

NOVEMBER 2025

President's Message

DR CHOON-JIN OOI



The Asian Pacific Digestive Week (APDW) will be held in Singapore from 18 to 22 November 2025. I look forward to welcoming many of you to our beautiful city-state and hope you will enjoy the breadth of educational events that the Singapore APDW Local Organising Committee has worked hard to curate.

This APDW is especially meaningful to APAGE. With the wholehearted endorsement of the APAGE Executive Committee and Council, we will confer the inaugural Master, APAGE Award to a select group of ten individuals who have distinguished themselves through long service to APAGE and sustained contributions to the field of gastroenterology.

Over the past year, we have welcomed new member societies to our community. In addition to the Emirates Gastroenterology and Hepatology Society and the Lao GastroenteroHepatology Association joining us in the past year, I am delighted to announce our newest member, the Cambodia Association of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. With this addition, our APAGE family now comprises twenty-five member-societies.

Our Task Forces and Committees have been actively engaged in educational initiatives. The IBD Committee successfully organised PENANG 2025 in May 2025, in collaboration with the Malaysian Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, under the leadership of its President, Dr Raman Muthukaruppan. At the same venue, we partnered with the Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology Foundation (JGHF) to conduct the second APAGE-JGHF Young Clinicians' Programme, equipping young doctors with practical research skills. Thank you to Drs Peter Gibson (Melbourne), Ida Hilmi, (Kuala Lumpur), and Khoon-Lin Ling, (Singapore), and the hardworking committee for executing this important endeavour. In the same setting, a consensus on p19 anti-IL-23 inhibitors and small molecules in inflammatory bowel disease was concluded.

On guidelines and consensus, the Task Force on Pre-neoplastic Lesions, led by Dr Wai-Keung Leung (Hong Kong), achieved a notable milestone with its work accepted by GUT. The task force on Green and Sustainability in GI, headed by Dr Tiing Leong Ang (Singapore), besides having the group's positional statements accepted for publication in the Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology in January 2025, recently organised a well-received educational Zoom webinar on 16 September

2025. We look forward to many in-person sessions from these and other groups, including the Task Force on Women and Leadership in GI, led by Dr Nonthalee Pausawasdi (Bangkok), and the Emerging Leadership Committee (ELC), headed by Drs Rashid Lui (Hong Kong) and Raja Affendi (Kuala Lumpur), at APDW in Singapore. We thank Drs Lui and Affendi for their pivotal work in developing clinical leaders within our community. A leadership renewal and new appointments within the ELC will take place alongside the incoming Executive Committee and Council this November. APAGE has set up a Task Force on Pancreas Disease and the chair and co-chair have been appointed.

The 14th Asian Pacific Topic Conference (APTC) APST on colorectal cancer was held in September 2025, in conjunction with the Taiwan Digestive Disease Week. We extend our sincere thanks to the Gastroenterological Society of Taiwan for spearheading this effort.

Finally, the revamped APAGE website now offers a more user-friendly platform with updated information and activities. Please explore the site and share your suggestions for further improvements.

Until we meet in Singapore, I wish everyone continued good health and success.

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USEFUL LINKS

FACEBOOK	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560107501172
WEBSITE	www.apage.org
LINKEDIN APDW	https://www.linkedin.com/events/7358763503194705922/
WEBSITE APDW2025	https://apdw2025singapore.com/





Editor-in-Chief Note

DR VIET-HANG DAO

In this dynamic era of technological transformation, driven by innovations such as artificial intelligence, digital health platforms, and precision medicine – the field of gastroenterology stands at the threshold of unprecedented progress. These advancements not only reshape clinical practice and research methodologies but also strengthen the bonds among gastroenterology societies and task forces worldwide. Through collaboration, we amplify our collective expertise, accelerate discovery, and deliver greater impact for patients and healthcare systems alike.

Over the past years, joint initiatives within the APAGE community – such as Task Forces on Green Endoscopy and Sustainability, Women and Leadership in GI, and Surveillance of Gastric Preneoplastic Lesions – have demonstrated how shared vision and teamwork can drive meaningful change. Notably, the publications of statements and consensus documents from these task forces have helped optimise management approaches tailored to local contexts. These significant outcomes will be presented and further disseminated across the region, extending their educational and clinical influence.

As we look forward to Asian Pacific Digestive Week (APDW) 2025 in Singapore, we celebrate the enduring spirit of cooperation that defines our field. This gathering will serve as a powerful platform for exchanging ideas, embracing cutting-edge technologies, and shaping the next chapter of gastroenterology in the digital age.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the APAGE President, Professor Dr Choon-Jin Ooi, the APAGE Council, and the local organising committee in Singapore for their leadership and dedication. We also extend our gratitude to Ms Molly Kong, Executive Director of APAGE, and her team for their tireless work in coordinating activities and bringing this issue of APDNews to fruition.

Let us continue to collaborate, innovate, and inspire together, shaping a brighter, smarter, and more connected future for gastroenterology across the Asia Pacific region.





Asian Pacific Association of Gastroenterology

COUNCIL 2023-2025

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APAGE/JGHF CLINICIAN-SCIENTIST TRAINING FELLOWSHIP AWARD	DR VAROCHA MAHACHAI (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Bangkok</i>)
APDNews	DR VIET-HANG DAO (<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>) (<i>Hanoi</i>)
RESEARCH PROGRAMME AWARD	DR WAI-KEUNG LEUNG (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Hong Kong</i>)
INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE	DR CHOON-JIN OOI (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Singapore</i>)
CELIAC DISEASE	DR GOVIND MAKHARIA (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>New Delhi</i>)
EMERGING LEADERS (Y-APAGE)	DR RAJA AFFENDI RAJA ALI (<i>Co-Chair</i>) (<i>Kuala Lumpur</i>)
	DR RASHID LUI (<i>Co-Chair</i>) (<i>Hong Kong</i>)

TASK FORCES

GREEN AND SUSTAINABILITY IN GASTROENTEROLOGY	DR TIING-LEONG ANG (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Singapore</i>)
WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN GI	DR NONTHALEE PAUSAWASDI (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Bangkok</i>)
PRE-NEOPLASTIC GI LESIONS	DR WAI-KEUNG LEUNG (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Hong Kong</i>)
AI IN GI	DR KAI-CHUN WU (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>Xi'an</i>)
PANCREATIC DISEASES	DR PRAMOD GARG (<i>Chair</i>) (<i>New Delhi</i>)
	DR BENEDICT DEVEREAUX (<i>Co-Chair</i>) (<i>Brisbane</i>)
	DR HIROYUKI ISAYAMA (<i>Co-Chair</i>) (<i>Tokyo</i>)



THE HONG KONG SOCIETY OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

To promote the advancement of gastroenterology, The Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology continues to organise academic activities.

