



**Commonwealth Association of  
Paediatric Gastroenterology  
& Nutrition**



# Bulletin

Year: 02

Vol: 04

July 2025

## What inside...

● About us, Mission & Vision.....	Page 01
● Executive Committee .....	Page 02
● Gaza statement .....	Page 04
● Pre-conference workshop .....	Page 05
● Post-workshop Glimpse.....	Page 07
● CAPGAN Conference 2025 .....	Page 09
● CAPGAN General Meeting .....	Page 11
● Forthcoming Conference .....	Page 12
● Upcoming Webinar .....	Page 14
● Recent publications from CAPGAN members .....	Page 15-16



*for a better world for children...*



## About us

CAPGAN is the Commonwealth professional and scientific association of paediatricians which aims to promote the knowledge of, and training in, paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition throughout the Commonwealth, especially amongst developing countries.

CAPGAN seeks to foster collaborative research in these fields, hold regular scientific meetings and be a source of authoritative advice to both national and international agencies within the Commonwealth on the problems of paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology and in particular the problems of childhood diarrhoea and malnutrition. CAPGAN exerts a positive influence as advocates for the welfare of children of the Commonwealth.

## Mission & Vision

The aims of CAPGAN are to promote knowledge, research, education, and training in pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology, and nutrition throughout the Commonwealth, especially amongst developing countries.



## Executive Committee

President



Dr. Robert Bandsma; Canada  
robert.bandsma@sickkids.ca

Secretary



Dr. Dharam Basude; UK  
dharamveer.basude@uhbw.nhs.uk

Treasurer



Prof. Jay Berkley, UK/Kenya  
JBerkley@kemri-wellcome.org

Dep. Secretary



Dr. Zeenat Gaibee; SA  
zeenatgaibee@gmail.com

### Dear CAPGAN Members,

We live in a time of mounting global challenges-geopolitical instability, climate change, and biodiversity loss-all of which increasingly threaten human health, particularly the health of children. In this context, CAPGAN's mission to improve child health and nutrition worldwide is more vital than ever. As an international organization, we have a unique responsibility to foster collaboration across the Commonwealth and beyond, uniting health professionals and advocating for action to protect and support vulnerable children.

On behalf of the CAPGAN Executive Team, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all Council Members for your continued dedication and support. Your commitment has been instrumental in strengthening CAPGAN's impact and advancing our shared goals. We are truly thankful for your collaboration and enthusiasm.

This April, we were pleased to convene with our colleagues at the joint **KPA-CAPGAN meeting in Mombasa, Kenya**. The event showcased a dynamic scientific program, rich

with cross-continental exchange and insight. A key highlight was celebrating emerging talent through our abstract awards—congratulations to the three exceptional recipients whose research reflects the bright future of pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition.

In May, **CAPGAN had a strong presence at the ESPGHAN meeting**, further reinforcing our international visibility. We were also honored to join the **FISPGHAN Council meeting**, contributing to a global dialogue on advancing pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology, and nutrition.

As we look to the future, we pause to recognize and sincerely thank **Dr. Neelam Mohan**, who recently concluded her impactful term as President of CAPGAN, and **Dr. Stephen Allen**, who has served with great dedication as Secretary. Their leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment have guided CAPGAN's development and positioned us well for the years ahead.

We look forward to building on this momentum—expanding our reach, deepening our partnerships, and continuing to advocate for the health and well-being of children worldwide.

