

PORTUGUESE SOCIETY OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS

The specialty of Gastroenterology started to differentiate itself in the 19th century, namely in Germany and Austria. In 1879, Ewald published the first treaty of Gastroenterology in Germany; and Boan founded the first journal of Gastroenterology (formerly the Archiv fur Verdauungs-Krankheiten, now the Digestion).

Such differentiation and evolution led physicians from the United States of America to work in Europe, namely in Germany. After they returned back to America, they founded the first society of Gastroenterology in the world, in 1897: The American Gastroenterological Association.

The British Society was found in 1910, and the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology in 1960.

Two characters decisively contributed to the foundation of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology. They addressed a letter to Professor Francisco Gentil, Director of the Instituto Português de Oncologia de Lisboa, [the Portuguese Institute of Oncology in Lisbon], encouraging him to create the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology: Professor Henry Bockus, President of the World Gastroenterology Organization, which was later built, and Professor Geraldo Siffert, Secretary-General of the WGO.

The Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology was officially inaugurated on 19 January 1960, when the General Assembly of the Sociedade de Ciências Médicas de Lisboa, [the Portuguese Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon], approved the proposal for its creation by unanimous decision.

The proposal for the creation of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology proceeded from a preparatory meeting that was held for that effect on 22 October 1959. This preparatory meeting took place at the Instituto Português de Oncologia de Francisco Gentil [the Portuguese Institute of Oncology] in Lisbon.

The following colleagues attended the preparatory meeting:

Professor Frederico Madeira, Dr. Evaristo Franco, Dr. Fernando Castro Amaro, Dr. Fernando Vasconcelos Dias, Dr. António Catita and Dr. J. Ferreira Malaquias (all from Lisbon);

Dr. Horácio Bernardes Pereira and Dr. Hernâni Vasconcelos (from Porto);

Dr. J. Ferreira Malaquias represented:

Professor Vaz Serra and Professor Bruno da Costa (from Coimbra); Dr. Egídio Santos, Dr. Castro Henriques, Dr. Eduardo Gama and Dr. Sena Lopes (from Porto).

Dr. Hernâni de Vasconcelos represented:

Dr. Manuel Silva Leal, Dr. Oliveira Dessa, Dr. José Maria Rodrigues de Carvalho, and Dr. Valdemar Pacheco (all from Porto).

Professor Gentil Martins was not present due to illness.

Dr. J. Ferreira Malaquias acted as the secretary of the meeting, and referred to the several prior attempts which failed to form the society, as well as to the letters by Professor Henry Bockus and Geraldo Siffert appealing to the formation of the Society.

In the preparatory meeting, disseminated among the 45 gastroenterologists practising in Portugal at that time, the following were approved by unanimous decision:

1. Proposal for the creation of the Portuguese Society of 1. Gastroenterology as a Division of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon;
2. Proposal for the nomination of Professor Cascão de 2. Anciães, as Chairman of the Society, and Dr. J. Ferreira Malaquias as the Secretary.

The proposal for the creation of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology as a Division of the Society was unanimously approved by the General Assembly of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon, held on 19 January 1960. The Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology was thus founded.

The 1st General Assembly of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology was held on 30 January 1960 within the scope of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon at the Portuguese Institute of Oncology in Lisbon. An internal Regulation, based on the other Divisions of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon, was also approved by unanimous decision.

According to the Regulation, the first Board of Directors of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology was composed of:

Chairman:
Prof. Cascão de Anciães (Lisbon)
Vice- Chairman:
Prof. Bruno da Costa (Coimbra)
1st Secretary:
Dr. J. Ferreira Malaquias (Lisbon)
2nd Secretary:
Dr. António Catita (Lisbon)
Members:
Dr. Hernâni Vasconcelos (Porto)
Dr. Fernando Vasconcelos Dias (Lisbon)

This list was thus composed of 4 elements from Lisbon, 1 from Porto and 1 from Coimbra.

