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 International Working Group for GI Motility & Function  
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 8091 Zürich, Switzerland

## Ascona II:

### Advances in Clinical Measurement of Gastrointestinal Motility and Function

19-24 April 2015, Congressi Stefano Franscini, Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland

**Number of participants:** 180 (including 45 faculty)  
**UEMS / EACCME Accreditation:** 27 CME points (Event code: 11995)

**Chair:** Mark Fox  
 Conference Secretary: Anil Areeckal  
 Local Organization Committee: Helen Parker, Matthias Sauter, Henriette Heinrich, Michael Hollenstein, Andreas Steingötter, Simon Mall

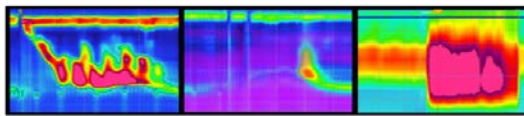
<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Steering Committees</b>
<b>Swallowing:</b>	Peter Kahrilas, John Pandolfino, Nathalie Rommel, Taher Omari
<b>Reflux :</b>	Sabine Roman (lead), Prakash Gyawali, Arjan Bredenoord, Edo Savarino
<b>Continenence:</b>	Emma Carrington, Henriette Heinrich, Mark Scott, Charlie Knowles, Donato Altomare, Satish Rao

## Meeting Report

The Ascona II conference was called to review dramatic developments in the clinical investigation of gastrointestinal motility and function including high resolution esophageal manometry, multiple intra-luminal impedance and advanced tests of anorectal function. Endorsed by the European, American, South American, Asian and Australasian societies for Neurogastroenterology and Motility plus the European Society for Coloproctology, the International Working Group is an umbrella organization for academics and clinicians with an active interest in the clinical application of these technologies. Its aim is to reach consensus on the use of physiological measurement to reveal the causes of gastrointestinal dysfunction and symptoms, especially in patients in whom endoscopy and radiology provide little information. This information, it is hoped, will guide more effective management of so-called "functional" gastrointestinal diseases.

Ascona II marks the start of a process timetabled to last three years. Contents included:

- Presentation of the best evidence concerning the diagnosis of pharyngeal and esophageal motility disorders, gastro-esophageal reflux disease and disorders of anorectal function.
- Agreement on standard operating procedures for the application of advanced technologies used in the physiological measurement of gastrointestinal motility and function
- Work towards classification systems for the diagnosis of disorders of gastrointestinal motility and function based on these technologies



An expert faculty delivered a mix of state of the art lectures, case based discussions and focused working group sessions. This content including powerpoint presentations to download and full audiovisual recordings of all sessions is now on line via the [www.iDigest.ch](http://www.iDigest.ch) website. Delegates included physicians, surgeons and physiologists performing these investigations in clinical practice. More than 40 countries and all five continents were represented. Participants included 180 delegates and faculty, from clinical research fellows to specialist consultants and leading representatives of several national societies responsible for writing national guidelines for the diagnosis and management of functional gastrointestinal disease. Observers from the biomedical industry, especially those involved in the development of advanced technologies for physiological measurement were also present.

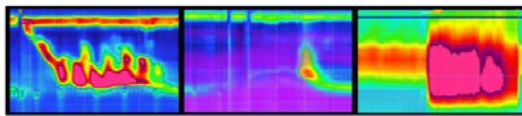
As chair of the meeting, I was delighted that, despite glorious sunshine and surroundings, attendance was excellent at all sessions from early morning to late at night. Just as important, I am pleased to report that the three working groups made excellent progress towards guidelines for the acquisition and analysis of physiological measurements of GI motility and function. I am very grateful also to all of you that chose to participate in the study to assess the effects of diet and alcohol on digestive sensations after meals. The results will be circulated once analysis is complete. Our target is the Christmas edition of the BMJ. A worthy follow up to the seminal work from Zürich concerning "what to drink with a Swiss Cheese Fondue" (Heinrich et al. 2010. BMJ 341: c6731)!

Thanks also for your positive feedback (see below). Completed forms indicate that the overall concept of the meeting with its mix of didactic lectures and group discussions was very successful. The conference had a very low (1:4) faculty to delegate ratio to facilitate discussions between faculty and delegates. The opportunity to continue conversations between faculty and delegates that began in the sessions on an informal basis during coffee breaks and dinner was considered of particular value.

