Lead Story

Make Sure You Are Counted As a Supporter of GI Research!

At DDW® 2010, Takeda will make a $25 charitable donation to the AGA Foundation for Digestive Health and Nutrition (FDHN) for every visitor scanned at booth 319. The AGA foundation supports many young researchers every year, so make sure to visit Takeda booth 319 and be counted.

Research

Combination Telaprevir Treatment Effective for Hep C Infection
Trunk Fat Associated with Increased Serum Levels of Alanine Aminotransferase
High-Definition Colonoscopy Detects Colorectal Polyps at High Rate
Doctors Study Genetic Risk Factors for Post-Infectious IBS

Lead Story, continued

The FDHN raises money and funds young investigators’ research on digestive diseases. If every DDW attendee gets scanned at booth 319, we could raise thousands for GI research.

The AGA foundation provides nearly $2 million annually in research grants and has funded more than 550 researchers, many of whom have made important contributions to the field of gastroenterology. Help extend our support to even more researchers by visiting booth 319 while you are at DDW.

Learn more about the FDHN.
Patients with genotype 1 hepatitis C virus who do not have a sustained response to therapy with peginterferon alfa and ribavirin have a low likelihood of success with retreatment. According to data published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in hepatitis C-infected patients in whom initial peginterferon alfa and ribavirin treatment failed, retreatment with telaprevir in combination with peginterferon alfa-2a and ribavirin was more effective than retreatment with peginterferon alfa-2a and ribavirin alone.


**Trunk Fat Associated with Increased Serum Levels of Alanine Aminotransferase**

Liver injury is associated with obesity and related measures, such as BMI and waist circumference. The relationship between liver injury and body composition has not been evaluated in a population-based study. Study results appearing in *Gastroenterology* indicate that trunk fat is a
major body composition determinant of increased alanine
aminotransferase, supporting the hypothesis that liver injury can be
induced by metabolically active intra-abdominal fat.

*Gastroenterology; 2010: 138(4): 1346-1356.e3*

**High-Definition Colonoscopy Detects Colorectal Polyps at High Rate**

Adenoma detection rates might be improved through use of
high-definition colonoscopy, which can detect subtle mucosal changes.
According to a study in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*,
doctors found that in a general clinical practice setting, high-definition
white-light colonoscopy resulted in a higher adenoma detection rate
compared with standard-definition white-light (SDWL) colonoscopy.
The use of SDWL colonoscopy could reduce the number of missed
adenomas and the subsequent risk for colorectal cancer.

*Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology; 2010: 8(4): 364-370*

**AGA Spring Postgraduate Course**

Learn what’s on the horizon for colorectal cancer screening by
attending the AGA Spring Postgraduate Course, May 1 & 2 in New
Orleans, LA.

[View program and register online.]

**Doctors Study Genetic Risk Factors for Post-Infectious IBS**

Acute gastroenteritis is the strongest risk factor for IBS. In May 2000,
more than 2,300 residents of Walkerton, Ontario developed
gastroenteritis from microbial contamination of the municipal water
supply; a longitudinal study found that greater than 36.2 percent of
these developed IBS. In a study published in *Gastroenterology*, doctors
used this cohort to study genetic susceptibility to post-infectious
(PI)-IBS. This is the first descriptive study to assess potential genetic
determinants of PI-IBS. Genes that encode proteins involved in
epithelial cell barrier function and the innate immune response to
enteric bacteria are associated with development of IBS following acute
gastroenteritis.

*Gastroenterology; 2010: 138(4): 1502-1513*

**Student Research Fellowship Awards**

Ten awards of $2,500 each are available for high school students
interested in digestive disease or nutrition research. The deadline to
apply is **April 23**. If you know an eligible student, download the award
criteria and application.

