

# INTERNATIONAL

## ASGE Ambassador Program makes an impact

### Ambassadors visited Vietnam in November



In 2009, the ASGE introduced a new initiative called the Ambassador Program. This program was developed to export two of the society's greatest assets, basic and advanced endoscopic medical care and training expertise. Ready access to advanced GI care does not exist in many developing countries.

Likewise, the education and training of physicians in underserved countries provides a tremendous opportunity for ASGE to make a lasting impact in these areas. The ultimate goal of the program is to decrease illness and deaths in underserved populations from untreated digestive disorders.

#### Focused training in two Vietnam cities

ASGE launched its first Ambassador program in February 2010 in Cairo, Egypt, with great success. The second program was held in Vietnam in November. ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Hue City and Nha Trang to train physicians from north, central and south Vietnam at two separate conferences. Sessions consisted of didactic lectures and hands-on training.

Fifty physicians from throughout the country participated in the training. The programs focused on diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) for the treatment of bile duct stones and pancreatic cancer, both prevalent in Vietnam, and endoscopic ultrasonography (EUS) for the management of gastric and esophageal cancer, which are also common in the region.

In addition, the doctors were successfully trained in percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) placement to manage patients who are unable to eat due to head trauma, a common injury seen in Vietnam due to the widespread use of small motorbikes for transportation.

Overall, the Vietnamese physicians were extremely grateful to ASGE and learned a great deal. Approximately 25 patients were treated during the program.



Franklin Kasmin, MD, FASGE, best summed up the experience by saying, "I believe we have essentially taught the country how to do PEG placement, and those we have taught will teach others who could not attend."

A follow-up to the training program will be planned within the year to further educate and evaluate the progress of the newly trained physicians and to assess the impact of the program.

#### Funding critical

The ASGE Ambassador Program would not be possible without the grant funding and equipment provided by our industry partners: Pentax Medical Company, Olympus Corporation of the Americas and Cook Medical. Members are encouraged to [donate](#) to the program. Travel and accommodations are provided by ASGE.

#### ASGE Ambassadors to Vietnam

Andrew Q. Giap, MD  
Lakeview Medical Offices  
Anaheim, Calif.

Franklin E. Kasmin, MD, FASGE  
Albert Einstein Hospital  
New York City, N.Y.

Kai Matthes, MD, PhD  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center  
Berlin, Mass.

Raj J. Shah, MD  
University of Colorado Denver  
Aurora, Colo.

Jerome H. Siegel, MD, FASGE  
Beth Israel Medical Center  
New York City, N.Y.



*"I believe we have essentially taught the country how to do PEG placement, as those who have learned will teach the rest who could not attend."*

Dr. Franklin Kasmin

Click on [Ambassador](#) for more information or to contribute to future programs, or contact Holly Becker, manager of International Member Relations, via email at [hbecker@asge.org](mailto:hbecker@asge.org) or telephone at 630.570.5631.

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# Vietnam Ambassador perspective from a former refugee

Andrew Q. Giap, MD, FASGE, University of California, Irvine and Kaiser Permanente Orange County



Andrew Q. Giap,  
MD, FASGE

Gastroenterology, and especially advanced endoscopy, have always been my passion. Having left Vietnam at a young age as a refugee, for many years I have wanted to return to share my passion with Vietnamese gastroenterologists. Being an ASGE Ambassador gave me this opportunity.

## Direct, hands-on training

With a great team including Drs. Jerome Siegel, Raj Shah and Kai Matthes under the leadership of Dr. Franklin Kasmin, we traveled to central Vietnam and visited the Hue Central Hospital and the Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy in Hue City, as well as Khanh Hoa Hospital in Nha Trang.

In collaboration with Dr. Dung Ho from Choray Hospital of Ho Chi Minh City, we demonstrated and gave direct hands-on education in ERCP, EUS and PEG placement. At these hospitals, we also gave lectures pertaining to ERCP and EUS, along with other types of therapeutic endoscopy. We assisted and performed difficult ERCP and EUS cases from choledocholithiasis to pancreatic, biliary malignancies, ranging in number from 5 to 10 cases per day.

Lastly, using Dr. Matthes' pig stomach models, we taught PEG placements to the 50 physicians who came to Nha Trang from north, central and south Vietnam. With experience in this essential technique, these physicians will now be able to assist patients who are unable to eat, especially those who have suffered from traumatic head injuries resulting from motorbike accidents.

