



Non-Gain Trust IT 4253/2006

1st Intestinal and Liver POCUS meeting Cape Town July 29th and 30th 2022

As soon as we got rid of the backroom attitude and brought our apparatus fully into the department with an inexhaustible supply of living patients with fascinating clinical problems, we were able to get ahead really fast. Any new technique becomes more attractive if it's clinical usefulness can be demonstrated without harm, indignity or discomfort to the patient.

Sir Ian Donald - Medical Ultrasound Pioneer

Over the last two decades, the use of Ultrasonography by clinicians at the bedside, has become increasingly popular as devices have become smaller, more accessible and more affordable. Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) refers to the use of ultrasound, in the hands of the clinician as opposed to the radiologist, and at the patient bedside. POCUS provides diagnostic information allows for a rapid diagnosis, often without the need of additional investigations and allowing for management to start promptly.



With this in mind, and with Intestinal Ultrasound beginning to feature strongly at GI International Conferences and entering management guidelines, the Gastro Foundation hosted the first Liver/Intestinal POCUS meeting in Cape Town on the 29th and 30th of July with 26 Gastroenterologists and Hepatologists representing all GI/Hepatology academic units in South Africa.

Furthermore, senior sonographers from all the academic units were invited to attend and were exposed to newer techniques in the hope that they would be able to consolidate the teaching, clinicians obtained at the meeting, in the months ahead.

Chairman: Prof Chris Kassianides

Trustees: Prof Reid Ally, Dr Bilal Bobat, Prof Eduard Jonas, Prof Jose Ramos, Prof Wendy Spearman, Prof Gill Watermeyer

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Professor Gerhard Rogler from Switzerland's Zurich University Hospital led the course along with his colleague Dr Luc Biedermann. Prof Gerhard Rogler certainly needs no introduction to the South African Gastroenterology community - a frequent visitor to SA. He excelled in a series of introductory lectures that were held virtually prior to the commencement of the course. These well balanced talks and videos, conveying the principles of bedside ultrasound, were embraced by eager physicians and allowed for a smooth transition to the hands-on and truncated course which followed and proceeded effortlessly and successfully. Prof Rogler has been running Intestinal Ultrasound courses for some time and has published a handbook which he kindly made available to all delegates.

The meeting took place at the Crystal Towers Conference Centre – beginning with an evening of lectures and a repetition of some of the videos which were shown virtually prior to the course and allowed delegates to pose questions and to become more comfortable with newer concepts. We were out of our seats the next morning for the hands-on part of the course!

Credit must be given to the amazing organization and set up of the facility by Bini Seale and her team and the Gastro Foundation particularly since this meeting was the first of its kind for the Foundation. Further thanks must be extended to the medical technology industry who brought a variety of ultrasound machines ranging from high-end to portable compact devices.



The first part of the morning allowed the ultrasound novices to explore normal anatomy - a group of medical students from the University of Cape Town volunteered their time as subjects. A big thank you to them and hopefully it was rewarding to them giving them a peek into the future of diagnostics!

An additional group of patients with Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), kindly organized by Prof Gill Watermeyer and Prof Mashiko Setshedi, joined us for the second part of the meeting where delegates were able to appreciate IBD pathology utilizing ultrasound - once again the delegates were very grateful to these individuals giving up their Saturday for this purpose. The ability to assess disease activity, follow fistulous tracts as well as stenosed bowel was an eye-opener!

Whoops of excitement could be heard from the clinicians able to capture the pathology they were looking for. The expert guidance of Prof Rogler and Dr Biedermann made things look all too easy! It would take at least 50 cases to become comfortable and a further 50 more to become proficient; thankfully we are 20% there at the conclusion of this weekend!

A further station incorporating transient elastography utilizing the Fibroscan device gave a further perspective to the hepatology component.

The end of the COVID restrictions has made it easier to hold these gatherings and once again it was wonderful seeing friends and colleagues from all over the world.

A final thanks to the Gastro Foundation team for putting this meeting together as well as Takeda who had given a generous educational grant for the meeting to take place.



I am certain that if each delegate translates into practice, what they had learnt at this meeting, it will be a game changer for patients in South Africa and especially so in the public sector where waiting times for MRI scans can extend into months let alone the potential for use in SSA!

It is hoped that following the success of this 'pilot event' we can expand POCUS courses to the broader GI and Hepatology community and particularly into SSA.

Dr Bilal Bobat
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Trustee Gastroenterology Foundation of SSA



Thank You