

Editorial

Since its founding in 1967, the Slovenian Association of Gastroenterology and Hepatology (SAGH) has prioritized the education of its members—gastroenterologists, surgeons, and allied professionals—while establishing treatment standards for gastrointestinal diseases through evidence-based guidelines. Every four years, SAGH hosts an international congress, and we are proud to present the sixth edition in 2025. Time flies, and the pace of progress in our field is remarkable. This syllabus, featuring abstracts from lecturers and poster presentations, offers a comprehensive overview of the congress's scientific program.

The burden of digestive diseases is rising globally, driven by an aging population and modern lifestyles. These conditions, ranging from cancers to chronic disorders, represent a significant challenge to patients and healthcare systems. Gastrointestinal cancers, in particular, account for a substantial proportion of the over 20 million annual cancer cases worldwide. Slovenia's National Program for Early Detection and Prevention of Colorectal Cancer (SVIT) has set a global standard for screening, reducing incidence and improving survival rates. Building on this success, Slovenia is now implementing screening initiatives for gastric cancer, addressing its high incidence.

Significant advancements in chronic inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, have transformed treatment, diagnostics, and personalized care. Innovative therapies, such as TL1A pathway inhibitors, JAK inhibitors, and emerging oral treatments, are improving patient outcomes. In hepatology, breakthroughs in treating metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) with drugs like Resmetirom show promise in improving liver fibrosis and metabolic

health. Interventional radiology has revolutionized liver tumor management, offering minimally invasive options that enhance outcomes and reduce recovery times, while minimally invasive anatomical liver resections (MIALR) and laparoscopic techniques continue to evolve.

Endoscopy remains a cornerstone of gastroenterology, with approximately 40 million procedures performed annually in the Western world for screening, diagnostics, and treatment. These increasingly complex examinations account for over half of gastroenterologists' workloads. In pancreatic carcinoma—the gastrointestinal cancer with the fastest-growing incidence—new diagnostic blood tests, oncological drugs, and robotic-assisted surgeries, such as the Whipple procedure, are transforming care. Organ preservation, novel perfusion technologies, and microbiome-based therapies, including dietary interventions like the low-FODMAP diet, are further expanding treatment possibilities.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping gastroenterology and hepatology, from polyp detection and histopathology to imaging diagnostics, clinical decision support, risk stratification, and prognostics. These technologies are already integrated into daily practice and will be a key focus of this congress.

The field of gastroenterology is vast and rapidly evolving. This two-day congress offers a snapshot of the latest developments, fostering collaboration and inspiring future innovations. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants, contributors, and attendees for their dedication to advancing our field. May you find inspiration and knowledge to fuel your work.

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