

ESPGHAN was formed when I was a medical student, full of medical knowledge but completely lacking in nutritional knowledge. However, I was very aware that hospital patients who could not look after their own nutritional needs, were dying of starvation. ESPGHAN was not a minute too soon.

Later, I spent nearly 2 decades in the Tropical Metabolism Research Unit, Jamaica doing research in and managing young children with severe acute malnutrition. More recently, the scourge of overweight and its consequences, have been occupying us, even our children, and throughout the world: but famines and underweight are also still occurring particularly in African and Asian countries where children form the majority of the population. The consequences of malnutrition in surviving children, who are the future of these countries, are lifelong and severe.

Thus, thank goodness for the enlightened founders and early members of ESPGHAN who realised that their Society, while advancing interest, research, knowledge and practice of the closely related topics of gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition in Europe, was not enough. Many Commonwealth and other countries in Africa and Asia suffered and still suffer severe poverty, famines and childhood malnutrition. Sixteen years after ESPGHAN was founded, in 1984, John Walker-Smith and Sandy McNeish ran a highly successful conference in London on diarrhoea and malnutrition in children in the Commonwealth (CDMCC). This was followed by conferences in Delhi and HongKong. At the HongKong conference, CAPGAN was created and John Walker-Smith and Peter Sullivan were the first Chairman and Secretary (resp) of its Council. A Constitution was created and accreditation by the Commonwealth Secretariat was received. Thus, CAPGAN was largely an offspring of ESPGHAN. Several other senior ESPGHAN members, Alan Phillips (Past Treasurer of CAPGAN & ESPGHAN), and Bhupinder Sandhu (Past President, CAPGAN) in particular, have contributed freely and willingly to the development of CAPGAN. However, of necessity, CAPGAN has a larger role in advocacy and it tries to be as inclusive as possible when organising conferences which are now biennial. Thus, CAPGAN is attended by state of the art researchers as well as junior paediatric trainees from very poor areas, and not just limited to Commonwealth countries. Our recent conference in September 2017, was in Lusaka, Zambia while the next will be in 2019 in Toronto, Canada.

FISPGHAN was created in 2000 as an umbrella organisation of which ESPGHAN is a full member. CAPGAN is an associate member as we simply do not carry the funds necessary to pay for full membership. However, CAPGAN has been particularly active in FISPGHAN in helping organise the 4 yearly World Conferences (WCPGHAN), from that in Paris 2004 till the next one in Copenhagen in 2020. CAPGAN also contributes to FISPGHAN's Council meetings and Working Groups.

Thus, we are indebted to ESPGHAN and particularly its founder and early members for our existence and development. We wish ESPGHAN all the very best for the next 50 and beyond.

Dr Barbara Golden

President (Past, 2015-2017)

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