**POLICY**

**Senate Moving Toward Extending Physician Payments through End of May**
This week, the Senate has been debating H.R. 4851, legislation that would extend a number of expiring programs such as unemployment insurance and COBRA health-care coverage, and would also provide a patch for physician payments under Medicare, thus preventing the 21.3 percent cut that was scheduled for Jan. 1 from going into effect. Senate Finance Chair Max Baucus, D-MT, offered an amendment that would extend these programs through the end of May. This amendment cleared a procedural hurdle in the Senate, which is hoping to finish final passage this week. However, the measure would then need to be approved by the House since the House approved an extension of payments through the end of April.

In the interim, CMS has been holding claims for 10 working days due to the Senate’s inability to pass this legislation prior to April 1 when the extension of payments expired. However, CMS can no longer hold claims, and carriers will begin processing claims reflecting the 21.3 percent cut. We fully expect that retroactive payment adjustments will be made for claims processed at the reduced rate. We will continue to monitor any announcements from CMS on this process.

The AGA is following this process very closely, but this reprieve is only a temporary solution. We continue to call on Congress to enact meaningful payment reform this year and fix the sustainable growth rate formula once and for all. The inability of Congress to even provide temporary relief underscores the need for a long-term fix. Let your voice be heard and call on Congress to stop playing politics and enact a permanent solution. If you haven’t already, call the Alliance of Specialty Medicine’s toll free number, 866-899-4088, to connect with legislators; when prompted press 4242 for AGA or bypass the introduction by pressing 1, then 4242.

Please look for more updates on the AGA Washington Insider.

AGA to Hold Trainee/Young GI Public Policy Roundtable at DDW®

AGA members are invited to attend the second annual AGA Trainee/Young GI Public Policy Roundtable Briefing during DDW® in New Orleans, LA. The event will be held on Tuesday, May 4 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. CT in the Ile de France I room at the JW Marriott Hotel.

Hosted by Robert Burakoff, MD, MPH, AGAF, chair, AGA Public Affairs & Advocacy Committee, and Ronald P. Fogel, MD, AGAF, chair-elect, AGA PAC Board of Advisors, this event is an opportunity for members to share their views and concerns about key issues facing the field and learn how they can affect change through political and legislative efforts.

"Health-care reform will have a significant impact on the practice of medicine. It is essential that gastroenterologists — particularly trainees and young GIs — take an active role in shaping their future by participating in the legislative process," said Dr. Burakoff.

AGA has built itself into a leader of political and legislative advocacy on behalf of gastroenterologists and their patients. The organization is working to further enhance its reputation in these areas by developing a more extensive grassroots program to bring its message to policymakers in Congress.

Please RSVP to attend the event by Friday, April 23 by contacting Lauren DePutter at 240-482-3221 or ideputter@gastro2.org.
For more information about AGA's public policy activities, visit www.gastro.org/advocacy.

Hear Congress' First GI Discuss Health-Care Reform — AGA PAC Fundraising Event

Come hear what Rep. Bill Cassidy, MD, R-LA, has to say about the health-care reform debate and what it means for gastroenterology.

Monday, May 3, 2010 — Held during DDW®
12:15–1:45 p.m. CT
J.W. Marriott Hotel New Orleans, LA

Learn more.

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Learn about the AGA Registry at DDW® 2010

The AGA Institute is launching the AGA Digestive Health Outcomes Registry™, the first and only practice registry designed to help gastroenterologists measure and improve their clinical practice and patient outcomes. The registry will launch with quality and outcomes measures for colorectal cancer prevention and IBD treatment. Additional topics are in development.

DDW® attendees can learn about the registry, including its measures and data elements, by attending the Committee-Sponsored Symposium, "The Gastroenterology Clinical Data Registry: Where Are We, Where Are We Going?", on Wednesday, May 5, 8:30 to 10 a.m. CT in room 280-282 in the convention center.

Attendees can also visit the AGA booth (2434) or the AGA Resource Center (lobby H) to get information, view a live demonstration and enroll in the registry. The first 100 DDW attendees to enroll in the registry will receive a special gift.

Learn more about the AGA Registry.

