.

Once again, a gathering of Lewis Robert's African network for GI and Liver disease was held over lunch at the DDW and productive exchanges were presented. This organization has aligned itself with GHASSA – the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Foundation of SSA. An IBD network of GHASSA members is currently underway and a guidance document for the diagnosis and treatment of IBD in SSA is in progress. This expands the network of GHASSA colleagues.

Guidance papers for SSA use of Gastroscopy including testing and treatment regimens for H pylori infection, Colonoscopy, EUS and video capsule are all planned for the future

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Chairman