### *Dissemination*

The next step will be to disseminate the research and technical advances presented at Ascona II at national and regional meetings Worldwide. The success of this process, as with the Chicago Classification after the first Ascona meeting, depends on faculty and delegates cascading information to local practitioners using this equipment in clinical practice. **If you wish to host a regional meeting and require contacts for potential faculty then please let me know.**

At the same time, further meetings of the individual working groups will work towards standard operating procedures and new classification systems. *Access is not unlimited to these focus group meetings.* If you wish to participate then please contact the appropriate working group lead: pharyngeal swallow (Nathalie Rommel, Leuven), esophageal motility (Peter Kahrilas, Chicago), gastro-esophageal reflux disease (Sabine Roman, Lyon), anorectal physiology (Emma Carrington, London). Again, I can provide contacts if required.



The [www.iDigest.ch](http://www.iDigest.ch) website will keep you updated with progress. At this time, international meetings at which the working groups intend to meet include:

- European **NeuroGASTRO 2015 meeting, Istanbul, Turkey. 4-6<sup>th</sup> June 2015**  
<http://www.neurogastro2015.org/> (post-graduate course and informal meeting)
- 10th Scientific and Annual Meeting of the **European Society of Coloproctology (ESCP), Dublin, Ireland. 23-25 September 2015** <http://www.escp.eu.com/dublin>
- **United European Gastroenterology (UEG) Week, 24-28 October 2015, Barcelona, Spain.** <https://www.ueg.eu/week/> (working group discussions)
- **Digestive Disease Week, San Diego, California, USA. 21-26<sup>th</sup> May 2016**  
<http://www.ddw.org/>. (working group discussions plus major dissemination meeting ahead of DDW hosted by Ravi Mittal)

The aim is that new classification systems for the diagnosis of gastrointestinal motility and function will be presented at the **2nd Federation of Neuro-gastroenterology & Motility (FNM) meeting in San Francisco, August 2016**. The resulting documents will be published in a dedicated supplement of Neurogastroenterology and Motility with reviews in major journals.

*Thanks*

It remains to me to thank the conference secretary, Mr Anil Areeckal, for his excellent work in the run up to and during Ascona II and my local organization committee for making sure everything ran smoothly from transfers to the station to downloading the SymTrack application!

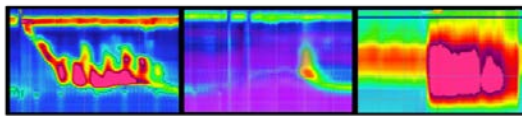
The steering committee recognizes "long term project" funding from the United European Gastroenterology Education Committee that supported the meeting and also the three year dissemination process. We recognize the generous donation of finance and technical support from Covidien, MMS, Sandhill Scientific, Crospon and Mui Scientific (manufacturers) and Reckitt Benckiser, Almirall (biomedical industry). We are thankful also for the support of the Swiss National Scientific Research Foundation (SNF), the University and ETH Zürich and the Congressi Stefano Franscini for making the excellent facilities available.

*Finally*

Many of you have asked me whether there will be an Ascona III meeting. This will depend on work done by all those present at Ascona II and, I hope, many more beside. The next step is to show how advances in method and technology can explain patient symptoms and guide effective management. Once this has been achieved... it will be time to meet again. I look forward to it!

Zürich, 5.5.2015,

Mark Fox



## Evaluation forms and comments from participants:

Based on the following scoring system: 1-10 (poor-excellent)

- **Average score for 46 lectures / talks** **8.8/10**
- **Average score for 6 live demonstrations / case-based discussions** **9.0/10**
  
- **Location** **9.2/10**
- **Organisation** **9.2/10**
- **Overall assessment of Ascona II (including stay)** **8.6/10**

Assessment of Meeting	Assessment 1 – 10 Poor-Excellent
Location of meeting	9.2
Travel to/from meeting	7.5
Duration of meeting	8.5
Number of participants	8.3
Opportunities for informal personal contacts	8.5
Accommodation.	8.1
Quality of Catering	7.9
„Social“ program	8.3
Organization in general	9.2
<b>Scientific Program</b>	
Daily working hours	8.5
Selection of topics	9.4
Quality of presentations in general	9.2
Independence/objectivity of presentations in general	9.1
Opportunity for active participation	8.6
Learning effect	9.2
Facilities (meeting rooms)	8.8



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**ETH**  
Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich  
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