On 13 March 2025, the Annual General Meeting cum Scientific Meeting was held and Honorary Fellowship was bestowed upon Professor Min-hu Chen, Professor and Chief, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China, and Professor Shu-Chen Wei, Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, National Taiwan University Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan. The evening was highlighted by the captivating state-of-the-art lectures “Diet and Microbiota in CD Pathogenesis” delivered by Professor Chen and “21st Century IBD Landscape – Lessons Learnt” by Professor Wei.



The 27th Joint Annual Scientific Meeting was held on 7 September 2025. The conference was jointly organised by six societies for gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary diseases in Hong Kong, namely the Hong Kong Society of Gastroenterology, the Hong Kong Society of Digestive Endoscopy, the Hong Kong Society for Coloproctology, the Hong Kong Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, the Hong Kong Society of Gastrointestinal Motility and



the Hong Kong IBD Society. Nine lectures covering hot topics in gastroenterology, hepatology, endoscopy and surgery, were delivered by international renowned speakers, including Professor John Plevris from the UK, Dr Walter Chan and Professor David Rubin from the USA and local speakers Dr Jimmy Lai, Dr Vienna Ng, Professor Anthony Teoh and Dr Louis Lau. The programme was stimulating; interesting topics included the efficacy and safety of intravenous iron therapy, eosinophilic esophagitis/reflux disease, the role of gut microbiome in IBD, management of portal hypertension, endoscopic treatment of T1 colorectal cancer, management of gastric outlet obstruction and artificial intelligence in endoscopy.

Both scientific meetings continued to provide a valuable platform for local and overseas gastrointestinal professionals and experts to exchange knowledge and share experience in different perspectives of GI diseases. They are proven to be an enjoyable and rewarding event.



8th Biennial Congress of the Asian Neurogastroenterology & Motility Association (ANMA) in conjunction with the Indonesian Digestive Disease Week (IDDW) 2025

By Professor Ari Fahrial Syam

This year marks a historic milestone as Indonesia, through the Indonesian Society of Gastroenterology (ISG), proudly hosted the 8th Biennial Congress of the Asian Neurogastroenterology & Motility Association (ANMA) in conjunction with the Indonesian Digestive Disease Week (IDDW) 2025. The congress took place at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Mega Kuningan, Jakarta, Indonesia, on 4 – 6 September 2025.



Originally planned as a fully onsite meeting, the congress adopted a hybrid format due to certain circumstances in Jakarta during the event period. Despite the unexpected adjustment, enthusiasm from participants both onsite and online remained high.



The event opened with a landmark achievement Indonesia's first Esophageal Motility Workshop, attended by 30 participants from across the nation. World-renowned faculty including Dr Tanisa Patcharatrakul (Thailand), Professor Yeong-Yeh Lee (Malaysia), Dr Reuben Kong-Min Wong (Singapore), and Professor Justin Che-Yuen Wu (Hong Kong) guided live demonstration sessions on high-resolution manometry and impedance-pH monitoring. For many attendees, this was their first direct training in motility diagnostics.

The following two days featured the scientific symposium, welcoming more than 400 delegates

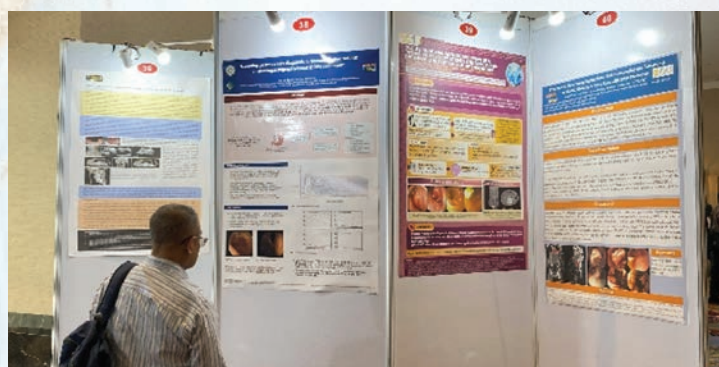
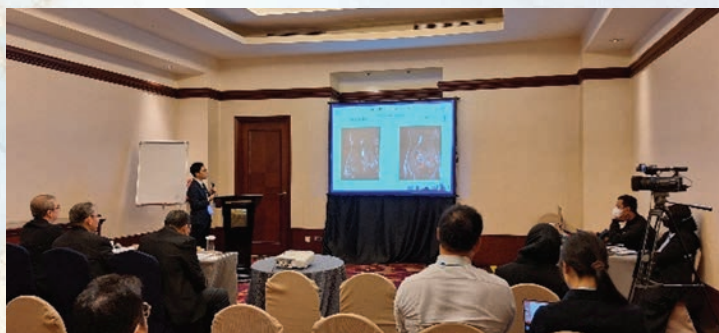
from Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Portugal, Myanmar, Thailand, Korea, Japan, and other Asian countries. The Opening Ceremony began with a vibrant Nusantara dance performed by internal medicine residents of Universitas Indonesia, followed by the ceremonial gong striking by Professor Ari Fahrial Syam (Chairman ANMA & IDDW 2025 / President of Indonesian Society of Gastroenterology (ISG)), accompanied by Professor Justin Che-Yuen Wu (ANMA Committee Member), Dr Amanda Pitarini Utari (Secretary General of ANMA & IDDW 2025) & Dr Hasan Maulahela (Secretary General of Indonesian Society of Gastroenterology (ISG)).

