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World Gastroenterology Organisation Announces 2015 WDHD

Every 29th May, the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) celebrates World Digestive Health Day (WDHD) and initiates a worldwide public health campaign through its more than 100 member societies and regional affiliates which reach over 50,000 individual gastroenterologists around the globe. Each year focuses upon a particular digestive or liver disorder, with the theme for 2015 being “Heartburn: A Global Perspective.”

About This Year’s Theme

The goal of the WDHD 2015 campaign is to raise awareness of heartburn and to provide a broad overview on this common symptom by providing gastroenterologists and, hence their patients and the general public, with an understanding of the latest basic and clinical research in the pathogenesis, investigation, and treatment of esophageal symptoms.

“Heartburn is the key presenting symptom of a very common condition – gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) – that has major implications for individuals and healthcare systems,” according to Dr. David Armstrong, MB BChir, Chairman of the Steering Committee for WDHD 2015. *“GERD is associated with a significant impact on health-related quality of life and reduction in personal and work-related productivity; it is, also, associated with a greater risk of Barrett’s esophagus, a pre-malignant condition that may progress to esophageal adenocarcinoma. Fortunately, GERD can, generally, be treated safely and effectively. However, the investigation and treatment of GERD can be costly and the management of GERD patients has to be optimized, in many jurisdictions, in the context of the many other pressures on the healthcare system.”*

Through a multi-faceted approach, to include local and regional campaigns and conferences, the campaign for WDHD 2015 seeks to translate research into clinical practice and facilitate communication between healthcare providers, healthcare payers, and heartburn sufferers to ensure that patients receive appropriate dietary and lifestyle advice as well as appropriate investigations and treatment, relevant to their condition and circumstances.

The WGO's task will be supported by the development of educational and training materials around the world in collaboration with WGO Member Societies and by the concurrent development and publication of the WGO Global Guideline on the management of GERD.

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 a section featuring what countries and societies are doing to celebrate WDHD. Events are organized throughout the year through WGO's member societies and regional affiliates and include lectures, press conferences, symposia, walkathons, patient awareness camps, creating a World Digestive Health Week, and much more. The WDHD 2015 web page can be found at <http://www.wgofoundation.org/wdhd-2015.html>.

About WGO

Formed in 1935 and incorporated in 1958, The World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) is a federation of over 100 member societies and 4 regional associations of gastroenterology representing more than 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:

www.worldgastroenterology.org / www.wgofoundation.org / www.wgofoundation.org/wdhd-2015.html