

Essential reading from the editor's desk

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We would like to start this editorial by sharing sad news that has deeply affected the entire Belgian gastroenterology community. Professor René Fiasse, from the gastro-enterology department at Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc, passed away on February 26, 2024, at the age of 87. Every member of the gastroenterology community had the privilege of knowing him and experiencing his passion for science, his dedication to research, and his commitment to patients (he led the French-speaking patients' association for many years). In this issue of *Gastroenterologica Belgica*, Professor Yvan Borbath pays a heartfelt tribute to this extraordinary scientist and remarkable individual.

In this issue, several important papers deserve to be highlighted.

As summer 2024 approaches and the challenges posed by SARS-CoV-2 have been progressively diminishing for several months, with fewer deaths and less burden on the healthcare system, vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 remains crucial, especially for vulnerable patients. In the context of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), the use of immunomodulators, including biological therapies and small molecules, can potentially impair the efficacy of vaccinations (1). Hoyois *et al.* from the team at Erasme conducted a single-center prospective study involving 504 IBD patients and demonstrated that more than 90% of the patients were immunized after the two-dose vaccine series, and immunosuppressive treatments did not impact the antibody response. This study highlights the effectiveness of the vaccine in this population and supports its continued use in the future.

Functional disorders are a common aspect of daily practice in gastroenterology, often accompanied by unsatisfactory data regarding management options. This journal aims to regularly publish original articles, expert consensus, and reviews on this broad topic. In our healthcare system, the prescription of unnecessary diagnostic tests and medications significantly impacts healthcare costs, including pump proton inhibitors (PPI) (2). An Israeli study demonstrated that, despite negative pH studies, a substantial number of patients with isolated extra-esophageal GERD symptoms continued taking PPI medications, contrary to the recommendations of the scientific community. This article should raise

awareness among healthcare professionals about the economic implications of unnecessary prescriptions. Another important question in the field of functional pathology is the management of irritable bowel syndrome with predominant diarrhea (IBS-D) in clinical practice. Casteels P. *et al.* conducted a survey among gastroenterologists and general practitioners to explore the diagnostic and therapeutic approaches for patients suffering from IBS-D in both primary and secondary care.

This journal aims to provide high-level reviews addressing practical questions, written by Belgian experts. More than just a review, this issue presents the Belgian Consensus Guideline on the Management of Anal Fissures, addressing a common clinical question in gastroenterology practice (3). Nineteen statements are proposed to enhance both the diagnosis and management of this specific clinical condition.

This journal also aims to present interesting clinical cases, usually addressed by young colleagues, to assist in solving rare and specific situations and to promote the scientific involvement of trainees. In this issue, several cases are highlighted, including an acute ileocolitis of unexpected origin, a rare case of respiratory failure associated with tofacitinib, and an unexpected presentation of post-colonoscopy appendicitis.

The entire editorial board wishes you an enjoyable reading experience with these highlighted and many other interesting and thought-provoking articles!

References

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