

EASL Awardee 2008

## Peter Ferenci, MD



On behalf of the European Association for the Study of the Liver, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Professor Peter Ferenci from Vienna, Austria. This year, the EASL Governing Board has decided to present Peter Ferenci with a prestigious EASL Recognition Award as an appreciation for his outstanding achievements and contributions in clinical research in hepatology.

Peter Ferenci was born in Budapest and after his parents moved to Vienna, was brought up and educated in Austria. He married Dr. Rosa Ferenci and is the father of four.

Following his graduation from medical school at the University of Vienna in 1972, Peter started his impressive professional and academic ascent. He received his board certification in 3 disciplines: Internal Medicine,

Gastroenterology and Hepatology, and Human Genetics.

Already in 1979 he started his adventures in hepatology by taking British Council courses with Prof. Roger Williams and the late Dame Sheila Sherlock. In 1981 he travelled to the United States and became a research fellow at the National Institutes of Health and NIDDK in Washington D.C. and worked together with J. Hoofnagle and with Dr. E. A. Jones who became his important mentor in the field of hepatic encephalopathy.

Indeed, his fellowship at the National Institutes of Health in the United States catapulted Peter Ferenci to a brilliant and exciting academic career as an accomplished, internationally-renowned clinical researcher in hepatology.

A search of Peter's contributions in the literature conducted through PubMed and Google Scholar websites revealed over 270 peer-reviewed publications in the form of original articles, editorials, book chapters and hundreds of abstracts of his presentations at international and national meetings. Many appeared in the best journals in the field, including: *Lancet*, *Gastroenterology*, *Hepatology*, *Journal of Hepatology*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Gut* and others.

Peter Ferenci's most important contributions to hepatology may be divided into 3 major categories:

– Peter Ferenci has published over 50 papers on the pathophysiology and treatment of hepatic encephalopathy. He became an opinion leader in this area where he presided over a number of international meetings and conferences and contributed to chapters in textbooks and proceedings. His most cited work appeared as a consensus review and report of a working group in *Hepatology* in 2002 on the nomenclature, diagnosis and quantification of hepatic encephalopathy which was cited hundreds of times.

– Treatment of chronic hepatitis C with the newly emerging antiviral agents. Peter has made significant contributions to the treatment of chronic hepatitis C, especially for what concerns the significance of viral kinetics during therapy and the impact of a rapid response on antiviral therapy, which resulted in an option to shorten the treatment period, thus enabling optimization and individualization of antiviral therapy in HCV.

– The genetics, diagnosis and treatment of Wilson's disease. Peter is recognized today as one of the most distinguished opinion leaders in Wilson's disease. His recent contribution on Wilson's disease in older subjects appeared in *Gastroenterology* last year.

Peter Ferenci is a member of many international and national professional societies, Editorial boards and scientific advisory committees including honorary memberships in the Hungarian, South African, Italian and Slovak Gastroenterology Societies and he also is the recipient of a doctorate *Honoris Causa* from the University of Cluj in Romania. He was President of the Austrian Society for Gastroenterology and Hepatology, President of ASNEMGE (Association des sociétés nationales européennes et méditerranéennes de gastroentérologie), Chairman of UEGF (United European Gastroenterology Federation), Secretary of EASL's Education committee and President of a number of international meetings. His achievements have been acknowledged by the international scientific community through many invitations to present his work and share his expertise in practically every corner of the world.

Peter has proven himself through the years to be a diligent and ambitious clinical investigator. His drive, curiosity and ability to conduct clinical research and collaborate with his peers were not even hampered when he was temporarily incapacitated by an illness which was also a focus of his research and which he has fought with stamina and courage.

All in all, Peter Ferenci is a role model for a clinical investigator. It was therefore an immense pleasure and personal privilege to present Peter Ferenci with an EASL Recognition Award for the year 2008.

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