

# Gut

*Journal of the British Society of Gastroenterology which  
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Therapeutic Strategies in Portal Hypertension. What was the first workshop and why a second?

The first workshop was held in Baveno in 1990 and was designed under the leadership of the admirable New Italian Endoscopic Club to reach consensus on the key issues of variceal bleeding and to produce guidelines for the future conduct of studies in this field. Baveno II workshop consisted of nine sessions and four lectures all published in this volume. In addition to the Italian contingent there were experts from 13 other countries. It summarised the problem areas from the first conference and discussed the progress.

Two main questions – Did the workshop achieve its objectives? Is the report of the proceedings useful for specialised hepatologists and general gastroenterologists with an interest in hepatology and having to treat oesophageal varices?

The answer to the first question must be 'yes' because most well designed single topic workshops are always more time worthy than the huge national or international conferences. I'm sure those who were lucky enough to be there would agree. Yet I have a concern about the general importance of specialised 'clubs' however worthy the cause and however illustrious the participants particularly if their ruminations are not disseminated. How can they become more inclusive? What will be the impact of their recommendations?

One suggestion would be a series of articles in top line journals following the example of the International Auto-Immune Hepatitis Group and others.

An important advance will be the contributions to the Cochrane Collection, a four year old international research organisation, named after the British epidemiologist Archie

Cochrane. The collection was set up to evaluate ongoing evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and already has a number of registered international clinical review groups.

Also of great interest was the analysis of the delay in incorporating irrefutable evidence from RCTs with or without meta-analysis into textbooks and on into recommendations for clinical practice and then into actual practice.

The results are that for years less than half of patients actually receive optional treatment even from experts. Another important issue was why do well designed RCTs disagree? The importance of statistical power so that all the hard work will achieve a valid statistical result is suitably emphasised. For example in portal hypertension 13 000 patients have been enrolled in published RCTs, an average of about 70 patients per trial! Clearly nearly 200 had less! However it does emphasise that in this area of clinical trials the investigators and patients are keen to contribute.

As far as the lectures are concerned I don't think they work because they are out of place in this book. They tend to be review articles and therefore historical in nature and more in keeping within a formal textbook. Especially as two were on the Surgery of Portal Hypertension, which is neither a 'hot' nor controversial issue. In contrast much less space was given to what in my view are 'hot' issues such as TIPS. I recommend this book for clinicians and investigators in this area.

However, regardless of this review I do not feel this extremely important book will be widely read as it has to compete with all manner of textbooks on the subject.

L M BLENDIS

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## NOTES

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### Gastroenterology

The 11th World Congresses of Gastroenterology will be held on 6–11 September 1998 in Vienna. Further information from OMGE Permanent Secretariat, Keizersgracht 782, 1017 EC Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Tel: 31 20 627 04 01; fax: 31 20 625 95 74.

### Sir Francis Avery Jones BSG Research Award 1997

Applications are invited by the Education Committee of the British Society of Gastroenterology who will recommend to Council the recipient of the 1997 Diamond Jubilee Award. Applications (**twenty copies**) should include:

- (1) A manuscript (2 A4 pages *only*) describing the work conducted.
- (2) A bibliography of relevant personal publications.
- (3) An outline of the proposed content of the lecture, including title.
- (4) A written statement confirming that all or a substantial part of the work has been personally conducted in the UK or Eire.

Entrants must be 40 years or less on 31 December 1997 but need not be a member of the BSG. The recipient will be required to deliver a 40 minute lecture at the Diamond Jubilee meeting of the Society in March 1997. Applications (**twenty copies**) should be made to the Honorary Secretary, BSG, 3 St Andrews Place, London NW1 4LB, by 1 December 1996.

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*Gut* publishes original papers, short rapid communications, leading articles, and reviews concerned with all aspects of the scientific basis of diseases of the alimentary tract, liver, and pancreas. Case reports will only be accepted if of exceptional merit. Letters related to articles published in *Gut* or with topics of general professional interest are welcomed. Authors should include the names and addresses of four experts whom the authors consider suitable to peer review their work.

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**ETHICS** Ethical aspects will be considered in the assessment of papers (see the Medical Research Council's publications on the ethics of human experimentation, and the World Medical Association's code of ethics, known as the Declaration of Helsinki (see *BMJ* 1964; ii: 177)).

**SI UNITS** All measurements except blood pressure are expressed in SI units. In tables and illustrations values are given in SI units. For general guidance on the International System of Units and some useful conversion factors, see *The SI for Health Professions* (WHO,

1977). NB: Such conversion is the responsibility of the author.

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