In his remarks, Professor Ari Fahrial Syam emphasised that hosting ANMA in Indonesia is both an honour and a responsibility reflecting Indonesia's commitment to advancing gastroenterology and motility expertise regionally and globally.



The scientific programme was rich and diverse, featuring 2 plenary lectures, 18 symposia, and 4 special sessions, covering the latest updates in neurogastroenterology, motility, functional GI disorders, digestive endoscopy, and nutrition. A highlight was the Asian Consensus update on gastrointestinal. All sessions were delivered by distinguished international and Indonesian experts.

The congress also provided a platform for young doctors and researchers to present through poster and oral presentation sessions, featuring 49 posters (18 research studies and 31 case reports) and 12 oral presentations. Additionally, the ANMA Committee Meeting was successfully conducted in a hybrid format.



The faculty dinners, held at Lobo Restaurant, Ritz-Carlton Mega Kuningan, and Antarasa, One Satrio, served not only as opportunities to enjoy traditional performances and authentic Indonesian cuisine, but also as a warm gathering for ANMA faculty members from across Asia. These occasions became a valuable moment of reunion, strengthening friendships and fostering camaraderie.

Despite challenges, the congress concluded on a high note. The organising committee extended deep appreciation to Professor Xiaohua Hou, President of ANMA, and the entire ANMA Committee for their invaluable support and guidance. Sincere apologies

were also expressed to participants and speakers affected by the hybrid transition, while gratitude was conveyed for their flexibility and dedication. Special thanks were also given to the sponsors and the organising team, whose support and dedication ensured the success of ANMA & IDDW 2025.

The 8th Biennial Congress of the ANMA, in conjunction with IDDW 2025, will be remembered not only as a historic milestone for Indonesia, but also as a testament to the resilience and solidarity of the Asian motility community. As the congress closed, one message resonated strongly: *the future of motility in Indonesia is bright, and together with ANMA, we remain committed to advancing digestive health for the benefit of patients in Asia and beyond.*

Looking ahead, the Indonesian Society of Gastroenterology will once again host the "Indonesian Digestive Disease Week (IDDW) 2026" on 30 September – 4 October 2026, featuring another exciting programme. The committee looks forward to welcoming participants from across Asia Pacific and around the world to another successful meeting.



THE KOREAN SOCIETY OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

By Professor Joo-Sung Kim

SIDDS 2025 Wrap-Up: Global GI Community Convenes in Seoul

Seoul, 19 – 20 April 2025 – Swiss Grand Hotel. The Seoul International Digestive Disease Symposium (SIDDS 2025) concluded successfully under the theme “Frontiers in Digestive Research and Practice”. The programme, over two days, featured 18 symposia, 2 plenary sessions, 2 multidisciplinary therapy sessions, 6 postgraduate courses, 9 satellite symposia, 1 KMA mandatory session, 4 abdominal ultrasound training sessions, 2 educational sessions, the KSG-JSGE Joint Symposium, and a Presidential Lecture.

A highlight was the State-of-the-Art Lecture by Professor Alessandro Armuzzi (Humanitas University, Italy). In total, 975 participants from 22 countries took part, including 73 session chairs and 123 speakers. 138 abstracts were presented (24 oral, 114 poster). Awards included Best Oral Presentation, Young Investigator Award, Excellent Poster Award, and the Contribution Award. The exhibition hall hosted 42 sponsor booths, reflecting strong industry engagement. Strengthening international partnerships, SIDDS hosts biennial joint sessions with regional partners – JSGE (Japan) and GEST (Taiwan) – on an alternating basis.

By the numbers (SIDDS 2025): 975 attendees • 22 countries • 73 chairs • 123 speakers • 138 abstracts (24 oral / 114 poster) • 42 exhibitors.



The 33rd Seoul International Digestive Disease Symposium (SIDDS 2025)



Looking ahead. SIDDS 2026

SIDDS 2026 will take place on 18 – 19 April 2026 at Grand Walkerhill Seoul. A historic highlight will be the first-ever UEG Educational Symposium in Asia, co-organised by the Korean Society of Gastroenterology (KSG) and United European Gastroenterology (UEG).

Themed “*Practical Approaches to the Treatment of IBD*”, this 100-minute session will deliver cutting-edge insights directly applicable to clinical practice. The programme will cover:

- Future directions in IBD
- Advanced therapies: understanding the toolkit
- Personalised medicine in IBD
- Tips to optimise conventional therapy
- Anti-TNF failure: strategies for UC and Crohn’s disease
- Interactive panel discussion

Moderated by Professor Byong Duk Ye (Korea) and Dr Ignacio Catalan-Serra (UEG), the symposium will bring together leading experts from Europe and Korea, further strengthening international collaboration and positioning SIDDS as a truly global platform for education and innovation in digestive medicine.



AGA–KSG Joint Symposium at DDW 2025 Draws Strong Interest

At Digestive Disease Week (DDW) 2025, the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) and The Korean Society of Gastroenterology (KSG) hosted their second joint symposium following last year's successful programme at KDDW. Building on the KSG–AGA Memorandum of Understanding signed in June 2024, the 90-minute session drew about 100 attendees and featured sustained Q&A and lively floor discussion—clear evidence of growing engagement between the two societies.

The programme underscored converging priorities for AGA and KSG: earlier detection, microbiome-driven insights, and efficient translation of cutting-edge science into clinical practice. Audience questions centered on risk stratification frameworks that integrate molecular markers and imaging, real-world adoption of precision strategies across diverse practice settings, and pathways for embedding microbiome findings into trial design and clinical decision-making.

