

Essential reading from the editor's desk

T. Vanuytsel^{1,2}, C. Reenaers³

(1) Gastroenterology and Hepatology, University Hospitals Leuven, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium; (2) Translational Research in Gastrointestinal Diseases (TARGID), KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium; (3) Gastroenterology, University Hospital Liège, Liège, Belgium.

Keywords: COVID-19, FOBT, venous thromboembolism, endoscopic mucosal resection, viral hepatitis.

Last year, the first digital version of the Belgian Week of Gastroenterology was organized as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this year's conference was planned as a live event, unfortunately, the fifth COVID wave decided otherwise and forced the Belgian Week to go digital for the second time in 2022 (1, 2). Nevertheless, the organizing committee, coordinated by Prof. Sven Francque and Prof. Isabelle Colle, have put together a top-notch program with state-of-the-art lectures by nationally and internationally renowned speakers and more than 150 abstracts selected for presentation, all of which are published in this issue of the *Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica*. Of course, the Belgian Week is also one of the few occasions where the entire Belgian GI community can meet, interact and celebrate our field. It is evident that the social aspect will be lost to a large extent in the digital format, but let's not lose our community spirit and look forward to 2023 when we hope to meet again live!

Traditionally, in the first edition of the year, we also present the award for the best Belgian original manuscript and review, published in 2021. Dr. Lucas Wauters was awarded the prize for the best original manuscript on the impact of antithrombotic therapy on the fecal immunochemical test results (3). Together with the gastroenterology team from OLV Aalst, he found that the false positivity rate was not higher in patients treated with antiplatelet agents or anticoagulants. Dr. Laura Coremans received the award for the best review in 2021 with her comprehensive and very practical review on venous thromboembolism in patients with inflammatory bowel disease (4). We hope that these two annual rewards form an additional stimulus to keep sending your best work to the *Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica* in the coming years.

In this first issue of 2022, several important papers should be highlighted. Chaoui and colleagues from Leuven have analyzed the outcome of endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR) for 165 polyps in 142 patients and report a very high technical success rate of 95.2% with low recurrence rates (5). However, they also highlight the importance of close follow-up in patients with large (>4cm) polyps or presence of high-grade dysplasia, which were both

risk factors for early recurrence after resection. Frossard et al. report the outcome of percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tubes in Geneva University Hospital and found a high 1-year mortality of 32%, especially in patients with neuromuscular or malignant dysphagia as the indication for the enteral feeding (6). A validation of the neuromuscular disease swallowing status scale (NdSSS) for dysphagia in patients with neuromuscular disorders is also presented in this edition (7).

In the hepatology section of the journal, the focus is on viral hepatitis and its complications with a long-term Belgian follow-up study in patients with chronic hepatitis B with normal aminotransferase levels but high viremia (8). Even if the risk was low, high viremia was confirmed as an independent risk factor for liver-related adverse events. Liver fibrosis or cirrhosis is one of the long-term complications of viral hepatitis, but the invasive nature of a liver biopsy, the gold standard, stimulates the continued search for non-invasive diagnostic markers. Of nine such markers, Gamma-glutamyl transpeptidase to Platelet Ratio (GPR), King's score and S Index were shown to be superior in predicting liver fibrosis in chronic hepatitis B (9). Serotonin, on the other hand, is suggested as a promising marker of portal hypertensive gastropathy in hepatitis C related cirrhosis, although its value in daily clinical practice remains to be demonstrated (10). Finally, we highly recommend two clinical reviews on rare conditions of the gastrointestinal tract: gastrointestinal amyloidosis (11) and chronic intestinal pseudo-obstruction (CIPO) (12).

The quality of *Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica* continues to be more and more recognized internationally, demonstrated by the doubling of our impact factor to 1.3. The impact factor and the continuously growing number of submissions (533 in 2021!) allow us to select only the very best manuscripts for publication to provide the best quality to our readers. We also want to use this occasion to thank all our associate editors and Mrs. Mia Persoons from the editorial office for their valuable contributions to our journal.

Correspondence to: Tim Vanuytsel, MD, PhD, Herestraat 49, box 701, 3000 Leuven, Belgium. Phone: +32 16 34 19 73, Fax: +32 16 34 44 19. Email: tim.vanuytsel@uzleuven.be

Submission date: 25/01/2022

Acceptance date: 25/01/2022

The entire editorial board wishes you a pleasant reading with these highlighted and many other thought-provoking manuscripts.

References

1. EKMEKTZOGLU K., TZIATZIOS G., SIAU K., PAWLAK K. M., ROKKAS T., TRIANTAFYLLOU K., *et al.* Covid-19: exploring the “new normal” in gastroenterology training. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2021, **84**(4): 627-635.
2. SINONQUEL P., AERTS M., BADAOUI A., BISSCHOPS R., BLERO D., DEMEDTS I., *et al.* BSGIE survey on COVID-19 and gastrointestinal endoscopy in Belgium : results and recommendations. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2020, **83**(2): 344-354.
3. WAUTERS L., VAN DER VOORT V. R. H., DOBBELS P., HENDRICKX K., CASNEUF V., VANDERVOORT J. Impact of antithrombotics on the fecal immunochemical test for colorectal cancer screening : a multi-center Belgian experience. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2021, **84**(1) :19-24.
4. COREMANS L., STRUBBE B., PEETERS H. Venous thromboembolism in patients with inflammatory bowel disease: review of literature and practical algorithms. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2021, **84**(1): 79-85.
5. CHAOUI I., DEMEDTS I., ROELANDT P., WILLEKENS H., BISSCHOPS R. Endoscopic mucosal resection of colorectal polyps: results, adverse events and two-year outcome. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 47-55.
6. BOCHATAY L., BASTID C., ROBERT J., GIOSTRA E., SPAHR L., BICHARD P., *et al.* Underlying disease for percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy tube placement predicts short and long term mortality. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 29-33.
7. SAKIN Y. S., U MAY E., TANOGLY A., ERDAL H., KOC G., GUNDOGDU I. Validation and psychometric properties of the Turkish version of Neuromuscular disease swallowing status scale in patients with oro-pharyngo-esophageal dysphagia in neuromuscular disorders. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 21-27.
8. KOC O. M., VERBEEK J., KOEK G. H., BIELEN R., BUSSCHOTS D., GAMIL M., *et al.* A long-term study of liver-related events in Caucasian hepatitis B patients with normal ALT values and high viremia. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 56-61.
9. EKIN N., UCMAN F., EBIK B., TUGBA TUNCEL E., KACMAZ H., ARPA M., *et al.* GPR, King’s score and S-index are superior to other non-invasive fibrosis markers in predicting the liver fibrosis in chronic hepatitis B patients. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 62-68.
10. GAMALELDIN M. A., ELLAKANY W. I., SAAD M. A., ABOELWafa R. A. Serum serotonin as a non-invasive marker of portal hypertensive gastropathy in Egyptian patients with HCV-related liver cirrhosis. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 73-79.
11. SMEETS S., DEDEURWAERDERE F., THOMAERE E., HOUTHOOFD B., D’HULST L., WILMES P., *et al.* Isolated amyloidosis of the gastro-intestinal tract. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 80-84.
12. DE MEULDER S., VANUYTSEL T. Chronic intestinal pseudo-obstruction: a case-report with review of the literature and practical guidance for the clinician. *Acta Gastroenterol Belg*, 2022, **85**(1): 85-93.