Warm regards,

**Robert Bandsma**  
President CAPGAN

# Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition

## Executive Council:

### Prof Robert Bandsma

President  
robert.bandsma@sickkids.ca

### Dr Dharam Basude

Secretary  
dharamveer.basude@uhbw.nhs.uk

### Prof James A. Berkley

Treasurer  
JBerkley@kemri-wellcome.org

## Council Members

Dr Neelam Mohan (India)  
Dr Zeenat Gaibee (Canada)  
Prof Md. Rukunuzzaman (Bangladesh)  
Dr Ahmed Laving (Kenya)  
Dr Moinak Sen Sarma (India)  
Dr Shishu Sharma (UK)  
Dr Priya Walabh (Zambia)  
Prof Salahuddin Mahmud (Bangladesh)  
Dr Michele Zuckerman (South Africa)  
Dr Shrish Bhatnagar (India)  
Dr Rachel Mitole (South Africa)  
Dr Susan Hill (UK)  
Dr Lindo Radebe (South Africa)  
Prof Naveen Mital (USA)  
Prof Nikhil Thapar (Australia)

## Advisory Group

Prof Tahmeed Ahmed (Bangladesh)  
Prof Zulfiqar Bhutta (Canada)  
Dr Barbara Golden (UK)  
Prof Paul Kelly (Zambia/ UK)  
Prof Bhupinder Sandhu (UK)  
Prof Peter B Sullivan (UK)  
Prof Stephen Allen (UK)

To: **Heads of Governments of Commonwealth Countries**

June 13th 2025

RE: **Urgent appeal to end childhood malnutrition in Gaza**

Dear Head of Government,

We are writing to express our gravest concern regarding the current health crisis affecting children in Gaza.

Members of our Association from across the Commonwealth have worked together for more than 40 years to reduce the scourge of malnutrition and improve health in children in poorer countries. Malnutrition has devastating consequences—not only contributing to short-term mortality but also impairing a child's long-term growth, development, and ability to contribute to their society.

Malnutrition in poorer nations is a complex issue, influenced by a combination of poor diets, infections, and broader socioeconomic factors. Despite these challenges, sustained efforts have led to a gradual decline in malnutrition rates. It is, therefore, with great dismay that we now witness the widespread emergence of malnutrition among the population of Gaza<sup>1</sup>—tragically exemplified by the story of five-month-old Sear.<sup>2</sup> This crisis is intolerable, especially as it is largely man-made, driven by insufficient access to

food and health care for children and their mothers. The population of Gaza face a bleak future if the widespread malnutrition amongst its children, amongst the most vulnerable members of every society, is not addressed urgently.

We applaud the efforts of UNICEF<sup>2</sup> and many other actors in their attempts to provide life-saving therapeutic food and other critical actions to address malnutrition. However, we are equally aware that decisive political solutions are needed for a sustainable solution.

Although Gaza is not a member of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth Charter affirms our collective commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the rights and wellbeing of young people, and the principle that everyone should have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food. We therefore urge you as the Head of Government of a Commonwealth country, to do everything in your power to end this unfolding tragedy. Children need immediate access to nutritious food and appropriate medical care. Time is of the essence; a malnourished child cannot wait until tomorrow.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,

Robert Bandsma; President, on behalf of the CAPGAN Executive Council, Regional Representatives, and Advisory Group

1. <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk/press-releases/child-malnutrition-in-gaza-reaches-unprecedented-levels>
2. <https://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/children-in-gaza-crisis-appeal/>
3. <https://thecommonwealth.org/charter>
4. Mistral, G. (2005). "A child cannot wait." In the selected collection, 32.





## CAPGAN Training the Colonoscopy Trainer (TCT)

### Workshop Moments:

8th April, 2025  
Sarova Whitesands Beach Resorts  
Mombasa, Kenya.







## Post Workshop Glimpse:

8th April, 2025  
Sarova Whitesands Beach Resorts  
Mombasa, Kenya.





# Evening River Cruise: 8th April, 2025 Mombasa, Kenya.





## Conference Glimpse:

8th April, 2025

Sarova Whitesands Beach Resorts, Mombasa, Kenya.









## CAPGAN General Meeting:

9th April, 2025  
Sarova Whitesands Beach Resorts, Mombasa, Kenya.