The session affirmed the AGA–KSG partnership as a practical conduit for knowledge exchange between the U S and Korea. Both societies signaled plans to:

- continue joint activities at future DDW and KDDW meetings;
- expand opportunities for early-career investigators through dedicated sessions and mentorship;
- catalyse collaborative research in biomarkers, AI-assisted diagnostics, and microbiome-based interventions.

By the numbers

- ~100 attendees • 4 expert lectures • 1 dynamic panel/Q&A
- 2 societies, one shared mission



KDDW 2025

“New Wave in Digestive Medicine” returns to Seoul with global faculty and multi-society collaboration.

SEOUL, Republic of Korea – 13 – 15 November 2025. The 9th Korea Digestive Disease Week (KDDW 2025) will take place at Grand Walkerhill Seoul under the theme “New Wave in Digestive Medicine.” Organised by the Korean Society of Gastroenterology (KSG) with all major Korean academic societies in gastroenterology and hepatology, KDDW offers a comprehensive, English-language scientific programme spanning symposia, plenaries, postgraduate courses, free papers, and multidisciplinary sessions. (www.kddw.org)

KDDW 2025 runs on 13 (Thu) – 15 (Sat) November 2025 at Grand Walkerhill Seoul. Key dates include Abstract Submission Deadline: 12 September 2025; Notification of Acceptance: 26 September 2025; Pre-registration Deadline: 20 October 2025.

This year's scientific agenda brings cutting-edge content across GI & hepatology. Notably, on Friday, 14 November the KSG–UEG Joint Symposium (Combined Symposium 07), titled “Advancing therapeutic strategies and optimising managements in gastrointestinal diseases,” will be held 15:10–16:40, continuing the annual joint programming that has followed the KSG–UEG MOU.

Additional tracks explore AI in digestive disease management, microbiome and biomarker advances, precision diagnostics, and state-of-the-art endoscopic therapies.

KDDW is a collaborative congress of Korea's leading GI societies – with the Korean Society of Gastroenterology as organiser and partner societies including KSGE, KASL, KSNM, KPBA, KCHUGR, KASID, and KSGC, and KSPGHAN



as an associated society. The meeting underscores KDDW's evolution into a global platform for knowledge exchange and clinical innovation.

All participants register via the online system; pre-registration is advised by 20 October 2025. The official language is English. For programme details – including daily schedules and sessions – please refer to Programme at a Glance on the KDDW website.

KSG to Host First-Ever UEG Educational Symposium in Asia at SIDDS 2026

Seoul, Republic of Korea – The Korean Society of Gastroenterology (KSG) is proud to announce that the Seoul International Digestive Disease Symposium (SIDDS 2026) will feature the first-ever UEG Educational Symposium held in Asia, marking a significant milestone in global gastroenterology collaboration.

The symposium, co-organised by the United European Gastroenterology (UEG) and KSG, will take place on 18 – 19 April 2026 at Grand Walkerhill Seoul. Under the theme “Practical Approaches to the Treatment of IBD”, this educational session aims to deliver cutting-edge insights directly relevant to clinical practice.

KSG-UEG SYMPOSIUM 2026

Highlights of the programme include:

- IBD in 2026: Where are we and future directions – Overview of evolving treatment paradigms and upcoming innovations.
- The landscape of advanced therapies for IBD – Comprehensive update on the expanding therapeutic toolkit.
- Personalised medicine in IBD – Strategies for tailoring therapy to patient profiles.
- Optimising conventional therapy – Practical tips and tricks for maximising outcomes with established regimens.
- Managing anti-TNF failure – Stepwise approaches for both ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.
- Panel discussion – Interactive exchange among international experts, focusing on real-world clinical dilemmas.

Moderated by Professor Byong Duk Ye (Korea) and Dr Ignacio Catalan-Serra (UEG), the symposium will bring together leading experts from Europe and Korea to share perspectives, compare practices, and explore collaborative pathways for the future.

This landmark initiative not only underscores the strengthening partnership between UEG and KSG, but also represents a major step forward in making SIDDS a truly global platform for education and innovation in digestive medicine.



A YEAR OF MILESTONES FOR THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

By Dr Lau Su Yin (Honorary Secretary)

2025 has so far been truly a remarkable year for MSGH, marked by two major scientific gatherings that brought together experts, fellows and friends of the fraternity from across the region.

APAGE Clinical Forum on IBD – Penang, 16 & 17 May 2025

The year kicked off with the 6th APAGE Clinical Forum on IBD, held in the charming city of Penang. With the theme “*Back to the Beginning: Getting it Right from the Start*”, the programme organised by co-chairs Dr Choon-Jin Ooi and Dr Raman Muthukaruppan, and scientific-chair Dr Ida Hilmi, was designed to reinforce the fundamentals of IBD care.

The sessions went beyond theory. Through interactive, case-based discussions, the audience was able to walk through real-life scenarios – a format that was both practical and engaging. A key highlight was the KL Goh Memorial Lecture, delivered by Dr Jose Sollano (Philippines) on “*The Management of IBD: A Leap to the Future with Lessons from an Imperfect Past*”. With a stellar faculty invited from across Asia Pacific, the forum was both enriching and highly relevant – not just for IBD specialists but also for everyday gastroenterologists managing complex cases in clinical practice.

GUT 2025 – Kuala Lumpur, 8 to 10 August 2025

Our flagship annual scientific meeting – GUT 2025 – was held at the Shangri-La, Kuala Lumpur. This year’s meeting was extra special: for the first time ever, the Endoscopy Workshop was integrated into the GUT meeting, creating a unified event under the theme “*From Scope to Solution: Navigating the Future of GI Health*”. This combined event was met with an enthusiastic response, with a strong turnout of delegates not only from gastroenterology but from other disciplines.

