

# The Gastroenterology Foundation of South Africa & The Gastroenterology Association – Ethiopia

29 September – 1 October 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ethiopia is developing exponentially in terms of infrastructure, airline, airport (although much too small now for the massive amount of transfers), hotels and their service industry. Albeit, the majority of Ethiopians are still poor and probably do not have the same access to healthcare, as we have (despite our problems in the public sector).

Our South African group arrived on the Tuesday evening where we were joined for a late dinner by colleagues who had travelled from Nigeria, Kenya, DRC and Tanzania. In all, representatives from 14 sub Saharan countries were to join the meeting.

Wednesday morning we kicked off with the fellows program (held at the medical school opposite their Black Lions Hospital – main academic hospital). Several fellows from SSA (from Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana) joined by their Ethiopian counterparts/physicians were divided into 5 groups (base stations – upper (Funmi Lesi), lower (by myself), HPB (Sandie Thomson), Liver (Wendy Spearman) and for the first time a pathology base (Prof Segun Ojo). There were on average 5-6 fellows per group who rotated through the bases for small group teaching mostly by case discussion. We run a similar programme in South Africa and from the response seen in the evaluation questionnaire, this programme was thoroughly enjoyed.

On Thursday the programme focused on Endoscopy and Imaging. The morning was supported by **Medtronic**, where Eduan Deetlefs spoke and showed cases using Capsule Endoscopy. This was followed in the afternoon by Sandie Thomson who delivered the didactic elements of the Cape Town basic foregut endoscopy course which has been running for some years now. This course also covered the educational framework for teaching psychomotor as well as the core cognitive topics of sedation, anatomy, equipment cleaning and disinfection and scope handling. This was followed by an endoscopy quiz on lesion recognition which everyone enjoyed. Professor Thomson was sponsored by Pentax and it is encouraging to see how not only Pentax but other equipment manufacturers are supporting these educational principles. In addition Professor Thomson was exploring the feasibility of running the full course at the AMAGE meeting in July 2017. This would include a wet lab on the use of common endotherapy techniques at the WGO training centre at the Black Lion Hospital. This exploratory visit confirmed that with industry support such a venture is doable and will help build trainer capacity and trainee exposure. During the lunch break, led by Wendy Spearman and Mark Sonderup, a group of Hepatologist discussed the proposed guidelines for the treatment of Hepatitis B and C as it would apply in SSA.

On Friday morning we started with the official program (held at the Continental Hotel – around the corner from the Elilly), which was opened by Chris Kassianides and Berhane Redae (President of Gastroenterology Association – Ethiopia). We delivered The Best of AGA Postgraduate course using the South African faculty members together with a local as moderators. Despite the presentations being videos, this was well received by the audience of some 80 doctors and much discussion ensued, mainly as regards practice (what is

available in SSA!). Although a long day, I think enjoyed and knowledge gained by most of the attendees.

On Saturday, the Best of EASL postgraduate course was delivered. Excellent presentations by Franco Negro, Massimo Pinzani, Mark Sonderup, Wendy Spearman, Funmi Lesi and case presentations from the local faculty, stimulating much debate and discussion which concluded an excellent scientific meeting.

Socially, the faculty and the foreign delegates were treated to a special traditional Ethiopian evening, with music, singing, dancing and local cuisine climaxing a really pleasurable experience.

Overall, this truly was an amazing experience and a remarkable achievement by Chris Kassianides (raising all the funds and connecting groups) and the team that travelled to Addis. A hearty thanks to Karin, Bini, Juliet and Sabri (who provided excellent IT) for their unending and passionate drive.

**Reid Ally**

Head: Gastroenterology Unit  
CH Baragwanath Hospital & Witwatersrand University



Mary Afihene (Ghana), John Rwegasha (Tanzania), Kiydra Harris (fellow from BMSF), Abate Bane (Ethiopia), Chris Kassianides (South Africa), Reid Ally (South Africa), Betty Musua (Kenya), Segun Ojo (Nigeria), Mark Sonderup (South Africa), Christian Tzeuton (Cameroon), Betty Apica (Uganda), Funmi Lesi (Nigeria), Wendy Spearman (South Africa), Marie-Jean Kouakou-Loues (Ivory Coast)



Group of fellows outside the Addis Ababa Medical School



Reid Ally and Chris Kassianides with fellows from Sudan, as well as Berhane Redae, the GAE President