World Gastroenterology Organisation Announces 2012 WDHD

Milwaukee, USA — May 29, 2012 — Every 29th May, the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) celebrates World Digestive Health Day (WDHD) and initiates a worldwide public health campaign through its 110 national societies and over 50,000 members. Each year focuses upon a particular digestive disorder to increase general public awareness of prevention and therapy. The 2012 theme is *From Heartburn to Constipation - GI Symptoms in the Community: Impact and Interpretation.*

About This Year’s Theme

The goal of the WDHD 2012 advocacy and public health awareness campaign is to help health care providers and sufferers alike to understand these common symptoms, what they may mean and how they should be appropriately and effectively managed. WDHD 2012 will endeavor to engage with and inform the health care provider – physicians, pharmacists and allied health professionals – and the community at large. According to Richard Hunt, Canada, Co-Chair of the 2012 Campaign, “*Pharmacists, family physicians and gastroenterologists are all faced with the wide spectrum of symptoms that suggest dysfunction or disease in the gastrointestinal tract. These range from heartburn to constipation, dyspepsia to diarrhea and many more. Each of the terms carries the personal meaning of the patient and may be interpreted quite differently by the health care provide. WDHD 2012 offers the opportunity to highlight the prevalence and the impact of these symptoms across the spectrum of health care providers and help guide their diagnostic and therapeutic decisions.*”

Special attention will be given to the influence of culture, ethnicity and language on the expression and interpretation of these symptoms and to the development of diagnostic and management algorithms appropriate to various settings and circumstances. “*Digestive symptoms are very common around the world and can be a source of great distress and concern for some, yet our understanding of*
how language and culture influences the expression and patient experience of such common problems as heartburn, bloating and constipation has been little studied. Through WDHD 2012, WGO hopes to promote a common understanding of these symptoms and their impact as well as how they can be best addressed by the sufferer and the health care practitioner” according to Dr. Eamonn Quigley, Ireland, Co-Chair of the 2012 Campaign.

A new page on the WGO Foundation website is created each year, which consists of a package of useful public awareness materials, various guidelines pertinent to the current year’s theme, information for physicians and patients, an area to submit a society’s event, and an area featuring what different countries and societies have done to celebrate WDHD. Events that have taken place through WGO and its national member societies include lectures, press conferences, symposia, including WDHD information on a society’s website, creating a World Digestive Health Week, and much more.

Formed in 1935 and incorporated in 1958, The World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) is a federation of 110 national societies and 4 regional associations of gastroenterology representing over 50,000 individual members worldwide, focusing on the improvement of standards in gastroenterology training and education on a global scale. The WGO Foundation, incorporated in 2007, is dedicated to raising funds to support WGO educational programs and activities.

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For more information on WGO and its Foundation:
http://www.worldgastroenterology.org / www.wgofoundation.org