The meeting opened with pre-congress workshops led by the endoscopy team in Universiti Malaya, covering EUS

and Basic Colonoscopy & Therapeutics. These sessions provided hands-on exposure to delegates. There were several stand-out lectures at GUT 2025 including the 3rd Goh Khean Lee Distinguished Lecture, delivered by Dr Thawee Ratanachu Ek (Thailand) on the “*Role of EUS for Pancreato-Biliary Diseases: Past, Present and Future*”; the 22nd Panir Chelvam Lecture, given by Dr Teerha Piratvisuth (Thailand), on “*Early Detection in HCC: Gaps, Innovations and the Road Ahead*” and honoring his many contributions both locally and internationally; the 25th MSGH Oration was presented by Dr Sanjiv Mahadeva (Malaysia), titled “*The Influence of Culture on Disorders of Gut-Brain Interaction in Asians*”. Other key highlights were Live Endoscopy sessions broadcasted from the endoscopy unit at Universiti Malaya and a dedicated GI Assistants’ track in collaboration with the Malaysian Society of Gastroenterology Nurses, Assistant Medical Officers & Associates (MSGNMA).

GUT also marked important milestones in collaboration. Two major MOUs were signed: a partnership between MSGH, National Cancer Society of Malaysia, and Malaysian Society of Colorectal Surgeons to boost colorectal cancer awareness, screening and prevention nationwide; the other was between MSGH and the Gastroenterological Association of Thailand (GAT), to strengthen our collaborative efforts on academia, education and research initiatives.

Looking ahead, the 9th EndoQE 2025 will be held at Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (known for its beautiful sunsets), from the 13 to 15 November 2025. We look forward to many more opportunities to shape the future of gastroenterology, hepatology and endoscopy.





APAGE/JGE Foundation Young Clinicians Course



Vocal performance by Dr Alex Leow at the Opening Ceremony



Participants of APAGE/JGE Foundation Young Clinicians Course



Dr Jose Sollano delivering the KL Goh Memorial Lecture



Group photo at the APAGE Clinical Forum on IBD





The Organising Committee for Gut 2025



Awarding Dr Thawee Ratanachu Ek the medal for presenting the 3rd Goh Khean Lee Distinguished Lecture



The 25th MSGH Oration Lecture delivered by Professor Dr Sanjiv Mahadeva



Endoscopy broadcast live from the Endoscopy Unit at Universiti Malaya Medical Centre



The 22nd Panir Chelvam Lecture delivered by Professor Dr Teerha Piratvisuth



Symposium on DGBI



MOU signing between Gastroenterological Association of Thailand and MSGH



PSG ROLLS OUT AN ALL-YEAR ROUND COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS PROGRAMME

By Dr Jun R Ruiz and Rommel P Romano

The Philippine Society of Gastroenterology (PSG), through its Council on Gastrointestinal Malignancies, conducted a community lay forum on colorectal cancer (CRC) and a workshop for *barangay health workers* on CRC screening last 19 August in Batangas City. This marks the first major campaign on colorectal cancer screening through community outreach in the Philippines outside of March, which is the official month of this cancer awareness.

The kickoff event was organised by the Council on GI Malignancies, led by its head, Dr Jun R Ruiz, in collaboration with the PSG Southern Luzon Chapter, headed by its President, Dr Donnazon Reyes-Macasaet. The speakers included Dr Ruiz, Dr Joseph Nino Espino, and Dr Inah Coronel. The first session was a lay lecture on colorectal cancer, its clinical presentations, diagnosis, treatment, and screening options. The speakers recommended a call to action to encourage timely screening, a healthy lifestyle, and early detection to prevent and effectively treat cancer.

Barangay Health Workers as Partners in Screening

The second session was a workshop for *barangay health workers* (BHWs), serving as partners to physicians in promoting CRC awareness and identifying eligible patients in their communities for screening, which would be linked to the proposed national CRC screening programme. Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) cards were distributed to the eligible patients among

the audience of 115 persons. Those who tested positive were subsequently scheduled for their screening colonoscopies during the Endoscopy Caravan, organised by the Philippine Society of Digestive Endoscopy, which was held two weeks later in the same locality.

This training for *barangay health workers* directly supports the *National Policy on Gastrointestinal Health for Filipinos (2025)*, which designates BHWs as key partners in community-based screening and early detection. By capacitating frontline workers in CRC awareness and FIT testing, this initiative operationalises the policy's call for integrating GI health into the Universal Health Care (UHC) framework and ensuring equitable access to preventive services, particularly in underserved communities.



Prevalence of Colorectal Cancer in the Philippines

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the Philippines. An estimated 20,736 patients were diagnosed with a new cancer in the colon or rectum in 2022, based on the data of the Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN). This cancer is the fourth most common cause of cancer mortality among Filipinos. The Philippine Society of Gastroenterology is the lead organisation in gastrointestinal health and endoscopy in the national and international health agenda in the country. PSG has been leading several physician organisations and societies in promoting colorectal cancer screening and early diagnosis in the Philippines.

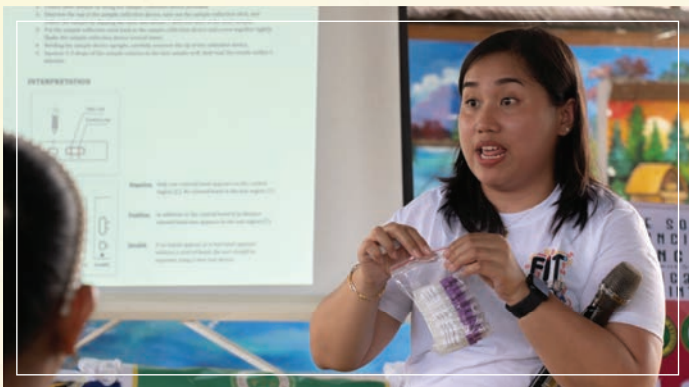




Colorectal Cancer Awareness Programme in the Philippines

March has been designated as “Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month” by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Starting this year, the PSG Council on GI Malignancies is promoting the expansion of this cancer awareness among Filipino patients from the traditional March celebration into a whole-year campaign. This strategy will strengthen and solidify this growing advocacy, which is not only advocated by gastroenterologists, but is now joined by colorectal surgeons and medical oncology groups.