The encouragement by Professor Bockus and Professor Siffert was also decisive for the growth of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology at international level. The Society joined the World Gastroenterology Organization, at the World Congress of Gastroenterology, which took place in Munich in May 1962.

Within this framework, the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology affiliated with the Organization Mondiale de Gastroenterologie and with the Association des Sociétés Nationales Européennes et Méditerranéennes de Gastroenterologie.

Upon its foundation, the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology initiated an intense activity, namely in organizing conferences lectured by internationally renowned gastroenterologists, including Henry Bockus, Geraldo Siffert, Caroli, Mogena, Hans Popper, Villardel, Avery Jones, among many others.

As multiple meetings were organized, support began to diminish; for that reason, a proposal to hold a National Meeting was put forth. The 1st National Meeting took place from 14 to 15 January 1966, at the Hospital de Santa Maria in Lisbon. A General Assembly was held during the event, having admitting as partners: Prof. Pinto Correia, Dr. Ortigão de Oliveira, Prof. Fausto Pontes, Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro, Dr. Cruz Pinho, Prof. Mário Quina, Prof. Carneiro de Moura, Prof. Daniel Serrão, among several surgeons.

At the General Assembly, Dr. Ribeiro do Rosário proposed that the chairmanship of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology rotate among all three centres: Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra.

In 1968, it was decided that the Society would have 3 regular meetings per year: March (Lisbon), June (Porto) and November (Coimbra).

On 27 May 1977, another National Meeting was held and from then on took place on an annual basis. In 1981, the name changed to National Congress of Gastroenterology.

At the General Assembly held on 28 May 1978, the Secretary-General, Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro, and 10 other members announced the proposal for the creation of a new Society, the Portuguese Society of Digestive Endoscopy, having been approved.

At the General Assembly of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology held in 1979, they announced the foundation of the Portuguese Society of Digestive Endoscopy, of which Dr. António Catita was the first Chairman of the Board of Directors.

At the General Assembly of 27 June 1980, Prof. Pinto Correia recalls that he had addressed a letter to the Board of the Society, signed by several members and requesting that a Hepatology Centre be created. The Board of the Society filed the request as they considered it extemporaneous.

In 1981, the annual meeting of the European Association for the Study of the Liver [EASL] was held in Lisbon. This meeting was promoted by Prof. Carneiro de Moura and was a remarkable success, thus projecting Prof. Carneiro de Moura into European Hepatology.

At the General Assembly of November 1982, they approved the creation of the Hepatology Centre and the corresponding statutes, by means of a proposal by a Committee chaired by Prof. Carneiro de Moura, and Dr. António Saragoça was its first Chairman.

In 1982, the 1st issue of the Portuguese Gastroenterology Journal was launched, and directed by Dr. António Saragoça.

In September 1984, the International Congress of the European and Mediterranean Gastroenterology Association took place in Lisbon. This congress was organized by a Committee chaired by Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro, with Dr. Cruz Pinho as Secretary. This congress was also a remarkable success.

At the General Assembly of 13 June 1985, following a proposal by the Board of Directors (the Chairman was Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro), they decided to acquire the Society's headquarters in a building that was still under construction on a street called Av. António José de Almeida.

Although the headquarters were inaugurated on 18 May 1985, the day Mrs. Maria José Ilharco started serving as the Secretary, it was only at the extraordinary General Assembly that was held on 13 August 1990 that the purchase of the headquarters was actually authorized. Representatives were appointed to sign the deed 6 years after the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology had owned the title of the property.

The Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology was no longer a Division of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon and became an independent Society with its own statutes (drawn up by Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro and Tomé Ribeiro), approved in the General Assembly of 13 June 1985.

The Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology incorporated on 21 August 1986 is a non-profit scientific association, following the line of the Division of the Society of Medical Sciences in Lisbon with the same denomination, founded in 1960.

