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Mission / Vision

Mission of WGO
To promote, to the general public and healthcare professional alike, an awareness of the worldwide prevalence and optimal care of gastrointestinal and liver disorders, and to improve care of these disorders, through the provision of high quality, accessible and independent education and training.

WGO Vision
Gastrointestinal and liver disorders are preeminent among healthcare issues globally, a significant burden to national healthcare budgets and the single greatest cause of cancer death. While an increasing awareness of causative factors, coupled with dramatic advances in diagnostic and therapeutic approaches have led to improvements in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal and liver disorders, these benefits have not been transmitted equally across the world and, especially, to those in greatest need.

As the global representative for gastroenterology and hepatology, the role of WGO is to:
• Increase global public awareness of gastrointestinal and liver disorders
• Provide independent and high quality educational opportunities to medical, nursing and other healthcare professionals in gastrointestinal and liver disorders throughout the world, regardless of location
• Promote international collaboration in digestive health education, training and research
• Support healthcare professionals who care for those with gastrointestinal and liver disorders throughout the world
Message from the President

Naima Lahbabi-Amrani, MD
President, WGO 2019-2021
WGO-RTC Training Center Director
Rabat, Morocco

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It has been an honor to serve as President of the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO). When I started my presidency in September 2019, there were three main objectives that I wanted to achieve:

• Encourage more females to serve on WGO committees and participate in our initiatives;
• Attract more young physicians to participate in WGO programs and committees; and
• Increase our efforts towards growing our membership in Africa and other parts of the world.

With your support and collaboration, and despite the COVID-19 pandemic, together, we were able to achieve all of these goals. You will find throughout this Annual Report a summary of what we accomplished in 2021 across our various programs and what we were able to achieve together.

Looking Ahead
I feel fortunate to have been with WGO for more than 20 years, beginning as the Director of the WGO Training Center in Rabat and moving into various positions during my tenure.

I wish Professor Guilherme Macedo, WGO President-elect, best wishes on a successful term as he moves into the presidency for the 2021-2023 term and I look forward to working with him and our members to carry out the goals for the organization.

WGO is evolving. These past few years have also demonstrated that, despite two years of challenges and uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we can face anything together.

I want to thank all of our volunteers, members, colleagues and partners. Your commitment to WGO and dedication to the specialty in improving research, education and training continues to impress and motivate me in the work we do.

We are a Big Family with only One Voice to reflect the mission of WGO. Thank you for entrusting me to serve as your President for the 2019-2021 term.
Message from the Incoming President

Guilherme Macedo, MD, PhD, FACC, FASGE, AGAF, FAASLD  
President, WGO 2021-2023  
Director, Porto Training Center  
Porto, Portugal

It is a humbling and huge honor and also a great privilege to serve as WGO President.

As a federation of 117 national societies, together, we create a powerful mechanism by which we can meaningfully impact change and the ability of this organization to give support to regions and countries to thrive, serving their needs and their goals. While the global gastroenterology community is diverse and kaleidoscopic, WGO is an international platform where national society members are able to take active roles in promoting and improving the standards in many critical aspects of gastroenterology training and education. We are leveraging resources collectively to achieve these purposes.

We are extremely proud of our national membership base, in particular of the commendable efforts and accomplishments of our volunteers serving the multiple committees, promulgating our mission and goals around the world.

WGO passion for education is built upon the engagement of all representatives of the organization.

As mentioned in one of our TTT leadership and management courses, education implies not only acknowledging and welcoming the change but also truly incorporating it into everyday behavior. This special attitude and mindset is making the difference in our organization. Our purpose will continue to develop better GI doctors – whatever the latitudes they are living in – better learners, better teachers, and better human beings.

The global distribution of our flagship Training Centers represents our concerns in making these units beacons for providing best quality care in gastroenterology and all its related disciplines everywhere, including underserved areas.