This expansion will result in more time for health promotion for this deadly cancer, through community outreach and health education of the disease. Learning through face-to-face forums and social media campaigns will be the essential foundation for further spreading the advocacy nationwide. This is indeed a pioneering development in the efforts to increase public awareness of the CRC programme among organisations and agencies promoting this movement in the country.



This all-year campaign also reflects PSG's commitment to the Department of Health's *8-Point Action Agenda under the National GI Health Roadmap*, particularly in health promotion, early detection, and equitable access to GI services. It further aligns with the *PSG 2024–2028 Strategic Plan*, under the pillars of Health Equity, Policy and Advocacy, and Training, by embedding cancer prevention and education into continuous community-based engagement, rather than limiting it to a single awareness month.

This premier activity was held at the Kumintang Ibaba Barangay Hall in Batangas City on 17 August 2025. The strong support and presence of the gastroenterologist-members of the PSG Southern Luzon Chapter ignited the passion, community and *bayanihan spirit* for the advocacy, reflective of the ideals of our society. There were 115 attendees at the venue.

Dr Ruiz stressed that “colorectal cancer is a preventable disease” that can be achieved by removing polyps in the colon during a colonoscopy and reducing its risk by healthy lifestyle habits. Dr Espino discussed the basics of colon cancer information appropriate for lay people. Dr Coronel gave the first-ever lecture to *barangay health workers* on orienting them on how to recruit eligible patients for FIT screening, including how to collect specimens. In addition to the activity proper of the lay forum, there were a lot of enticements for the audience, like free food and fun exercises.





Bridging Communities to the National Screening Programme

A *barangay health worker (BHW)* is a community-based volunteer trained to provide primary healthcare services. They are the first point of contact for the persons in their respective communities, and bridge the gap between the locality and the formal health system.

The *Barangay Health Worker's Manual on Colorectal Cancer Screening and Diagnosis* is a priority project of the PSG President Rommel P Romano and the PSG Board. This was tested during this activity and will continue to be a work in progress throughout the year until it is finalised for presentation to the Department of Health next year.

This initiative aligns with the National Policy's directive to institutionalise evidence-based training and standardised screening pathways. It contributes to

the policy's goal of establishing a nationwide colorectal cancer screening programme, anchored on early detection, appropriate referral, and the empowerment of community health frontliners.

It also demonstrates PSG's continuing mission, stated in its Constitution, to assist the government in formulating and implementing digestive health programmes, and in advancing the goals of the *GI ng Bayan* initiative toward accessible, high-quality gastrointestinal care for all Filipinos.



GESS – The Gastroenterological Society of Singapore

The Gastroenterological Society of Singapore was formed in mid 1980s and officially registered with the Singapore Registry of Societies in 1991.

Milestones

In the last three decades, GESS has hosted Scientific Meetings (GIHep), Endoscopy Workshops and Postgraduate Courses for doctors and nurses annually. In 1995, GESS collaborated with American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) to hold its first Asian AGA meeting in Singapore. Since then, GESS has continued to host other successful regional meetings in Gastroenterology and Hepatology, such as the Asian Pacific Digestive Week (APDW) in 2003 and 2011, and the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL) Liver Week in 2013.

Objectives of the society

- To advance the knowledge and practices of gastroenterology in Singapore;
- To promote research in gastroenterology in Singapore hospitals;
- To promote regional and international cooperation in gastroenterology; and
- To organise meetings, seminars, conventions and publish materials to educate doctors, nurses and the public in the field of gastroenterology.

Membership Growth

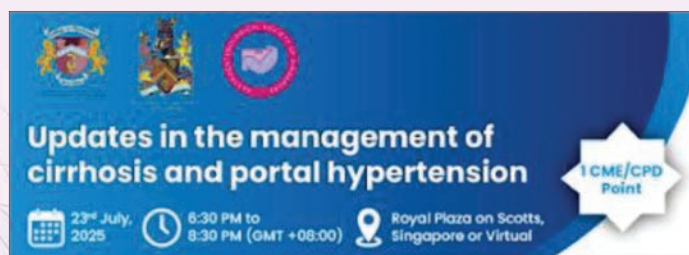
The Gastroenterological Society of Singapore (GESS) continues to expand its membership base, reaching a significant milestone of 160 ordinary members. This growth reflects the increasing interest and engagement in the field of gastroenterology within Singapore.

Successful Events in 2025:



Post Graduate Course 2025

This specialised course provided advanced training and education to gastroenterology trainees and fellows, contributing to their professional development.



Updates in the management of Cirrhosis and Portal Hypertension

This hybrid dinner symposium provided valuable updates for 104 gastroenterology trainee and specialists from Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, on the management of cirrhosis and portal hypertension. The symposium covered topics on hepatorenal syndrome, acute variceal bleeding and recompensation in cirrhosis.





Elevating Therapeutic Endoscopy: ERCP & EUS 2025

The course offered valuable educational opportunities for healthcare professionals and contributed to the continuous development and improvement of gastroenterology and hepatology practices in Singapore.



Upcoming Events in 2025 – Asian Pacific Digestive Week (APDW) 2025

Organised by Asian Pacific Digestive Week Federation and hosted by GESS, Asian Pacific Digestive Week (APDW) 2025, will be held in Singapore from 18 to 22 November 2025.

APDW 2025 will be a major gathering for the Asia-Pacific gastroenterology community — bringing together clinicians, researchers, and industry to share advances in digestive health, foster regional collaboration, and showcase innovations in the field.

Industry Collaborations

GESS fostered strong collaborations with industry partners to enhance the Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes. These events offer healthcare professionals the opportunity to stay abreast of the advancements in gastroenterology, enhancing clinical skills and improvement in patient care.

Overseas Conference Support

GESS has actively supported its members in participating in international conferences, such as The Asia-Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL) 2025 and APAGE Clinical Forum on Inflammatory Bowel Disease 2025. This enables GESS members to stay updated in global trends and best practices in gastroenterology.



