

Essential reading from the editorial board

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Dear reader,

As 2025 draws to an end, the editorial board of *Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica* looks back on a productive year and ahead to more high-quality scientific research in 2026. We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our warmest thanks to the dedicated team of associate editors with whom we are fortunate to work. They ensure that all submissions to our journal are reviewed fairly and promptly. We would also like to thank all the reviewers who take their time to read and score these papers despite their busy schedules. We hope we can count on your enthusiasm in 2026 as well. Last but not least, a very sincere word of gratitude for Mrs. Mia Persoons, the manager of our editorial office, without whom our *Acta* simply would not exist in its current form.

In addition to all these warm feelings, we are pleased to present you, dear reader, with another interesting and educational issue of *Acta*.

In this issue, we have a nice Belgian-Swiss study with interesting data on coeliac disease. Balsiger and colleagues found a lower rate of smokers in the group of celiac disease. The differences in symptoms presented and the higher age at diagnosis suggest that smoking may influence the onset and/or presentation of the disease in the early stages (1).

Debels and colleagues introduce the concept of remote colonoscopy training, provided by consciously-competent endoscopists via teleconferencing (2). They found a positive impact on caecal intubation rate and adenoma detection rate. This approach might open the door for one-on-one training by endoscopy experts without the logistic hassle of traveling.

Intestinal ultrasound (IUS) has rapidly found its place as a reliable and easy to perform evaluation of bowel wall involvement in inflammatory bowel disease. In a joint effort between the University of Bogota (Colombia) and the University of Leuven (Belgium), Parra Izquierdo and colleagues show that IUS parameters not only correlate with disease activity in ulcerative colitis, but also reflect quality of life indicators (3). This further validates IUS as a clinically relevant point-of-care test in a real-life setting.

Acute Hepatitis E virus (HEV) is currently the most frequent cause of acute viral hepatitis worldwide. In immune-compromised patients, this infection may become chronic and lead to fibrosis and even cirrhosis

necessitating liver transplantation. Philippart and colleagues provide a thorough background on HEV epidemiology and detail the seroprevalence of HEV in different immune-compromised patient groups (4). Importantly, they also include a recommended stepwise approach on how to treat chronic HEV in these populations if reducing immune suppression is either not feasible or not successful. This flowchart will undoubtedly be of great use for all infectiologists and hepatologists dealing with these patients.

Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica recently published the first Belgian consensus guideline on the management of anal fissures (5). This work is nicely complemented by a detailed systematic review on the same topic in this issue of *Acta* by Aygin and colleagues (6), which further confirms and validates the statements that were discussed and voted upon in the Belgian consensus.

As always, you can also find several interesting case reports which will undoubtedly prove relevant and useful for your everyday clinical practice.

We would like to conclude by wishing you and your loved ones all the best in 2026, on behalf of the entire editorial board.

Enjoy your *Acta*,

Heiko De Schepper & Astrid Marot

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