CMS to Host Call on Permanent RAC Program

CMS will host a teleconference on the nationwide Medicare recovery audit contractor (RAC) program on April 28 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET. The call will provide an opportunity for health-care providers to ask questions about the permanent RAC program. Future calls are planned for home health and hospice providers, physicians and durable medical equipment providers. To participate, dial 877-251-0301.

Learn more.

GI SAM® — Convenient Self-Assessment Resource

AGA's online GI Self-Assessment Modules® (GI SAM) offer anytime,
anywhere learning. GI SAM is a convenient and easily accessible resource, and each module allows you to go at your own pace. Once you have started a module, you can easily stop and return to it at a later date, allowing GI SAM to fit into your busy schedule. Topics available now include "Disorders of the Pancreas and GI Motility" and "IBD and GI Bleeding."

Additional benefits of GI SAM include:

- Ten points towards ABIM maintenance of certification and up to 10 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.
- Twenty-five questions with instant feedback.
- Targeted references for further study.
- Detailed images and videos to further clarify important points.
- A detailed score report informing the user of areas that need further review.

The GI SAM Difference

Unlike many self-assessment programs, GI SAM's content and references are continually reviewed and updated for ongoing accuracy and updated treatment protocols.

GI SAM is an interactive, intuitive product, designed to assess and enhance your command of the treatment, diagnosis, symptoms and risk factors associated with GI- and hepatology-related topics. The complete series will include eight modules covering 16 topics, giving you access to a wide variety of GI and hepatology topics.

View a demo and order today.

IBD Self-Management: The AGA Guide to Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis

Excellent resource for your patients.

In "IBD Self-Management," your patients will learn how to cope with flares, get the nutrition they need, and understand their medications and surgical options.

Order your copy today.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

GRG Symposium Will Focus on Endoplasmic Reticulum Stress

The 2010 Gastroenterology Research Group (GRG) Spring Symposium at DDW® will spotlight endoplasmic reticulum (ER) stress in digestive diseases. The focus of this year's symposium is to bring new and emerging scientific concepts to the gastroenterology and hepatology investigative communities. Attendees will hear descriptions of how current research into the fundamental processes that regulate protein synthesis and folding within the ER should affect the understanding of digestive diseases resulting from pathologic perturbations of this key cellular process.
Randal J. Kaufman, PhD, professor of biological chemistry and the Warner-Lambert/Parke-Davis professor of medicine at the University of Michigan School of Medicine, Ann Arbor, will speak about what kind of processes lead to ER stress, the molecular therapies available and what the consequences may be.

Neil Kaplowitz, MD, professor of medicine and chief of the division of gastrointestinal and liver diseases at the University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine, Los Angeles, will talk about ER stress in liver disease, with a focus on alcohol-associated injury and on how alcohol predisposes the liver cells to an ER stress response.

The final speaker, Richard S. Blumberg, MD, professor of medicine at Harvard University Medical School and a researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, will present "ER Stress and Pathogenesis of IBD."

GRG founders, Basil I. Hirschowitz, MD, Joseph P. Kirsner, MD, PhD, and E. C. Texter, MD, will be honored. The 2010 GRG awards will be presented by Dr. Hirschowitz.

The GRG Spring Symposium will take place on Sunday, May 2, 2010, 1 to 3:45 p.m. CT at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, rooms 255-257.

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**Training Directors: Enroll in the GI Match**

The deadline is quickly approaching for fellowship programs to enroll in the GI Match for positions beginning July 1, 2011. AGA Institute, AASLD, ACG and ASGE would like to reiterate how important it is for programs to participate.

**May 19, 2010 is the final deadline for fellowship programs to enroll.**

The Match delivers a more streamlined and equitable mechanism for GI recruitment. All training programs, large or small, research or clinically focused, will benefit from participation. However, the Match’s success rests squarely on sustained enrollment by all GI training programs.

We strongly encourage training directors to assume direct responsibility for registering and entering all necessary data into the National Resident Match Program’s (NRMP) registration system. Since the Match agreement is legally binding, training directors ought to ensure the accuracy of the data entered, including the program’s information and the number of positions entered, per track.

