



Non-Gain Trust IT 4253/2006

14th Gastro Foundation meeting for fellows

Lord Charles Somerset Hotel

Somerset West, Cape Town

17th to 19th March 2023

Life and experience is about intersections. Medicine and history intersect continuously. The enormity of human suffering in Crimea 1854 brought Florence Nightingale and the era of modern nursing to the fore. This war was imprinted in history by the infamous charge of the Light Brigade, commanded by Lord Raglan, where British cavalry charged Russian artillery to no avail (other than to inspire a poem by Alfred Tennyson who lamented the idiocy of human arrogance). His elder brother Charles Somerset was at the same time conducting another imperial mandate: the frontier wars against the Xhosa people in the Eastern Cape where town of Somerset was established to provide provision for the British army fortifying defence lines along the Kei river.

The 14th Gastro foundation meeting for fellows was hosted in the misty and mountainous town of Somerset West. The anxiety and trepidation I had as a junior fellow attending my first fellow's weekend paralleled that of a soldier commissioned to the frontier war. However, this trepidation was soon put to rest by the warm and welcoming nurture of the gastro fraternity.

We eased into the weekend after delightful lunch by listening to didactic presentations by the following experts in their fields: Dr Bobat, Dr Hlatswayo, Dr Chinnery, Dr Gabriel, and Dr Levin. Dr Bobat delved into the subtle delineation of acute liver failure versus acute-on chronic liver failure. I find it most difficult in offering or denying a patient the option of liver transplantation and his concepts eased this decision-making process. Dr Hlatswayo provided an excellent and simplified approach to chronic diarrhoea which is a common yet often frustratingly refractory disorder to diagnose and manage. Dr Chinnery tackled upper gastrointestinal dilations. Dr Gabriel managed to make colorectal screening and surveillance less protocol driven and more insightful. Dr Levin presented on dyspepsia and irritable bowel syndrome and made these common yet formidable disorders simple and pragmatic to manage. We also had the unique opportunity to

Chairman: Prof Chris Kassianides

Trustees: Dr Bilal Bobat, Prof Geoff Dusheiko, Prof Eduard Jonas, Prof Jose Ramos, Prof Wendy Spearman, Prof Gill Watermeyer

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listen to an internationally renowned expert, Professor Gerhard Rogler, speak on exciting and new monoclonal antibody therapy in inflammatory bowel disease. Professor Reid Ally added a new but invaluable twist to this year's meeting by introducing an approach to evidence-based medicine by utilizing critical appraisal skill sets.



The hepatobiliary and upper gastrointestinal surgical fellows embarked on a separate program to the medical and colorectal fellows but also enjoyed listening to key topics in their field which included: surgery after neo-adjuvant therapy in pancreatic cancer by Professor Ramos; cystic lesions of the pancreas and the step-up approach for the management of pancreatic necrosis by Dr Burmeister; treatment of oesophageal and gastric varices by Professor Bernon; treatment of benign liver tumours by Dr Hofmeyr and lastly management of colorectal cancer and liver metastasis by Professor Jonas. The day ended with a personal highlight, a competitive but fun team building quiz.



The second day began with tough 5km walk/run (4km of uphill) which after being torrentially rained upon was no doubt invigorating for the day ahead.



The program consisted of two intensive hepatology, general gastroenterology, inflammatory bowel disease and practical (endoscopy and ultrasound) skills sessions. As a new gastroenterology fellow, I personally found the practical endoscopy session hosted by Dr Lala and Professor Thompson to be one of the highlights of the weekend. The insights I acquired here will assist me greatly in making my own journey in attaining colonoscopy proficiency smoother.



Each session was interactive, stimulating, and as such invaluable to be a part of. A South African journalist and author, Ms. Marianne Thamm, was the guest speaker and provided an insightful and optimistic message on the status and trajectory of our country's past, present and future. She highlighted the good above the bad and ugly. There was constant flow of delicious snacks and beverages throughout and the intensity of the day ended with equally gratifying dinner and networking with new friends.

The last day consisted of an interactive and challenging endoscopy quiz by Dr Galya Chinnery which provided perspective on the technical and diagnostic difficulties of our sub-specialty. This was followed by a masterclass on nutrition by Ms. Heather Harmsen a fundamental yet often overlooked subject. The day ended with a practical session on critical appraisal by Professor Ally and Professor Setshedi which was difficult but rewarding. The acquisition of this tool will feature future programs as this reinforces the discipline of critical academic differentiation hitherto neglected in the practice of clinical medicine.

The Lord Charles Somerset hotel provided a unique and wonderful intersection for the Gastro Fellows of 2023. This was an intersection for acquiring new knowledge, new training, new research avenues, new perspectives (perspective is often more impactful than facts as this is attendant on the application of knowledge and experience to optimise patient outcomes) and most importantly, for the opportunity to meet colleagues and establish new professional and personal networks and friendships.





Thank you to the sponsors and to the Gastroenterology Foundation of SSA for this world class academic event.

Dr Jessica Wing



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14th Weekend for Fellows
The Lord Charles Hotel and Conference Centre, Somerset West
17-19 March 2023**



Julian Krüger 2023