We will develop closer ties with our member societies around the world and look for mutual present activities of the highest quality and greatest relevance to that region and hopefully to the entire GI community. Indeed, our well-established premium educational and training programs such as TTT, Training Center activities, and Global Guidelines have earned universal recognition. New workgroups and taskforces, such as the Climate Change initiative, will also make the difference in showing not only who we are but what we stand for.

This is the right time for a fresh start and a renewed approach. Building upon the great amount of work and achievements made by the previous great leaders in reshaping our organization to foster the bounds of a strong and vibrant community is vital. At the same time, it is important to increase irrevocably our visibility and awareness, not only for related commercial partners, but also for the lay public and our own member affiliates.

What you can expect from this WGO leadership and teamwork is persistence, foresight, selflessness, and creativity. We will grant an amazing energy, enthusiasm, and tireless efforts throughout this term of office.

We will feel globally, think globally, and act globally.

Thank you!
Governing Council

The Governing Council is comprised of 19 members which include the Executive Committee, Committee and Interest Group Chairs, and the Regional Associations Presidents/Chairs.

Executive Committee

President
Prof. Naima Lahbabi-Amrani
Rabat, Morocco
Professor of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Mohammed V University

President-Elect and Chair of the WGO Foundation
Prof. Guilherme Macedo
Porto, Portugal
Centro Hospitalar São João

Secretary General
Prof. Geoffrey Metz
Richmond, VIC, Australia
Epworth Hospital

Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee
Prof. Mark Topazian
Rochester, Minnesota, USA

Past President and Chair of Nominations
Prof. Cihan Yurdaydin
Istanbul, Turkey
Koc University Medical School, Dept. of Gastroenterology and Hepatology

Committee and Interest Group Chairs

Chair, Clinical Research Committee
Prof. Desmond Leddin
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Victoria General Hospital

Chair, Publications Committee
Prof. Alejandro Piscoya
Lima, Peru
Hospital Guillermo Kaelin de La Fuente

Chair, Guidelines Committee
Prof. David Armstrong
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
McMaster University, Department of Medicine

Chair, Hepatology Interest Group
Prof. Saeed Hamid
Karachi, Pakistan
Aga Khan University Hospital, Department of Medicine

Promotion of Education in Asia-Pacific Region
Prof. Kaichun Wu
Xi’an, Shaanxi, China
Xijing Hospital of Digestive Diseases

Chair, Scientific Programs Committee
Prof. Carolina Olano
Montevideo, Uruguay
Associate Professor, Universidad de La República
Committee and Interest Group Chairs

Chair, Training Centers Committee
Prof. Finlay Macrae
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Head, Colorectal Medicine and Genetics

Chair, Young Members Committee
Prof. Aasma Shaukat
New York, NY, USA
NYU Langone Health

Chair, Train the Trainers Committee
Prof. Jean-Christophe Saurin
Lyon, France
Hôpital Edouard Herriot, Hépato-Gastroentérologie

Chair, Endoscopy, Other Procedures and Outreach Interest Group
Prof. Vivek Kaul
Rochester, NY, USA
University of Rochester Medical Center

Chair, Young Members Committee
Prof. Aasma Shaukat
New York, NY, USA
NYU Langone Health

Chair, Endoscopy, Other Procedures and Outreach Interest Group
Prof. Vivek Kaul
Rochester, NY, USA
University of Rochester Medical Center

Regional Association Chairs/Presidents

Pan-American Gastroenterological Association (OPGE)
Prof. Arnoldo Riquelme
Santiago, Chile
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

African Middle East Association of Gastroenterology (AMAGE)
Prof. Reda Elwakil
Cairo, Egypt
Emeritus Professor of Tropical Medicine, Ain Shams University

Asian Pacific Association of Gastroenterology (APAGE)
Prof. Justin Che-Yuen Wu
Hong Kong
Prince of Wales Hospital

United European Gastroenterology (UEG)
Prof. Axel Dignass
Frankfurt, Germany
Agaplesion Markus Hospital