THE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY (VNAGE)

1. MILESTONES:

The Vietnam Association of Gastroenterology (VNAGE) was formed in the mild-1995. In the last three decades, VNAGE has hosted Annual Scientific Meeting of Gastroenterology (ASME), Endoscopy Workshops and Postgraduate Courses for Doctors and Nurses annually.

2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SOCIETY ARE:

- ❖ To advance the knowledge and practices of Gastroenterology, Endoscopy and Hepatology in Vietnam.
- ❖ To promote regional and international cooperation in Gastroenterology, Endoscopy and Hepatology.
- ❖ To organise meeting, seminars, conventions and publish materials to educate doctors, nurses and the public in the field of GI, Endoscopy and Hepatology.

3. VNAGE'S SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES IN 2025

3.1. Expand and establish new branches

VNAGE includes the following associations:

Hanoi Society of Gastroenterology

Association of Gastroenterology of Ho Chi Minh City

Association of Gastroenterology of Thua Thien Hue

Vietnam Federation for Digestive Endoscopy (VFDE)

Expand and establish new branches

This year, due to the increase in the number of members in the Mekong Delta, we have established a new Association: Federation for Gastroenterology and Hepatology in Mekong Delta (FGHM). The conference had 530 delegates and 18 scientific reports on digestion and gastrointestinal endoscopy.

3.2. The 9th Vietnamese Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Congress (VGEC 2025)

VGEC 2025 is the annual conference of the Vietnam Federation for Digestive Endoscopy (VFDE) on gastrointestinal endoscopy. The conference was held on 17 – 18 April 2025, in Can Tho City, Can Tho Province, Vietnam. The conference attracted 1321 delegates (1018 doctors and 303 nurses).

The conference included postgraduate training (CME), plenary sessions, research reports, endoscopic demonstrations with the participation of domestic and international experts (nice foreign professors). The conference was really useful, because it updated new information in endoscopic diagnosis and treatment.



The 9th Vietnamese Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Congress (VGEC 2025)
(Can Tho City, 18 April 2025)





*The 9th Vietnamese Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Congress (VGEC 2025)
(Can Tho City, 18 April 2025)*

3.3. Other Workshop on Endoscopy

In recent years, EUS technique has been applied in Vietnam and is very necessary for clinical, diagnosis and treatment. However, the number of doctors practising this technique is not many and basic training is needed. Therefore, the Vietnam Federation for Digestive Endoscopy (VFDE) has cooperated with APSDE and AEG to organise many seminars on EUS in diagnosis and treatment. Photos below, illustrates the EUS practical course at 108 General Hospital (8 – 9 August 2025), under the guidance of Professor Mitsuhiro Kida (Japan) and colleagues from Japan. The course had 50 participants and was a great success.

By September 2025, VFDE also coordinated to organise a Workshop on ERCP and EUS at Cho Ray Hospital, with the participation of Professor Seigo Kitano (President of APSDE), Professor Tajiri Hisao (Vice President) and two experts from Thailand. This is an advanced course on ERCP and EUS techniques. The course had 60 attendees and was a great success.



*AEGVFDE EUS Forum:
Sharing expertise
and experience
(108 Hospital,
8 – 9 August 2025)*



3.4. Other Conference on Gastroenterology

3.4.1. Conference on IBD

From 23 March 2024, VNAGE in partnership with Johnson & Johnson Vietnam, organised the scientific event on the topic of IBD. The event attracted nearly 170 healthcare professionals, who were actively engaged throughout. Numerous clinical questions regarding IBD treatment in practice were raised and addressed by experts from various specialties involved in IBD management.



*14th A-PSDE Local Training Workshop in Vietnam: Advanced ERCP and basic EUS
(Cho Ray Hospital, 19 – 20 September 2025)*

3.4.2. Conference on Gastroenterology

On June to August, VNAGE with Opela and Ferring, organised two insightful events with Topic “Probiotic in Clinical Practice” and “IBD Talk” in Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Noi City. These events brought together 100 leading gastrointestinal experts to share their knowledge and expertise.

The conference provided information on the role of Probiotics in clinical applications. The IBD Conference in Vietnam, informed about the epidemiology, diagnosis and treatment of IBD in the world.





Updates in the management of Crohn's Disease (Ha Noi City, 23 March 2025)

4. ATTEND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Many experts and young doctors actively attended the International Conference, including:

- ❖ VNAGE members attending JGES 109-JGES
- ❖ VNAGE members attending IBD Forum at Penang 2025
- ❖ VNAGE members attending IDEN 2025
- ❖ VNAGE members attending IDDF 2025 (Hong Kong, 5 – 6 July 2025)
- ❖ VNAGE members attending 1st JGES
- ❖ VNAGE members attending HSI 2025
- ❖ VNAGE members attending Green Endoscopy 2025



Conference on Ulcerative Colitis (IBD Talk)
(Hanoi, 15 July 2025)



VNAGE members attending JGES 109 –
Japan Gastroenterological Endoscopy Society
(Sapporo, 9 – 11 May 2025)



Workshop: The role of Probiotic in Clinical Practice
(Ho Chi Minh City, 15 June 2025)



VNAGE members attending IBD Forum
at Penang 2025
(Malaysia, 16 – 17 May 2025)



VNAGE members attending IDEN 2025
(Korea, 12 – 14 June 2025)



MEKONG DELTA DIGESTIVE & HEPATOBIILIARY ASSOCIATION



Establishing the Mekong Delta Digestive and Hepatobiliary Association
(Can Tho City, 16 March 2025)



Digestive & Hepatobiliary Symposium (Can Tho City, 16 March 2025)



VNAGE members attending IDEN 2025
(Korea, 12 – 14 June 2025)



VNAGE members attending IDDF 2025
(Hong Kong, 5 – 6 July 2025)



VNAGE members attending 1st JGES International 2025
(Tokyo, 5 – 6 September 2025)

