

World Digestive Health Day - May 29 2006



Joining forces to combat *Helicobacter pylori* worldwide: member societies respond enthusiastically to the call for campaigns to increase awareness

The World Gastroenterology Organisation has designated May 29 as World Digestive Health Day, an annual advocacy event to increase the awareness of digestive diseases worldwide. May 29, 2006 focussed on *Helicobacter pylori* infection and WGO-OMGE urged their member societies to undertake local activities to highlight this public health issue with a particular focus on developing countries.

We were thrilled to receive several reports of responses to this campaign call, some of which are highlighted here. Our congratulations go to all who responded to this call and contributed to the increased awareness of the impact of Hp on digestive disease:

■ **Consensus on National Guidelines reached in Lahore, Pakistan**

The Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology and Gastrointestinal Endoscopy hosted a consensus meeting on May 13 & 14, 2006 in Lahore, Pakistan. The aim of this conference was to formulate national guidelines for the management of *Helicobacter pylori* infection against the background of local dynamics. The one and a half day meeting included lectures followed by committee deliberations on epidemiology, disease pattern, prevention and management in adults as well as in children. The faculty is now in the process of writing the final guidelines on this topic.

Professor Dr. Ghias Un Nabi Tayyab, Vice President, Pakistan Society of Gastroenterology

■ **UAE commemorate World Digestive Health Day with Special CME Program**

The Emirates Medical Association, in collaboration with the UAE Gastroenterology Society and the General Authority for Health Services for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi extended an invitation to gastroenterologists in their region to join a special CME program which took place on June 3, 2006 and was attended by approximately 300 participants from the region. Topics included "History of Hp", "Diagnosis of Hp Infection", "Treatment Modalities" and "Updates and Non-Responders". Credited with 2.0 CME hours, the symposium was held in Abu Dhabi.

Dr. Wael Al Mahmeed (Meeting Organisation, Abu Dhabi) and Dr. Makki Fayadh (President of the Iraqi Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology)

■ **Support from the Uruguayan Society of Gastroenterology**

In a letter from the President, Dr. Cristina Dacoll and the Secretary General, Dr. Susana Kohen, the colleagues from Uruguay congratulated WGO-OMGE on initiating an activity that will become "stronger each year and will be a live impulse for every society, focus on preserving digestive health, eradicating diseases and improving quality of life". Together with their sister societies, the SUED (Uruguayan Society of Digestive Endoscopy) and the SUP (Uruguayan Society of Pathology), they organized a special scientific programme on Hp to commemorate the event.

Dr. Cristina Dacoll and Dr. Susana Kohen (President & Secretary General, Sociedad de Gastroenterología del Uruguay)

■ **Belgian Gastroenterologists, Patients and Media receive Tools to address the Threat of Hp**

The Belgian *Helicobacter pylori* Study Group (BHpSG) honored World Digestive Health Day 2006 by distributing informative materials to their members, patients and the press in both French and

Dutch about *Helicobacter pylori* and its importance as a risk factor for non cardia gastric cancer.
Dr. Vincent Lamy, BHpSG President

■ **World Digestive Health Day 2007**

Focussing in 2007 on Viral Hepatitis, the World Gastroenterology Organisation has set up a working group headed by Dr. Douglas LaBrecque. The working group will focus on what has developed into a worldwide epidemic: 400 million people are chronically infected with Hepatitis B and about half of that number with Hepatitis C. Together they lead to one of the 2 or 3 major causes of cancer in the world. Information on planned activities and support materials will be provided over the next months. WGO-OMGE urges all member societies to draw attention to this health problem and invites any member to apply for inclusion in the working group by sending an email before July 15, 2006 to info@worldgastroenterology.org with 'Viral Hepatitis Working Group' as the subject line.

Professor Henry Cohen, WGO-OMGE Secretary General

■ **About the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO-OMGE)**

Founded in 1954, WGO-OMGE is a federation of 100 national and regional gastroenterology societies and associations, representing over 50,000 gastroenterologists worldwide. Its mission is to contribute to the study and progress of gastroenterology on a global scale, to contribute actively to training and education in gastroenterology and gastrointestinal diseases and provide a vital worldwide link for physicians treating digestive diseases.

WGO-OMGE initiatives include Training Centers around the world (Thailand, Egypt, Italy, Pakistan, Morocco, South Africa, Bolivia, and Chile), Train-the-Trainer programmes for physicians, an Outreach Programme which brings endoscopic services and equipment to developing countries, the International Digestive Cancer Alliance and Global Guidelines Library among others. Its web address is www.worldgastroenterology.org.

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