

Liver Interest Group Meeting - November 2021

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The Liver Interest Meeting took place on 27th November this year and was held at the exquisite Vineyard Hotel, situated on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain, Cape Town. The symposium was hosted by the Gastro Foundation of SSA. ~~Gilead~~. Although a virtual option was available, it was refreshing to see so many colleagues from all over the country in person.

The meeting was held in honour of the late Professor Michael C. Kew and his contributions to the field of hepatology and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). It encompassed an array of medical and surgical topics, highlighting the complexities of the treatment of chronic hepatitis B and C viral infection and HCC and the ongoing need for multidisciplinary integration in the management of the disease.

After an enthusiastic welcome by Prof Kassianides, the first session kicked off with a glimpse into the world of pharmaceuticals; an in depth talk by Dr Michael Reid described the evolution in the development of antiviral therapies. Subsequently, lectures covering the medical aspects of viral hepatitis and HCC prevention and management followed. These included talks by the guest speakers Prof Lesi, who highlighted the 2030 goal of eliminating viral hepatitis; Prof Wearne, who covered the management of viral hepatitis in the context of chronic renal disease; Prof Wong (from the Chinese University of Hong Kong), who discussed the plausibility of a functional cure for chronic hepatitis B; and Prof Kramvis, a virologist who previously worked closely with Prof Kew on works regarding the link between viral hepatitis and HCC.

The second session focused largely on specific medical and interventional treatment options in HCC. Prof Omar, a guest speaker from Cairo University, largely discussed the growing armamentarium of systemic therapies available in the management of irresectable HCC, whilst Prof Jonas brought to light the role of TACE (transarterial chemoembolization) in HCC. This was followed by excellent clinical case presentations. The final lecture for the day was presented by Dr Thomson, who addressed organ transplantation in the Covid-19 era and emphasized the new obstacles that have arisen in transplant medicine secondary to the COVID global pandemic.

Overall, the meeting was, as always, a great success. The session chairs; Prof Spearman, Prof Sonderup, Prof Ramos and Dr Bilal, kept the sessions interesting and interactive by incorporating both the live audience and virtual audience into discussions. Bini and Juliet once again managed the behind-the-scenes intricacies, leading to an exceptionally well organized hybrid meeting yet again.