

Attending the 17th Gastro Foundation Weekend for Fellows was an incredibly rewarding experience both academically and personally. The weekend brought together fellows and experienced clinicians in gastroenterology, hepatology, colorectal surgery, HPB surgery, and paediatric gastroenterology from across South Africa in an environment focused on learning, mentorship, and collaboration.

The weekend offered a great balance of practical skills training, academic discussion, and multidisciplinary engagement. Highlights included the hands-on ultrasound workshop with dedicated liver, pancreatic, and intestinal stations, as well as the opportunity to move between the ERCP simulator and colonoscopy workshops, exposing fellows to a broad range of procedural skills across medical and surgical gastroenterology and accommodates fellows in all phases of training. The interactive base sessions created an excellent platform for case-based learning and direct engagement with experienced faculty. Beyond the formal programme, the weekend encouraged collaboration between different disciplines and training centres, creating an atmosphere where knowledge sharing and mentorship happened naturally throughout the meeting.

Beyond the educational programme, one of the most meaningful aspects was meeting other fellows from different training centres around the country. The networking and friendships developed over the weekend reminded me how important collaboration and peer support are during specialist training.

A particularly inspiring moment was hearing Professor Chris Kassianides reflect on the origins and development of the Gastro Foundation over the past two decades. Hearing about the challenges faced in establishing the Foundation, and recognising how current fellows continue to benefit from the vision, persistence, and sacrifices of those who came before us, was deeply motivating. It highlighted how far gastroenterology training in South Africa has progressed because of the commitment of senior clinicians dedicated to education and mentorship. As current fellows, it was an honour to be part of this legacy and a reminder that we also carry the responsibility of continuing to strengthen and advance gastroenterology and hepatology training for future generations.

Dr Mohamed Yaaseen Sungay

Gastroenterology fellow – Tygerberg hospital