The following documents will help guide your participation in the Match:

- Resolution regarding gastroenterology fellowship applicants, including all research and clinical fellowship applicants and positions.
- Guide for gastroenterology programs and applicants on the NRMP and the electronic residency application service.

Please e-mail any questions or comments to GIMatch@gastro.org.

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**Attention NPs & PAs: Update Your Knowledge, Enhance Your Clinical Skills**
Registration is now open for AGA Institute's 2010 course, *Principles of Gastroenterology for the Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant*. New and experienced providers are encouraged to attend this course for three days of intense instruction and networking opportunities. This is the only course that is specifically tailored to meet the needs of nurse practitioners and physician assistants in GI practice. This year's course will be held Aug. 2 to 4 in San Francisco, CA.

By attending, you will not only expand upon what you have learned on the job, but will become more knowledgeable about complex clinical issues you might not have been exposed to otherwise. This course will cover:

- New technologies in GI.
- Sessions on nutrition, women's health, pharmacology and pediatrics.
- Coding and billing updates for 2010.
- Four dedicated sessions covering IBD, motility disorders, colon cancer and GERD.

The course also provides a vehicle for you to network with more than 100 of your colleagues, providing an opportunity to expand your professional network and exchange ideas with colleagues who work in a variety of practice settings.

The pre-registration deadline is July 27. Online registration and program details are available now at www.gilearn.org/nppa.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**AGA Plans to Tweet at DDW®**

For the past several months, AGA has been leading the way in gastroenterology by using the popular social networking and microblogging site Twitter to keep members up to date on the latest news in the field, AGA public policy activities and the latest research from the AGA journals.

As we approach DDW®, the largest meeting in the field of gastroenterology, we are aware that attendees are sometimes unable to attend sessions or programs in which they are interested due to the breadth of cutting-edge data being presented. This year, AGA plans to help members stay abreast of the latest news in the field being discussed throughout the meeting. By following AGA's tweets, as well as those with the hashtag #AGA#DDW10, followers will be able to receive real-time updates from AGA and through their colleagues' observations from multiple sessions occurring throughout the meeting.

To help ensure we are updating followers on as many topics of interest as possible, AGA is identifying gastroenterologists who are interested in "tweeting" from the meeting to update their colleagues on interesting sessions and discussions.

If you are interested in working with us to tweet during DDW, please contact the AGA Communications Department at communications@gastro.org.

**What is Twitter?**

Twitter users communicate through tweets, which are short messages that are limited to 140 characters or less. When you join Twitter, you
can follow users, which causes their updates to appear on your home page. In turn, others can follow you. The short and succinct messages through Twitter are easy to view on your desktop or mobile device.

Get started by creating your free Twitter account by going to AGA's Twitter page and clicking "follow."

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### Apply for AGA Fellowship

**Application deadline: July 19, 2010.**

The AGA is now accepting applications for fellowship. Fellowship honors superior achievement in clinical private or academic practice and in basic or clinical research. AGA members must meet specific criteria in order to apply.

[View details and apply.](#)

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### Nobel Laureate to Expound on Global Health during DDW® Lecture

Former NIH Director and Nobel Laureate Harold E. Varmus, MD, will present the 2010 AGA Institute Morton I. Grossman Lecture, *New Opportunities in Global Health*. A co-recipient of the Nobel Prize for studies of the genetic basis of cancer, and the current president and CEO of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, Dr. Varmus will discuss the importance of recognizing global health concerns within the clinical practice of gastroenterology, the Obama administration's global health initiative, and the need for physicians to make greater efforts in controlling diarrheal diseases and other GI disorders in the developing world.

The Morton I. Grossman Lecture was established in 1989 by a group of UCLA Center for Ulcer Research and Education (CURE) Digestive Disease Research Center investigators and alumni wishing to commemorate the contributions of CURE's founder and first director. Morton I. Grossman, MD, is considered the father of modern gastrointestinal endocrine physiology. His most important contributions lay in defining the secretory mechanisms of the stomach and pancreas and the actions of regulatory gastrointestinal peptides.

