

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.

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The March edition of the *Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica* is always a special occasion since this is the edition of the Belgian Week of Gastroenterology. This year will be extra special as it will be a live event in Antwerp again, after two years of digital meetings because of COVID-19 (1,2). Finally the Belgian gastroenterology community will be able to meet and interact again. The organizing committee, coordinated by Prof. Sven Francque and Prof. Isabelle Colle, have assembled a fantastic three day program for this 35th meeting with national and international speakers covering all aspects of gastroenterology and hepatology. All the 197 abstracts are published in this edition of our journal which will be available to all the attendees of the conference.

In the first edition of the year we also honor the tradition to present the award for the best Belgian original manuscript and review, published in the *Acta* in 2022. We congratulate Dr. Francesca Della Casa and the team from UCL led by Prof. Tom Moreels for the best Original Manuscript on the accuracy of self-reported adverse events by endoscopists (3). They compared this self-report to a retrospective review of the medical records and found that the total adverse events rate was 1.95% and only half of these events were self-reported by the endoscopist. This important study demonstrates that the currently used reporting systems are not sufficient and advocates for the use of an electronic ad-hoc registration system, integrated in the electronic patient records. Dr. Quentin Binet and the group led by Prof. Nicolas Lanthier at UCL was awarded the prize for the best Belgian Review paper in 2022. In their comprehensive review they describe the role and modalities of screening for metabolic syndrome associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD) and its treatment in patients with type 2 diabetes (4). The authors make a plea for non-invasive screening in these patients to achieve an earlier diagnosis thereby avoiding complications of MAFLD such as cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma. We sincerely congratulate both authors and their teams for their great work and thank them for their contribution to our journal.

Every two years the Georges Brohée prize is awarded to a Belgian investigator for their contribution to the field of gastroenterology and hepatology (5). This year I was honored to receive this award for the work of my

team in Leuven on functional dyspepsia. The traditional paradigm for this condition still puts a lot of emphasis on the role of gastric disturbances, including delayed gastric emptying. However, the correlation to symptoms is poor and treatments targeting these abnormalities lack efficacy. Therefore the focus of the research has shifted to the duodenum, the details of which are discussed in a narrative review on this topic (6).

In this first issue of 2023, several manuscripts should catch your attention. Kathleen Van Malderen and colleagues from the team led by Prof. De Schepper, investigated the characteristics of patients who visited a patient-centered information website on irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) (7). They found that, even if most of these patients had visited a health care provider, about 43% did not think their physician took them seriously and 59% thought that the physician lacked knowledge on IBS. Even if this is a selected patient population, the data demonstrate a continued need for education of physicians on functional gastrointestinal disorders, but even more so on communication skills. They also highlight a high incidence of psychological comorbidities including anxiety and depression. In many of these patients antidepressants, currently renamed as neuromodulators, are utilized not only to treat comorbid psychological conditions, but also to address abdominal symptoms. Bosman and colleagues from Leuven have performed a comprehensive review on the efficacy of neuromodulators in functional dyspepsia which is published in the current issue (8). Another comprehensive review was written by Hannes Ruymbeke and colleagues from multiple Belgian centers on secondary anal fissures, an important topic, that many physicians are less well-versed in (9).

Also in this issue, Maly and colleagues describe their experience with the 'balloon dilation pull' technique for the treatment of buried bumper syndrome in patients with a percutaneous endoscopy gastrostomy (PEG) (10). Technical success was achieved in 24 of 26 patients (92%) with a low incidence of adverse events (1 aspiration pneumonia and 1 patient with limited local bleeding).

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

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The manuscript also contains a useful link to a video for practical guidance in clinical practice (11). The majority of the procedures were performed under sedation. Lois et al. investigated the driving capabilities in a simulator of patients who met the discharge criteria after having undergone an endoscopic procedure under propofol sedation (12). They observed more mistakes in terms of crossing the midline of the road and speeding in the patients vs. their escorts, highlighting again that patients should not be allowed to drive home after endoscopy with sedation.

One of the goals of the *Acta Gastro-enterologica Belgica* is to provide guidelines on the management of various gastrointestinal disorders to our readers. In the past years we have published excellent practical Belgian guidelines on the management of gastro-pancreatic neuro-endocrine tumors (13), pathology of colorectal polyps (14), hemorrhoids (15) and IBS (16). In the current edition we are very happy to present the Belgian consensus for the management of *H. pylori* in 2023 by the Belgian Helicobacter pylori and Microbiota Study Group (BHMSG) (17).

This first editorial of 2023 also marks the end of my two-year period as editor-in-chief of the *Acta*. It has been an immense pleasure to collaborate with all the associate editors and the representatives of the different societies, with special thanks to our treasurer Dr. Maridi Aerts, the deputy editor Dr. Catherine Reenaers and above all Mrs. Mia Persoons from the editorial office. Moving forward, Dr. Catherine Reenaers will assume the position as editor-in-chief with Dr. Heiko De Schepper as the deputy editor.

The entire editorial board wishes you an excellent meeting at the Belgian Week of Gastroenterology and a pleasant reading with these highlighted and many other thought-provoking manuscripts.

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