

# DANANG 2024 – 5<sup>TH</sup> APAGE CLINICAL FORUM ON INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE INCORPORATING APAGE/JGH FOUNDATION YOUNG CLINICIANS COURSE: A PRIMER IN CLINICAL AND RESEARCH MEDICINE

**Ariyana Convention Centre, Da Nang City, Vietnam**



In April 2024, the highly anticipated Danang 2024 – 5<sup>th</sup> APAGE Clinical Forum on Inflammatory Bowel Disease unfolded with remarkable success, attracting over 200 attendees from the Asia-Pacific region. This two-day event from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024, served as a pivotal platform for advancing knowledge and collaboration in the field of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). Over the two days, 9 oral and 48 poster presentations showcased advancements in IBD research and treatment.

This year saw the organisation of the inaugural Young Clinicians Course for young researchers, held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024, one day before the Forum. Hosted by APAGE and JGHF, this full-day course, divided into four sessions, welcomed 20 bright minds from Vietnam itself and 15 candidates nominated by APAGE member-societies. The aim was to provide knowledge on research and leadership skills such as networking

and communications. Young doctors who participated in this course had an opportunity to learn on crafting research questions, analysing scientific papers, clinical research methods, and practical study design sessions. Through interactive discussions, they learned to make good research inquiries, grasp various research methodologies, and apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This rich experience equipped them with the skills and confidence needed to work on impactful research. One session focused on the importance of soft skills such as teamwork, patient communication skills, feedback and networking. The next session targeted specifically on fostering important aspects for a budding academician such as crafting abstracts, delivering powerful presentations, and securing publication in high-impact journals. At the end of the course, Dr Choon-Jin Ooi, Dr Vineet Ahuja, Dr Ida Hilmi and Dr Siew-Chien Ng offered insights into their journey rooted in real-life



experiences. Their stories serves as invaluable lessons to inspire young doctors on their career paths. As they embark on their respective journeys, the course also provided the young clinicians an opportunity to form a camaraderie amidst shared learning and growth. We are very grateful to the JGH Foundation for supporting this great initiative.

On the first day of the conference (5<sup>th</sup> April 2024), the starting event was the pre-conference workshop on two important topics – Endoscopic assessment of IBD and strategies for IBD associated dysplasia. The attendees were divided into three rooms to increase interaction. Each room had the same slide sets presented by different speakers. Pre and post-tests were conducted to evaluate the improvement and motivate the involvement of the doctors. Many basic and practical topics were summarised, such as the interval time for colorectal cancer screening in IBD patients and how to carry out endoscopic surveillance. The treatment targets, including clinical, endoscopic, and histologic criteria, were also presented in detail with evidence and recommendations from recent guidelines.

Following the workshop, the first session focused on the diagnosis and differential diagnosis of IBD. This was followed by case discussions on two common diagnostic conundrums in Asia – Tuberculosis vs Crohn’s Disease and Infection vs Ulcerative Colitis. This session emphasised the need for careful evaluation in the diagnosis of IBD. The next session was on Common Missteps in the Management of IBD, such as inappropriate use of medications, failure to monitor for complications, and inadequate patient education. The inaugural K L Goh Memorial Lecture to commemorate the late gastroenterology giant, Professor Emeritus Goh Khean Lee, was given by Dr Vineet Ahuja titled The onslaught of IBD in Asia –

Are we armed and ready? The other sessions of the day focused on optimising first line therapy in IBD. The second day covered topics such as management of extra-intestinal complications, the role of surgery, positioning of advanced therapy, as well as case discussions on complex situations such as acute severe ulcerative colitis and perianal fistulising Crohn’s disease. There were also oral presentations highlighting quality research conducted throughout Asia by young and upcoming academicians.

Throughout the event, attendees actively engaged in various activities to enhance their knowledge and skills in managing IBD. Dynamic presentations by leading experts gave attendees insights into the latest advancements in IBD research, innovative diagnostic techniques, and emerging treatment modalities. Panel discussions facilitated lively exchanges of ideas and perspectives, while interactive workshops offered hands-on experience with practical tools and strategies for optimising patient care. Networking opportunities allowed participants to forge valuable connections with peers, share best practices, and establish collaboration to improve outcomes for individuals living with IBD. The event’s inclusive atmosphere fostered a sense of community among attendees, fostering a supportive learning and professional growth environment.

Overall, the IBD-focused event in Danang City proved to be an invaluable platform for knowledge dissemination, professional development, and community engagement, reaffirming its significance in the ongoing efforts to combat and manage this complex gastrointestinal disorder.