# Forthcoming Conference 2025





Pedgastro Annual Conference

## ISPGHANCON 2025

### The 12th Annual Meeting of

Indian Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology,  
Hepatology, and Nutrition

and

### The 35th National Conference of

Gastroenterology chapter of IAP  
(Indian Academy of Pediatrics)

**Oct 31st – Nov 2nd , 2025**

Royal Orchid Resort & Convention Center,  
Bengaluru

**Registrations & Abstract Submission Now Open**

[www.ispghancon2025.com](http://www.ispghancon2025.com)



**Dr Srikanth KP**  
Organizing Secretary



**Dr S K Yachha**  
Organizing Chairperson



**Dr Nagendra Kumar V**  
Treasurer & Joint Secretary



**Dr. Seema Alam**  
ISPGHAN President



**Dr. M S Viswanathan**  
ISPGHAN Secretary



**Dr Aathira Ravindranath**  
Scientific Committee



**Dr Sahana Shankar**  
Experiential Learning  
(Workshop & hands-on)



**Dr Ashritha A**  
Hospitality



**Dr Shruthi Pranav Bhadrinath**  
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# NASPGHAN Annual Meeting

Sheraton Grand, Chicago, USA

November 5-8, 2025



## Next CAPGAN Webinar



### CAPGAN Webinar: Evidence to Action: WHO 2023 Guidelines for Malnutrition – What's New & Next for Infants Aged < 6 Months

Date: 28 July 2025

Time: 14:00 GMT GMT

Speaker: Dr. Marko Kerac

### Meet the Speaker



**Dr. Marko Kerac**  
SPEAKER

## Recent publications from CAPGAN members



### The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL of MEDICINE

#### Unlocking the Genetic Puzzle of Congenital Diarrhea and Enteropathy

We are proud to highlight the recent publication “*The Genetic Architecture of Congenital Diarrhea and Enteropathy*,” co-authored by Zeenat Gaibee, Joint Secretary of the Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition (CAPGAN), in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2405333)

This landmark study is among the most comprehensive genomic investigations of congenital diarrheal disorders to date. Using whole exome and genome sequencing of 129 infants with suspected monogenic enteropathies, the team achieved a diagnostic yield of nearly 50%. Beyond confirming known causes, the study identified three novel genes—GRWD<sub>1</sub>, MYO<sub>1A</sub>, and MON<sub>1A</sub>—and a founder mutation in NEUROG<sub>3</sub>, expanding our understanding of the molecular mechanisms behind these complex conditions.

By integrating genomics with functional biology, this research sets the stage for earlier diagnosis and personalized therapies—including specialized diets, medications, and surgery—improving outcomes globally. For low-resource settings, it highlights how precision medicine can transform care for rare but serious pediatric disorders that are often overlooked.

We commend Zeenat Gaibee for her scientific leadership and dedication to CAPGAN’s mission. Her work exemplifies how cutting-edge research can drive real-world change for children and families worldwide.



## Recent publications from CAPGAN members



**SPRINGER NATURE**



### Improving pediatric hepatitis C management in Bangladesh

We are pleased to spotlight a recent publication by Professor Salahuddin Mahmud, esteemed CAPGAN council member, in the Egyptian Liver Journal (<https://doi.org/10.1186/s43066-025-00430-2>).

In this prospective study conducted at the Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Prof. Mahmud and colleagues evaluated the real-world effectiveness and tolerability of the pan-genotypic direct-acting antiviral regimen sofosbuvir/velpatasvir (SOF/VEL) in children aged 3–18 years with chronic HCV infection. The study found a 92.7% sustained virologic response (SVR) after 12 weeks of treatment, with significant improvement in liver function and symptoms, and no major adverse events reported.

This important work adds to the growing body of pediatric HCV evidence and reinforces the safety and efficacy of pan-genotypic DAA therapy in children—particularly in low- and middle-income country settings where access to safe, short-course treatment is vital.

Our congratulations to Prof. Mahmud and his team on this valuable contribution to the field of pediatric hepatology!

