

Gastro Fellows weekend

25 – 27 March 2022

The Vineyard hotel

Cape Town

Over the weekend of the 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, the gastroenterology fellows, medical and surgical alike, were all welcomed to the beautiful Mother city once again for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual fellow's weekend. This was my second opportunity to attend this much anticipated event on any gastro fellow's calendar. I had some idea of what to expect and relished the opportunity to take it all in and get the most out of the experience. This time, however, a new venue awaited our arrival.

After thirteen years at the Spier Estate, it was time for the fellow's weekend to say farewell and move on to a new temporary home. And so, while some may always refer to it as the Spier weekend, we disembarked various flights from all corners of the country and sub - continent and beyond our borders and were escorted to the beautiful Vineyard Hotel in Newlands. This is where the Gastroenterology Foundation of Sub- Saharan Africa hosted 40 local fellows, 10 sub-Saharan fellows and 35 virtual attendees along with faculty and trustees. Set in beautiful, lush green surroundings of Cape Town's southern suburbs, with Table Mountain a picturesque background for the weekend, the new venue provided the ideal setting for learning, collaboration and networking, not to mention the perfect photo op.

Day one got off to a great start after lunch with a warm welcome from Professors Watermeyer and Jonas. Friday afternoon saw colorectal surgical fellows and medical fellows join together in sessions dealing with drug induced liver injury, new therapies to take note of in inflammatory bowel disease, H. Pylori and Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis. This was clearly, creatively, and concisely covered by Professors Sonderup, Watermeyer, Dr Levin - displaying his daughters' great artistic skill- and Dr Bobat. Meanwhile hepato-biliary fellows broke away along with upper gastrointestinal fellows to enjoy an update on chronic pancreatitis by Dr Hofmeyr, a review of submucosal tumours of the upper gastro-intestinal tract by Dr Chinnery, cystic lesions of the pancreas by Professor Jonas and new issues important in intra-hepatic cholangiocarcinomas by Professor Ramos. The final academic session of the first day saw colorectal fellows a lot more at ease with excellent insights around colorectal cancer screening and an approach to stomas by Dr Boutall and Dr SurrIDGE respectively, while Dr Chinnery and Dr Kloppers reminded others about UGIT polyps and managing cystic tumors of the liver. With the serious issues out the way and everyone finding their way to their rooms and getting acquainted with their roommates, we all looked forward to the much anticipated quiz that evening. This year saw a new, younger set of quiz masters taking over the reins from Professor Thompson and Professor Krige. But regardless of the change, the quiz still provided an entertaining, spirit building opportunity, where fellows in their various teams competed to show a little more than just all things gastroenterology. Well done to the red team for a convincing win! Thereafter followed a buffet style dinner and the opportunity to meet and mingle with mentors and peers in a relaxed environment.

Day two started with its traditional early morning run or a walk, for those of us who wanted to take in the scenery at a more leisurely pace. This took us on a beautiful route through the streets that surrounded the hotel, and it definitely didn't disappoint if you were hoping to squeeze in a good view of Table Mountain. Following a breakfast buffet the first session was one brought back by popular demand. Prof Setshedi took us through an extremely valuable talk on the basics of statistics for the occasional researcher. The remainder of the day's sessions were more case based, with an opportunity to interact, ask questions, answer questions and get a sense of the type of scenarios one might face in

an exam setting. With the academic program for the day drawing to a close the foundation welcomed two heavy weights from the legal profession for the evenings guest lecture. Both Judge Richard Goldstone and Advocate Paul Hoffman drew on their local and international experience in addressing us on matters of corruption both at home and beyond our shores.

The third and final day started with Dr Chinnery's endoscopy quiz and delivered one of my favourite sessions of the weekend, made even better by some great endoscopy video editing of clips of scopes and pearls of wisdom scattered throughout the quiz. Prof Candy also regaled us with an excellent second instalment of her masterclass in GI radiology, in and amongst various sessions around topics in hepatology. Feedback from delegates from sub-Saharan Africa provided great insights into what happens beyond our borders. It introduced us to some of the training programs and gastro units of our neighbors with this event providing the opportunity to form ties with our gastro counterparts and colleagues from just north of our border.

As the program drew to a close and fellows and faculty prepared to return home, all that was left was to take a moment to acknowledge those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this event as successful as it was and to acknowledge the colorectal blue team for being voted team of the weekend. Major thanks go to Prof Kassianides, chairman and founder of the Gastro foundation, and all faculty involved in providing fellows with this invaluable experience and all they contributed to make this weekend a great success. Thanks also go to Bini Seale for the crucial role she played in making the event possible. In discussion with fellows past and present we can definitely agree this really seems to be a 'not to be missed' event on a young gastro fellow's calendar. Now we look forward to seeing where the fellow's weekend may find its new forever home!