Secretariat Staff

Executive Director
Marissa Lopez, CAE

Program Manager
Jim Melberg

Communications and Development Manager
Zachary Blevins

Education and Meetings Manager
Milly Gonzalez

WGO Executive Secretariat
555 East Wells Street, Suite 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3823 USA
Phone: +1 414 918-9798 • Fax: +1 414 276-3349
E-mail: info@worldgastroenterology.org
Volunteers

WGO consists of the following bodies, each contributing to the activities of the organization:

- Executive Committee
- Governing Council
- Climate Change Working Group
- Clinical Research Committee
- Endoscopy, Other Procedures and Outreach Interest Group
- e-WGN Editorial Board
- Finance Committee
- Foundation Committee
- Global Guidelines Committee
- Hepatology Interest Group
- Mentorship Program
- Nominations Committee
- Publications Committee
- Scientific Programs Committee
- Training Centers Committee
- Train the Trainers Committee
- World Digestive Health Day Steering Committee
- Young Members Committee

Volunteers by Gender

77% 192
23%

Volunteers by Region

Africa/Middle East - 47
Americas - 57
Asia Pacific - 58
Europe - 30

Thank you to all of committee volunteers for your commitment and dedication to WGO!
Membership

WGO is a global federation of 117 Member Societies representing over 66,500 individual gastroenterologists, hepatologists, endoscopists, GI surgeons, and other healthcare professionals. WGO programs and activities are dedicated to serving the needs of its members and promoting digestive health worldwide, especially in developing and emerging societies.

WGO Member Societies by Region
Africa/Middle East - 34
Americas - 25
Asia Pacific - 21
Europe - 37

Welcome Our New 2021 WGO Member Society!

Burkina Faso
Société Burkinabé D'Hépato-GastroEntérologie Et D'Endoscopie Digestive
Programs / Services

Training

Education and Training represents a core primary program for WGO. Since 1998, WGO has provided training and education to the global gastroenterology community reaching over 2,500 trainees through its 23 Training Centers and over 1,100 participants from 100 countries through its Train the Trainers courses.

Training Centers

WGO endorses 23 centers globally in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa/Middle East and the Americas. Although many of our centers were impacted by the pandemic, many were able to pivot and offer virtual courses and trainings.

2021 Grants Program

Total number of trainees who were awarded grants to attend a training course at a WGO Training Center in 2021

17

$17

Training Centers awarded Educational Activity funds

8

2021 Grants Program Recipients

18 Trainees

Gender

Female 5

Male 13

Number training outside their country of residence

8

Length of Training

1-3 months 3

4-7 months 5

8-11 months 0

12 months 9

“Thank you for supporting these international Training Centers. Without this opportunity, I could have not reached my dream of learning EUS in my country.”

“Maintaining this scholarship is having a door to contribute to the development of professionals with an interest in hepatology, an experience that motivates us to be better in this field, to contribute to the care of our patients, and the development of our care services.”
Programs / Services, continued

Train the Trainers

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2021 Warsaw, Poland and Lyon, France TTT’s were postponed. The last in-person TTT was successfully held in April 2019 in Bucharest, Romania. As WGO continues to celebrate its 20th anniversary of the Train the Trainers program, we are pleased to announce there will be in-person & virtual sessions available in 2022.

Over the past 20 years, 28 workshops have been held in 18 different countries across six continents with over 1,100 alumni from more than 90 countries.

“Lots of work has been done, including a complete rebuild of the program with shorter and more focused modules, preparation of new modules (feedback, statistics), preparation of new advanced TTT modules, ongoing pre- and post-tests, research activity on TTT evaluations, social media group, and more. Now, we are ready and excited to test all this in preparation for real, face-to-face TTTs next year.”

