An Analysis of the Origins, Subjects, and Awards Received for Presentations at the Annual IASG Conferences (2009–2013)

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Abstract Abstracts presented at scientific meetings are important for making ongoing research more widely known and may also reflect the quality of the parent institution's standard of patient care. We analyzed the abstracts presented at the annual meetings of IASG for the past 5 years for (i) medium of presentation (oral/poster/videos), (ii) subjects discussed, (iii) institution of origin, (iv) whether a prospective/retrospective study or a case report, (v) changing trends, and (vi) awards received. Of the 1340 abstracts analyzed, there were 18.5 % oral, 74.9 % posters, and 6.5 % videos presented from 205 in 2009 to 388 in 2012. The main organs discussed were the liver (19.3 %) pancreas (18.8 %), and biliary system (14.4 %). Sixty percent was from the private sector with Sir Ganga Ram, SGRH (95) and the Apollo Hospital, New Delhi (60), being the most prolific. From

public institutes, the abstracts were predominantly from PGIMER, Chandigarh (39) and GB Pant Hospital (37). Thirty-three percent was from DNB and 25 % from M.Ch GI Surgery centres and 42 % was from others (most of these were as posters). There were 1016 (75.8 %) prospective/retrospective studies and 324 (24.2 %) case reports. Presentations, especially those related to liver transplantation, showed an increase. The main awards were won by SGRH (8); AIIMS, New Delhi (7); and JIPMER, Puducherry (6). Over the last 5 years, abstracts presented at the IASG have increased in number especially those dealing with the hepato-pancreatico-biliary system and liver transplantation. Most presentations were from “academic” departments, and similar analyses may inform us where we are heading and stimulate healthy competition.

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Introduction

Abstracts presented at scientific meetings are important for the dissemination of research findings and may have an impact on clinical practice and further investigation as they are referenced in textbooks, at scientific meetings, and in expert committees [1]. The Indian Association of Surgical Gastroenterology (IASG) was established in 1988 to provide a platform for general surgeons, surgical gastroenterologists, medical gastroenterologists, and radiologists to present their work at a national level conference. Surgical gastroenterology is one of the most sought after branches among aspiring surgical subspecialists, and the addition of liver transplantation has further increased its attractiveness and glamour. Previously, most presentations at the IASG forum were from “conventional”

Table 1 Number of abstracts by different organ systems, 2009–2013

Organ system	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total (%)
Esophagus	16	24	28	42	30	140 (10.4)
Stomach	15	13	10	24	10	72 (5.4)
Liver	34	39	61	84	41	259 (19.3)
Pancreas	48	38	46	69	52	253 (18.9)
Biliary	29	31	48	50	34	192 (14.3)
Small intestine	10	8	22	19	19	78 (5.8)
Colorectal	26	17	30	41	41	155 (11.6)
Miscellaneous	27	34	29	59	42	191 (14.3)
Total	204	205	274	388	269	1340

surgical gastroenterology, but recently, with the surge in the numbers of liver transplants being performed in India, there has been an increase in the number of oral and abstract presentations in this field.

We aimed (i) to evaluate the number, quality, and subjects of abstracts presented by various institutions in India at the IASG Annual Conference and (ii) to plot the changes over past 5 years.

We did not study whether or not these abstracts were subsequently converted to full papers.

Methods

We obtained details of the abstracts submitted at the annual conference of the IASG between 2009 and 2013 including posters, oral presentations, and videos from the supplement issues of *Tropical Gastroenterology* containing the abstracts submitted for presentation. We recorded the type of presentation, i.e., oral/poster/videos; subjects; institution at which the work was done; awards won; study design (prospective/retrospective study or case reports), and we also plotted their

changing trends. Thirty-four abstracts without complete information about their author or institution were excluded. We were unable to obtain data on award winning abstracts for 2009 and 2013.

Results

A total 1340 abstracts were presented at the annual meetings of the IASG during the past 5 years. The number of abstracts submitted showed an increase from 205 in 2009 to 388 in 2012 (Table 1). Eighty percent of abstracts were accepted for poster or video presentations, while 20 % were for oral presentations. Most of the presentations were on topics related to the liver (19.3 %) followed by the pancreas (18.8 %) and biliary system (14.4 %). All organ system presentations showed an increase during this period with the maximum number in the year 2012.