At the General Assembly of 7 July 1989, the Clube Português do Pâncreas [the Portuguese Pancreas Club] joined the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology. Prof. Orlando Bordalo was its first Chairman.

In 1990, Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro disseminated a letter of intentions to form an Ultrasound Centre. This new division named the Grupo Português de Ultra-Sons [the Portuguese Ultrasound Group] and corresponding statutes were later approved at the extraordinary General Assembly held on 20 July 1991. Prof. Carrilho Ribeiro was its first Chairman.

In 1991, the first postgraduate course in Gastroenterology took place in Coimbra. Prof. Mário Quina was at the time the Chairman of the Society.

The General Assembly of 27 November 1992 originated the Centre of Digestive Motility and its Regulations, with Prof. Carneiro Chaves as its first Chairman.

In 1993, the Ethics Committee was created and Dr. Castel-Branco da Silveira was its first Chairman.

At the extraordinary General Assembly of 22 January 1994, the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology created an official body, GE-Revista Portuguesa de Gastrenterologia [the Portuguese Gastroenterology Journal]. The first issue of the journal was launched in June 1994, during the Congress in Porto. Prof. Fausto Pontes was its first Director.

At the general Assembly of this Congress, Prof. Carneiro Chaves was elected the Chairman of the Ethics Committee, and the Gastroenterological Library (in Portuguese: A Biblioteca Gastrenterológica) was created, which he also coordinated.

In 1994, the Hepatology Centre changed its name to Associação Portuguesa para o Estudo do Fígado (APEF) [the Portuguese Association for the Study of the Liver], as proposed by its Chairman, Dr. António Saragoça, and approved by the General Assembly.

In the 2005-2007 biennium, the Board of Directors of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology (Prof. Carlos Sofia as the Chairman) proposed and created a new structure, within the scope

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of the statutory assignments, under the name Centro Nacional de Registo de Dados em Gastrenterologia (CEREGA) [the National Centre for Data Recording on Gastroenterology].

This coordinating centre is an associated and subordinate structure of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology and was approved at a board meeting held on 18 March 2006.

Their main goal was to create and support the development of national collaborative studies on diseases of the digestive tract, liver, pancreas and bile duct. CEREGA is regulated by its own regulations.

At the General Assembly of June 2009 in Porto, following the public deed signed on 17 April 2009 in Coimbra, by which the APEF (Portuguese Association for the Study of the Liver) was founded, this new Society was approved, with its own statutes. Prof. Rui Marinho was the Chairman of APEF. The first elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the new APEF was Prof. Guilherme Macedo.

On 23 May 2009, a proposal for the creation of the Grupo de Estudos Português do Intestino Delgado (GEPID) [the Portuguese Group for the Study of the Small Intestine] was put forth. This Portuguese study group would be regulated by the statutes of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology, as well as by the specific regulations of the group as a specialized division. In 2010, an ad hoc committee was created and Prof. Pedro Figueiredo was the first Chairman.

These are just a few facts of a long and rich history of the 50 years of the Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology.

What about the future?

To answer this question, we can say that we are aiming for a cohesive society; promoting excellence in healthcare, education, science and research; we shall strive to guarantee high levels of clinical and organizational efficiency and to consolidate technical know-how and excellence in training and research. This vision is a collective duty that starts in the proud legacy of the past, continues in the present and is projected towards the future, using gastroenterologists' knowledge and ability to transform and innovate.

History is made of time, circumstances and Man. The time is now, circumstances are created. The most difficult but exciting task is up to us and that is to build a "new" Society and, therefore, to contribute to the History as well – because we want to improve our services, we understand the future challenges, and this would be the greatest tribute and respect one can pay to the legacy we inherited from outstanding figures in Portuguese Gastroenterology.

Jorge Areias
*Chairman of the Board of Directors of the
Portuguese Society of Gastroenterology
(2009-2011 biennium)*

Porto, April 2010