

Editorial

GASTROENTEROLOGY IN IRAQ PAST , PRESENT , AND THE FUTURE

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It is with great pleasure to write this editorial addressing the first issue of the Iraqi Journal of Gastroenterology after a long wait and dreams.

Iraq, being the birthplace of old civilizations (Sumerian's, Babylonian's, Assyrian's, and Islamic) gave the world for more than 3000 years B.C. every thing in all aspects of knowledge.

In gastrointestinal and liver diseases Assyrian's have described in details the heartburn and they advocated the use of (Liquorice) for it's treatment. They also described local treatment for anorectal conditions, in addition to many prescriptions for a variety of abdominal complaints.

In Islamic civilization; suppositories made of honey and fat were advocated for local rectal use. Yogurt has been used to treat diarrhea, & honey has been used for a variety of abdominal complaints, like diarrhea and liver diseases. The first description of hematemesis secondary to vomiting was done by Islamic pioneers 1000 years ago, as Ibn-Sina has described this condition long before Mallory-wiess described early cases of upper GIT bleeding secondary to vomiting.

Recent practice of Gastroenterology and Hepatology in Iraq started in the sixties by the pioneers in the field. This has continued in the late seventies by the founders of the Iraqi society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, and continuous efforts that has started from 1979, ended in 1992 by the foundation of the Iraqi Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. Although we have lost some of the pillars like late Dr Raoof AL-Tae and Late prof. Zuhair Kasir, the society by the activity of their members has established in 1995 the center of Gastroenterology and Hepatology. One year later, in 1996 we were able to establish the academic study (Board certification in Gastroenterology and Hepatology) in Iraq.

These events were achieved in spite of the Siege imposed on Iraq, as Iraqi people has adapted themselves to siege conditions, and learned perfectly how to utilize their resources

For the welfare of their people. Society and center of GE went more steps further and organized three important conferences in attendance of all Iraqi gastroenterologists, and many members from the arab world.

Under construction now in Baghdad, new GIT and liver center, planned for 150 beds, in it our liver transplant program will be started hopefully.

Being the director general of GIT center, and the president of Iraqi Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, and the head of the liver section of the pan-Arab association of GE, I feel proud with the help of my colleagues and students, whom without their efforts we couldn't do these achievements.

Special tribute for my colleagues in the society and center, Arab, and foreign countries who worked within the editorial board of the Iraqi journal of GE, who's efforts has led to the publishing of this issue of the journal.

It is important to mention that our society and center has paved the way for the proper practice of GE and Hepatology in Iraq, and has put the focus on the important issues, made a plan of training, put guidelines for GE practice, and started research works in our important diseases. On achieving these goals our next plan is to start campaigns that will include: prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment of our common diseases (like inflammatory bowel disease, colonic and GI neoplasms which seems to be increasing to levels similar to those in the western countries).

At the end I welcome all contributions from colleagues in Iraq, Arab, and international world. Further more I hope our future practice will see more young Gastroenterologists practicing in this important field in order to improve the level of our medical knowledge for the benefit and welfare of our people.

Editor in chief