About 60 % of all submissions were from the private sector. The largest numbers were from Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (SGRH), Apollo Hospital, Delhi, and GEM Institute, Coimbatore: 95, 60, and 51, respectively. From government institutes, the largest number of abstracts was from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh (39) followed by G.B. Pant Hospital, Delhi (37) and Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry (36). Over half (59 %) of the abstracts were from institutes which conducted “academic” courses [33 % from the Diplomate of the National Board of Examinations (DNB) and 26 % from M.-Ch. institutes] and 41 % from non-academic institutes. Most presentations from non-academic institutes were as posters. From 2011 to 2013, the largest numbers of award winning abstracts were from the AIIMS, New Delhi, in the public and SGRH from the private sectors (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2 Characteristics of the abstracts

Characteristic	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total (%)
Type of presentation						
Oral	53	53	54	47	41	248 (18.5)
Poster/video	152	151	220	341	228	1092 (81.5)
Academic/research institute						
Yes	109	137	172	213	132	763 (58.4)
No	96	67	102	175	103	543 (41.6)
Nature of study						
Prospective/retrospective	163	149	225	271	208	1016 (75.8)
Case report	41	56	49	117	61	324 (24.2)
Type of organization						
Government	76	75	118	179	99	547 (41.9)
Private	129	129	156	209	136	759 (58.1)
Abstracts on liver transplantation (%)	17 (8.3)	22 (10.7)	32 (11.6)	35 (9.0)	30 (11.1)	136 (10.1)

Table 3 Distribution of abstracts (award winning)

Institute	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
SGRH, New Delhi	11	17 (4)	29 (2)	16 (2)	22	95 (8)
AIIMS, New Delhi	4	6 (3)	10 (3)	5 (1)	2	27 (7)
JIPMER, Puducherry	6	7 (1)	9 (3)	7 (2)	7	36 (6)
Medanta, Gurgaon	0	8 (4)	7 (1)	10 (1)	12	37 (6)
PGIMER, Chandigarh	6	8 (2)	9 (1)	10 (2)	6	39 (5)
GB Pant, Delhi	0	2 (0)	4 (0)	28 (4)	3	37 (4)
MMC, Chennai	5	6 (0)	8 (1)	16 (3)	0	35 (4)

Information on award winning abstracts for years 2009 and 2013 could not be obtained

Discussion

Presentations at national surgical meetings serve to disseminate knowledge, which helps towards the improvement and maintenance of the standard of patient care. Their quality depends both on the quality of work that has been performed and the way it is reported [1]. However, compared with full-text published manuscripts, abstracts presented generally lack rigorous peer review, because they contain insufficient information to assess their validity and quality. Nevertheless, we felt that analyzing their numbers and quality might provide an indication of what the current interests of investigators were and where the research had its origins. To our knowledge, this is the first study evaluating abstracts presented at a national conference in gastrointestinal surgical practice in India. We found that the number of abstracts increased over a period of time from 2009 to 2013, which may be due to an increased awareness of the importance of public presentations. Most were presented as posters and originated from academic and, to our surprise, private institutions rather than public ones. Among the academic institutes, the largest numbers were from SGRH, Apollo, Delhi, and the GEM Institute in the private sector and the PGIMER Chandigarh, JIPMER and GB Pant hospitals from the public sector.

There was an increasing number of presentations on hepatic-pancreatic-biliary surgery over this period, which

may reflect the increase in the number of tertiary referral centres in India. Abstracts presented on the small intestine and stomach declined over the years, which might be a reflection of the reported nationwide decrease in the incidence of gastric cancer [2].

The number of abstracts on liver transplantation also showed an increase parallel to the increase in the number of centers in India now performing this procedure. However, most of the abstracts on liver transplantation originated from the private sector. All the award-winning abstracts were exclusively from academic institutions with AIIMS and SGRH garnering the largest numbers.

Conclusions

The number of abstracts presented at the IASG increased during the past 5 years with those on the hepato-pancreatic-biliary system being the most common while those on gastric diseases has decreased. Most of the presentations were from academic and private, rather than public institutions. Liver transplantation is the new area of increasing interest. Academic institutes performed better than non-academic institutes in the awards received.

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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