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Q1 Was there a particular person or event that encouraged you down your path towards specialising in gastroenterology, hepatology, and liver transplantation?

Regarding my decision to undertake my studies in the field of gastroenterology, a prominent role was certainly played by my mentor, Remo Naccarato, the father of gastroenterology in Padua, Italy. Subsequently, the choice to specialise in hepatology and liver transplantation happened when I moved to England, UK, for my PhD.

Q2 Drawing upon your leadership experience in several organisations, including the International Liver Transplant Society (ILTS), European Liver and Intestine Transplant Association (ELITA), and European Association for Study of the Liver (EASL), how important is the work United European Gastroenterology (UEG) is completing? Weighing up these groups, is there anything UEG does better, or could improve in its operations?

There is a huge difference between scientific societies that are specifically dedicated to liver transplantation and the UEG, in terms of fields of interest. Comparing the EASL and UEG, they are both extremely strong societies, and the experiences in both favour my knowledge, expertise, and personal relationships.

"This is not a scientific session, but a patient engagement event led by the UEG Public Affairs Group."

Q3 Having authored over 350 articles, including your latest article, 'Uniting to defeat steatotic liver disease: a global mission to promote healthy livers and healthy lives'. What was the key message in this paper, and where can we expect to see your education focus lie in the near future?

Today, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), previously referred to as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, has an enormous burden on individuals, families, communities, societies, and healthcare systems across the globe. Fortunately, MASLD is preventable and detectable, and its progressive forms and complications are increasingly manageable. We have a collective obligation to use this knowledge to deliver meaningful change, from early diagnosis to therapeutics and sound policy responses. We must leverage this unique window of opportunity to end MASLD as a global public health threat.

Q4 What are the highlights from the packed scientific programme at UEG Week 2023 for you?

For me, the highlights are 'Postgraduate Teaching: Fulminant hepatitis, liver failure and liver transplantation', 'Never waste a good disaster' (hepatobiliary and pancreas), and the 'Digestive Health Roundtable: Advancing Digestive Health: Collaborating for Better Outcomes'. This is not a scientific session, but a patient engagement event led by the UEG Public Affairs Group.

Q5 Could you talk a bit about the Public Affairs Group, which you chair within UEG, and the awareness for digestive health this group is raising?

The UEG Public Affairs Group raises awareness of digestive health among specialists and decision-makers at European Union (EU) level through policy papers, targeted campaigns, and meetings with stakeholders. We are in regular contact with Members of the European Parliament (MEP), especially through our MEP Digestive Health Group,¹ as well as other health stakeholders in Brussels, Belgium, to promote digestive health on the EU agenda. Ahead of the EU elections in 2024, we are currently in the process of developing a targeted campaign to ensure (digestive) health remains a political priority for the EU, and also to maintain the strong relationships we have built over the years, and establish new ones in the next parliamentary term.

Our multiple awareness-raising campaigns² throughout the year, the biggest one being Digestive Health Month each May, address the general public, policymakers, medical experts, and patients. To strengthen our advocacy work, we also build alliances and collaborate with European and national patient organisations, working towards positive change at policy level across Europe.

Q6 How much of an impact do you believe UEG has directly on gastroenterologists, but also indirectly on their patients?

Looking at UEG's broad offer in terms of world-class education, research support, fellowships, and grants, and not to mention the annual congress UEG Week, the direct impact on the career path of gastroenterologists and other digestive health experts is substantial. With the My Connect platform, UEG also offers a unique online space for digestive health experts from all

fields and career stages to connect, learn from, and work with each other.

This wide range on offer impacts and benefits the expertise of thousands of digestive health professionals, and, as a result, the quality of patient care.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, UEG and the Public Affairs Group in particular work closely with patient organisations to advocate for improved patient outcomes and quality of life.

Q7 What are the most significant changes you have observed in the speciality over the course of your career to date?

Over the years, I have observed a huge improvement in the technical facilities for the clinical management of patients, particularly in endoscopy and interventional radiology; the increase in knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of gastro- and liver diseases, and the incredible increase in structures linked to teaching, training, and communication.

Q8 Are there any particular innovations within liver transplantation, or in wider gastroenterology, that you are excited about seeing translated into practice soon?

Within liver transplantation, I am seeing important innovations in transplant oncology, machine perfusion, and patients and caregiver care. ●

References

1. United European Gastroenterology (UEG). MEP Digestive Health Group. Available at: <https://ueg.eu/public-affairs/mep-digestive-health-group>. Last accessed: 27 September 2023.
2. United European Gastroenterology (UEG). Stakeholder collaboration. Available at: <https://ueg.eu/public-affairs/advocacy/stakeholder-collaboration>. Last accessed: 27 September 2023.

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