

## EDITORIAL

### 14th Biennial Conference of APASL: Facts and Prospects

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The trip to India to attend Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver (APASL) conference (11-15 December, 2004, New Delhi, India) was not just about listening to lectures, but rather some lessons which I would like to share with my fellow practitioners and authorities in charge of such events in Iran.

Nearly two thousand scientists, practitioners, and postgraduate students participated in the conference which was held in the capital city of India. The highlights of the congress include: a one day postgraduate on "Clinico-patho-radiological Decision Making in Hepatology" which was managed by local scientists. The next part was a three day core-meeting with emphasis on molecular, genetic and immunological basis of liver diseases including novel approaches to therapy; the last but not the least was a joint workshop with the American Association for the Study of the Liver Diseases (AASLD) on "Epidemiology of liver diseases in Asia" and a workshop on "Endoscopic and Radiological procedures in Liver Diseases".

A major step for Iran in this event was that besides Dr Mirmomen's article, which was orally presented, there were 25 other articles from Iran, presented as posters. The point to attend is we should have a clear policy to approach different aspects of viral hepatitis disease consisting of: prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment in our country.

One of the conspicuous lecturers in this conference was Prof. Anna Lock, whose major talk was about management of chronic hepatitis B, responders and non-responders. As you know, she is the author of chronic hepatitis B guideline in AASLD 2004. Another key lecturer in this conference was Prof. Y-F Liaw, who talked about hepatocellular carcinoma, its relation with HBV and prevention by means of antiviral medications. Prof. Marceline, also, had a lecture about chronic hepatitis B and C.

Other topics presented in this conference include: management of complications of cirrhosis, pathogenesis and treatment of alcoholic hepatitis, molecular aspects of liver diseases, and new treatments for HCC.

A prominent feature in this conference was the AGA workshop on the last day, which involved epidemiologic aspects of research in liver diseases, especially in viral hepatitis. Moreover, Prof. Alter had a face-to-face discussion with the Iranian group about the methodology of studying risk factors prevalence, and other related issues with regard to problems of viral hepatitis in our society.

In my opinion, it is essential that we have research methodology workshops conducted by distinguished professors in our international GI and Liver disease conferences. This practice will guide and benefit our young researchers a lot. It is also recommended that there be a one-day training course on a subject so that all aspects are covered. It is proposed that a comprehensive conference booklet be published and given to all attendants so that they can participate in scientific discussions more effectively. Dear fellows, we, Iranian Gastroenterologists, have more potential to activate. Let's collaborate and have more active presence regarding research papers in next conferences. We can if we want.