

LIVER INTEREST GROUP MEETING

Radisson Blu Gautrain Hotel

Sandton

The 15th annual Liver interest group meeting hosted by the Gastroenterology foundation of SSA and GASSA was held on Saturday 20th October 2024 in Sandton.

Over 58 attended the meeting with another 67 present virtually .

The program devised by Dr Bilal Bobat included a comprehensive overview of recent advances in the screening and treatment of patients with chronic viral hepatitis B&C and included the recently updated WHO guidelines on the screening and treatment of viral hepatitis B.

These were reviewed by Wendy Spearman who emphasized the use of point of care testing using Hepatitis B S Ag to screen patients and HBV DNA for monitoring.

Mzamo Mbelle reviewed the treatment options for patients with chronic viral hepatitis C and the excellent responses to the various therapeutic regimens.

Sanju Sobnach emphasized the need to view liver cancer in SSA as a different phenotype and to modify liver transplant listing criteria suitable for patients with liver cancer in SSA.

The meeting then turned to issues of life style and the liver.

Non alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) a term used for many years is now obsolete.

Steatotic liver disease (SLD) is the preferred term and includes 5 sub types - MASLD, MetALD, Alcoholic Associated Liver Disease, Specific aetiology SLD and Cryptogenic SLD.

Wendy Spearman reviewed the subtypes and the associated cardio - metabolic risk factors.

Mark Sonderup emphasized how the therapeutic landscape for the treatment of SLD has opened with the availability of GLP – 1 receptor agonists, widely available for the treatments of obesity and the metabolic syndrome, and with the use of Resmetirom, a thyroid hormone receptor – beta agonist, that reverses the liver fibrosis due to MASLD.

Ethical issues with regard to the liver transplantation of patients with alcoholic hepatitis were discussed by Bilal Bobat and Chris Lundgren and emphasized the controversies surrounding the ethical and clinical decisions.

The meeting closed with a session on Pancreatology with John Devar discussing surgical issues with regard to acute pancreatitis and pancreatic cysts.

Adam Mohammed reviewed IgG4 disease and Neo Seabi discussed the medical management of patients of chronic pancreatitis.

An excellent multidisciplinary meeting well attended and enjoyed by all.

Our thanks to the Foundation for facilitating the meeting and to the sponsors Abbott and Equity, and to all at Cornucopia - Juliet Desilla and Bini Seale for organizing the meeting.

Chris Kassianides

21st November 2024.