Prof. Jean-Christophe Saurin, Chair, Train the Trainers Committee, 2017-2021

“Having the opportunity to take part in WGO’s Train the Trainers Program during my gastroenterology training was great timing since it offered me a suitable context to get helpful information on how to be professional as a clinician and clinical researcher but also in teaching.”

“Easily the best medical meeting that I have ever attended, the Train the Trainers meeting in Porto, Portugal remains a vivid memory for me.”

Climate Change Working Group

WGO’s Climate Change Working Group’s (CCWG) objective is to assist GI health providers worldwide to adapt to, and mitigate, the effects of climate change on health. The CCWG has members from 18 countries representing high, medium and low-income populations. It aims to review the scientific literature on climate and GI health, to encourage education and the undertaking of actionable measures including advocacy, and to further research and collaborations within the global GI community.

In 2021 the CCWG partnered with three major GI journals, Gastroenterology, Gut, and the Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology (JCG) to publish a commentary — “Uniting the Global Gastroenterology Community to Meet the Challenge of Climate Change and Non-recyclable Waste” — that highlights the important consequences of the climate crisis on gastrointestinal human health, and the impact of gastroenterology practices globally on the carbon footprint and non-recyclable waste.

“Climate change is an increasingly important topic in the news. In discussion with medical leaders globally, it appears that very little in the way of structured research and education has been published on the impact of climate change on health and disease from the many medical subspecialties that might be effected by climate change.”

Prof. Geoffrey Metz
Chair, Climate Change Working Group
Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program

WGO formed the Emerging Leaders Mentorship Program as part of our ongoing commitment to training and education. Over a yearlong partnership, mentors will impart knowledge and expertise in the areas of clinical practice, education, and research, catering to the interests and specific needs of the mentees.

The program aims to initially focus on selecting young professionals or professionals new to the field of GI as mentees. Special consideration will be given to young GI professionals in regions where access to needed resources may be limited. The initial aim is to select mentees who are just starting out, whether they are new to their field or new to their career.

Mentors will be chosen from among established experts, preference will be given to those who have a demonstrated track record of successful mentorship and who have a first-hand knowledge of issues in GI in their region.

Education

WGO Global Guidelines and Cascades

The WGO Guidelines Library contains 27 practice guidelines that are globally applicable by the nature of their cascades, which identify other ways of achieving the best possible outcome by taking the available resources into account. While each guideline includes references to other relevant guidelines, WGO is the only organization who has adopted a global focus. In addition, each guideline review team includes non-Western experts with direct knowledge of conditions in their regions.

Updated and/or Newly Published Guidelines in 2021

- Digestive Tract Tuberculosis (new)
- *Helicobacter Pylori* (updated)

Most Popular Titles in 2021

- Probiotics and prebiotics
- Acute diarrhea
- *Helicobacter Pylori*
- IBS

Languages Available

- English
- French
- Mandarin
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
Outreach / Advocacy

World Digestive Health Day (WDHD) 2021

Every 29th May, WGO celebrates World Digestive Health Day (WDHD) and initiates a yearlong, worldwide, public health campaign through 117 WGO Member Societies, which reach over 60,000 individuals worldwide, WGO Training Centers, Regional Affiliate Associations and other WGO global partners. Each year focuses upon a particular digestive disease and/or disorder in order to increase general public awareness of prevention, prevalence, diagnosis, management and treatment of the disease and/or disorder.

The theme for World Digestive Health Day 2021 was “Obesity: An Ongoing Pandemic.”

This year, WGO partnered with the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders (IFSO) to increase awareness of obesity throughout the world and engage with world-class leaders on topics related to the prevention, treatment, and management of obesity. The campaign launched on 29th May with a live global webinar.

Website Stats
The WGO website received 1,950 sessions on 29 May 2021, far above WGO’s average web traffic.