HSI HEALTHY STOMACH INITIATIVE

Please join our upcoming webinar

HSI Asia

September 9th 2025
3:00PM
(GMT+7, Indochina Time)

Please register:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98123456789>

Challenges in Gastric Cancer Management

Antibiotic resistance of H. pylori and eradication strategies in Asia
Prof. Dr. Rattana Korn Viachon
Thammasat University, Thailand

Endoscopic stratification for risk of gastric cancer
Prof. Dr. Duc T. Quach
University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

MODERATION & Current & Future situations of gastric cancer in Asia

VNAGE members attending HSI 2025
(9 September 2025 – Online)

Faculty

VNAGE members attending Green Endoscopy 2025
(9 September 2025 – Online)

CONTACT: VIETNAM ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY (VNAGE)

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President: Professor Mai Hong Bang Tel: 84-4988.628.788 Email: vnage2009@gmail.com



14TH ASIAN PACIFIC TOPIC CONFERENCE (APTC 2025) TAIPEI, TAIWAN

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING TOGETHER

The 14th Asian Pacific Topic Conference (APTC 2025) took place on 27 September 2025, at the Taipei International Convention Center, Taiwan, attracting 96 participants from across the Asia Pacific region. Organised by the Gastroenterological Society of Taiwan (GEST) under the leadership of Professor Han-Mo Chiu, this year's APTC carried the theme of *"Advancing Population-Based Colorectal Cancer Screening Across Asia"*. The one-day meeting was filled with energy, inspiration, and collaboration, reflecting the region's growing commitment to preventive gastroenterology and early cancer detection.

The conference opened with two thought-provoking keynote lectures that set the tone for the day. Professor Linda Rabeneck (Canada), the former global chair of World Endoscopy Organization Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Screening Committee, shared her experience in launching and strengthening national screening programmes, emphasising the essential components of planning, quality monitoring, and sustainability. Professor Han-Mo Chiu (Taiwan), who is also the convenor of APTC 2025, followed with an insightful overview of how Asian countries are shaping their own CRC screening pathways, moving beyond Western paradigms and tailoring strategies to local realities and health systems.

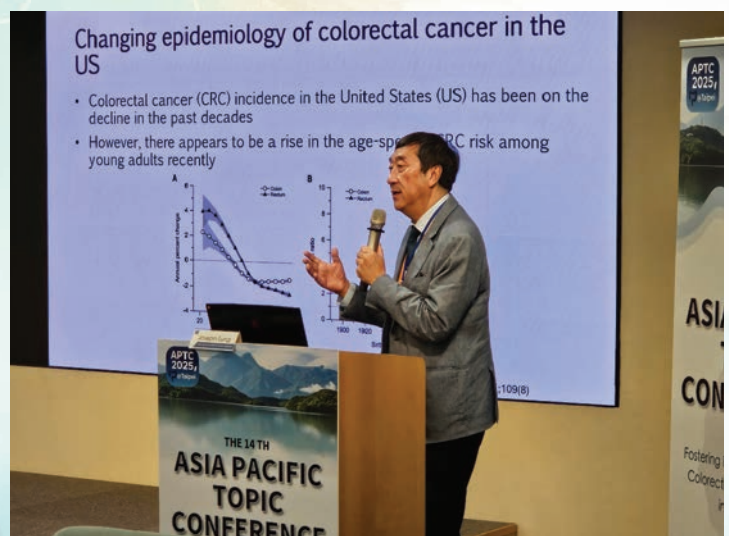
Throughout the sessions, speakers from Singapore, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, shed light on current challenges and emerging opportunities. Professor Joseph Sung (Singapore) discussed the rising burden of young-onset colorectal cancer; Professor Hyun-Soo Kim (Korea), explored the complementary roles of FIT and colonoscopy in organised screening; Dr Wen-Feng Hsu (Taiwan), highlighted public participation and awareness; and Professor Masau Sekiguchi (Japan), stressed the importance of quality assurance in national programmes. Each presentation sparked lively discussion among participants, illustrating the collective momentum toward improving CRC screening across Asia.

One of the most engaging moments came during the afternoon roundtable discussion on *"Implementing Population-Based CRC Screening Programmes"*. Moderated by Professor Linda Rabeneck, Professor Tony Hsiu-Hsi Chen (Taiwan), and Dr Patricia Anne Prodigalidad (Philippines), this session brought together representatives from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippines, and Vietnam. Each country shared its current progress and unique challenges, from policy and logistics to workforce training and resource allocation. Notably, Dr Le Dinh Quang joined remotely from Vietnam via Zoom, symbolising the conference's inclusive and forward-thinking spirit. The conversation highlighted both shared ambitions and the diversity of national contexts, underscoring the importance of continued regional cooperation.

The meeting concluded with the session *"CRC Screening 2.0"* which offered a glimpse into the future of precision prevention. Innovative presentations covered fecal hemoglobin concentration (F-HbC) as a risk-stratification tool, AI-driven predictive models, novel non-invasive diagnostics, and the expanding role of smart technology in screening and surveillance. These talks pointed toward a more data-driven and personalised approach to population health in the coming decade. In his closing remarks, Professor Han-Mo Chiu expressed heartfelt appreciation to all speakers, moderators, and attendees for their contributions. He emphasised that collaboration is key to achieving equitable and high-quality colorectal cancer screening throughout the region.

The success of APTC 2025 not only demonstrated the strength of Asia's academic community but also reaffirmed a shared vision—to prevent colorectal cancer through innovation, evidence, and partnership. The 14th APTC concluded with optimism and camaraderie, leaving participants inspired to continue building stronger screening programmes and deeper international collaboration. The conversations in Taipei will no doubt continue to shape the region's efforts toward saving lives through early detection.







BANGKOK 2026
7th APAGE
CLINICAL FORUM
on IBD

16-17 JULY 2026
THE ATHENEE HOTEL
BANGKOK, THAILAND