The Morton I. Grossman Lecture has been held each year since 1999 at Digestive Disease Week®. In July 2002, the AGA assumed the management and administration of the Grossman lecture to ensure that it will be held in perpetuity. The Grossman lecture is a named fund within the AGA foundation's endowment. To make a designated contribution to the Grossman endowment, visit the [foundation's website.](#)

The Morton I. Grossman Lecture will take place on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, from 8:30 to 10 a.m. CT at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, rooms 295-296.

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### GI Career Search Launches Newly Redesigned Career Center

GI Career Search.com, AGA Institute's online job bank, has been redesigned through our partnership with the [HEALTHeCAREERS](#).
Network to provide job seekers with improved tools to search hundreds of health-care jobs.

The newly redesigned site offers an enhanced search feature that allows users to search for jobs in the online database by specialty, keyword, location or company name. In addition to the listings of open positions, users can sign up for job alerts and receive e-mail notifications when new opportunities are posted that match their qualifications and interests. This is a great option for those who may not be actively looking for a position, but are curious about new possibilities.

Users will also see a number of new career development resources designed to help job seekers connect to more jobs in less time. The user-friendly site provides easy tools to manage online resumes, jobs and application histories. Users can also sign up to receive free e-newsletters that offer career advice, employment best practices and job tips.

For employers, the newly redesigned career center is attracting more job seekers to more jobs, all with additional resources that make it easier to connect.


GICareerSearch is a member of the HEALTHeCAREERS Network of association career programs.

PUBLICATIONS

Gastro & CGH Video Abstracts of the Month

Watch Andri Rauch, MD, discuss his recently published Gastroenterology article, "Genetic Variation in IL28B Is Associated with Chronic Hepatitis C and Treatment Failure: A Genome-wide Association Study." Provide your thoughts and comments on this important study via the YouTube comments tool.
Watch Robert S. Sandler, MD, MPH, AGAF, discuss his recently published *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* article, "Dietary and Lifestyle Measures to Lower Colorectal Cancer Risk." Provide your thoughts and comments on this important study via the YouTube comments tool.

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**Hot off the Press**

Featured in this month's *GI & Hepatology News* is "Tailor CRC Screening Strategies, Panel Says." Read more.

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**Call for Papers on Clinical Trials: Gastroenterology**

*Gastroenterology* is committed to advancing clinical practice in the field of digestive disease. Recognizing that clinical trials generally have the greatest impact of all studies on clinical practice, Editor Anil K. Rustgi, MD, and his associate editors strongly encourage authors to submit their manuscripts on clinical trials (diagnostic validation, therapeutic efficacy) of drugs, biological materials and devices in digestive, liver and pancreatic diseases, including studies at phases I, II and especially III, to *Gastroenterology* for consideration. The journal is also interested in publishing trials in endoscopic and imaging modalities.

There are several important reasons to submit clinical trial research for publication in *Gastroenterology*:

With an impact factor of 12.6, *Gastroenterology* is the premier journal in the field.

*Gastroenterology* is the journal that will directly reach the largest portion of physicians who care for and make treatment decisions for patients with GI or liver disease.

Authors who submit their manuscripts to *Gastroenterology* typically will receive decisions within three weeks or fewer.

Accepted manuscripts will be published online and indexed on PubMed within 10 days of acceptance.

To submit your manuscript to *Gastroenterology*, go to www.editorialmanager.com/gastro. For important information on how to report clinical trials, go to www.gastrojournal.org/authorinfo. To review the current and past issues of the journal, go to www.gastrojournal.org.
Place GI position listings and activity announcements in AGA eDigest.

For only $82.50, you can place an ad of 100 words or less in two consecutive issues and for $165 in four consecutive issues. Ads can also be placed in AGA Perspectives, AGA's bi-monthly magazine. If you place ads in both AGA Perspectives and AGA eDigest, you will receive a 10 percent discount. For more information, contact Alissa Cruz at acruz@gastro.org or 301-272-1603.