Countries Represented by Participants of the WDHD Webinar

- Argentina: 6.6%
- Peru: 8.9%
- UK: 10%
- Pakistan: 10.3%
- Brazil: 10.6%
- India: 13.4%
- USA: 18.6%
- Portugal: 6.5%

Specialties of Participants of the WDHD Webinar

- Bariatric Surgeon: 35%
- Gastroenterologists: 20.1%
- Physicians: 5.6%
- Students: 4.1%
- Physicians: 5.6%
- Nurses: 4.1%
- Dietitians/Nutritionists: 20.8%
- Specialties: 20.1%
Congress and Meetings

GASTRO 2021 Prague

GASTRO 2021 Prague was held in partnership with the Czech Society of Gastroenterology on 9-11 December. We successfully pivoted the meeting to a hybrid (in-person & online) format due to the pandemic.

The congress had an exceptional scientific program with over 700 registered, engaged participants from 71 countries, and 475 abstracts submitted. The congress was accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME®) with 13 European CME credits (ECMEC®s).

On-demand access to sessions remained open online to participants until 11 March 2022.

The Joint Steering Committee
Naima Amrani, WGO President
Guilherme Macedo, WGO President-elect
Cihan Yurdaydin, WGO Past President
Julius Spicak, CSG Board Representative
Ondrej Urban, CSG President
Milan Lukas, CSG Past President

The Joint Scientific Program Committee
Carolina Olano, Uruguay
Joost Drenth, The Netherlands
Gerhard Rogler, Switzerland
David Sanders, UK
Tomas Hucl, Czech Republic
Radan Bruha, Czech Republic
Ilja Tacheci, Czech Republic
Geoffrey Metz, Australia
Reach / Engagement

Website

WGO redesigned its website, maintaining a consistent branding with the adoption of the new WGO logo. In addition to the fresh look, the WGO website is now more user-friendly with easier navigation, a more responsive design, and compatibility with Google Translate.

Did you know...
Almost half of the visitors came from Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Top Countries

Visitors came from 216 countries.

Circulation/Reach

e-WGN

The official newsletter of WGO, the electronic World Gastroenterology News (e-WGN), is available in an online format. The publication is produced on a quarterly basis and is accessible free of charge as a PDF. In March, WGO released a special issue focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional issues were released in May, September, and December, featuring a wide array of articles and topics including Expert Point of View articles, WGO Global Guidelines updates, member society news, and more.

Social Media

11,333 combined followers on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, a 25% increase from 2020.
Awards

WGO presents a number of awards in conjunction with each World Congress of Gastroenterology and at the meetings of the WGO Regional Affiliate Associations.

The WGO Distinguished Global Lecture

WGO believes that it is important to continuously expand the ways in which WGO supports its Member Societies and Regional Affiliate Associations and their activities. With this goal in mind, WGO has established the “WGO Distinguished Global Lecture” as one means by which WGO can even more effectively demonstrate its commitment to participating in and supporting the major annual or biannual meetings of the Regional Affiliate Associations. The central aim of the WGO Distinguished Global Lecture is to contribute from a global perspective to the education and training being offered on a regional basis by the four WGO Regional Affiliate Associations:

- African Middle East Association of Gastroenterology (AMAGE)
- Pan-American Gastroenterological Association (OPGE)
- Asian Pacific Association of Gastroenterology (APAGE)
- United European Gastroenterology (UEG)

2021 Pan-American Gastroenterological Association (OPGE) Recipient

Dr. Richard Kozarek, United States
Lecture: “Which is the best way to palliate malignant gastric outlet obstruction? Surgery, duodenal stent, or EUS-GJ?” at the XXXVII Pan-American Congress of Gastroenterology (virtual).

Sponsors and Partners

WGO is grateful to industry, foundations, and the individuals that supported our mission and therefore helping us to make a positive impact in the world in 2021. With the funds received we were able to assist Training Centers with their educational activities, support the attendance of trainees at the Training Centers, support the participation of key faculty for Train the Trainers and much more, furthering WGO’s mission and vision as the global representative for gastroenterology and related fields.