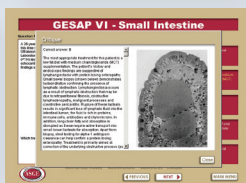
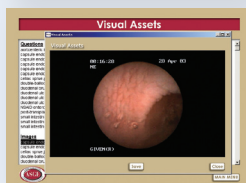
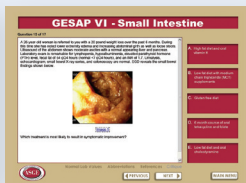
## A country in need

This was a powerful experience for me personally. Vietnam is a beautiful, developing country. Even though the country has limited medical resources, Vietnam has great potential because of the dedicated, talented physicians, some of with whom we had the opportunity to encounter, befriend and work. Vietnam is still much in need of advanced endoscopic training and resources, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have played a small part in that effort.

## GESAP VI—Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Self-Assessment Program (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)



ASGE's very popular self-directed educational tool, *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Self-Assessment Program* (GESAP VI), was significantly updated to reflect the latest evidence and guidelines related to endoscopy. This product will help you assess your knowledge of the appropriate use of endoscopy in the management of patients with digestive disease.



### GESAP VI includes questions related to:

- Patient Preparation
- Monitoring and Sedation
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Small Intestine
- Colorectal
- Pancreas
- Biliary
- Pediatrics
- Nutrition

Stay current on endoscopic topics with more than 200 questions written and reviewed by experts in the field of GI endoscopy.

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This material is ideal for those preparing for recertification or Board examinations.

If Endoscopy is Your Practice, ASGE is Your Partner.

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# INTERNATIONAL

## Vietnam Ambassador perspective from a grateful volunteer

by Raj J. Shah, MD, *University of Colorado Denver, Aurora, Colo.*



*Dr. Shah instructs physicians in endoscopic techniques.*

There is rare occasion during a career in which an opportunity is granted to enhance one's perspective of purpose, intent and fulfillment in the path he or she has chosen. On this note, it was with deep honor and gratitude that several physicians representing the ASGE embarked on a journey to improve the education and clinical exposure of gastroenterologists in the field of therapeutic endoscopy in developing areas in Vietnam.

Vietnam, of course, brings to light memories of our respective countries' war-torn past. However, what we experienced during our visit was only graciousness and respect for our efforts, time, teaching and clinical experience.

### **Enthusiastic response**

The average gastroenterologist in Vietnam receives only three months of endoscopic training. Some go on to do more advanced endoscopy such as ERCP or EUS, but in general, both expertise and resources are lacking.

The Vietnamese physicians' enthusiasm for acquiring advanced endoscopic techniques was remarkable considering the limited exposure they receive during their training and in daily practice. The physicians who attended the educational workshops received hands-on training in PEG placement and observed live case demonstrations of ERCP and EUS, along with extensive didactic sessions on these procedures by the ASGE delegation.

The technique of PEG placement was an interesting aspect of the educational mission because the primary mode of transportation for the younger generation is the motorbike. Given the population density and traffic patterns, head injuries are, unfortunately, a common occurrence in that society. Surprisingly, gastroenterologists receive little training in this simple procedure that can impact the lives of countless patients in a minimally invasive way.

### **Humbling experience**

The ASGE Ambassador Program is to be embraced. It represents what many of us at the start of our careers hoped to gain from pursuing a career in medicine: teaching, mentoring, helping those less fortunate than ourselves and impacting a generation of gastroenterologists in many aspects of therapeutic endoscopy.

ASGE leadership and staff should be commended for the initiation and planning of this worthwhile program, and I would encourage all members to become involved, on any level, to support the efforts of the Ambassador Program as ASGE seeks to continue its mission of spreading good will and improving the quality of endoscopy in developing nations.

## ASGE welcomes new members

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*ASGE added 800 new members in 2010!*

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During 2010, more than 800 new members joined ASGE, and more than 100 members reinstated their membership. These new and reinstated members have enjoyed benefits, such as an online and paper subscription to *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*, which is rated as the #1 reason why individuals join the society.

Members also have access to *ASGE News* and *Scope* and the opportunity to join one or more of the nine Special Interest Groups (SIGs). As an ASGE member, the current "class" will receive the discounted rate when registering for courses and when ordering educational products. This class may also attend DDW® 2011 at the member rate, which is a savings of more than \$300!

In 2010, ASGE introduced two new affinity partners. They include Welch Allyn (*see article on pg. 24*), which offers a professional consulting program that systematically guides physician practices through the complex electronic health record preparation, and Officite (*see ad on pg. 23*), which offers professional website development and hosting. Both affinity partners offer discounted rates for ASGE members. Please welcome the **new members!** ●