

Editorial

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Dear readers of the spring liver issue of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, before you immerse yourselves in the science of the following pages, I would like to give you some food for thought from the realm of humanities. A burning question has been posed to European hepatology and gastroenterology by the war raging just around the corner in our dear old Europe. The question is as old as humankind and, as we have just learned, the answers of we humans are as antipodal as ever.

On 21 March this year, Professor Thomas Berg of Germany, the president of EASL convened a meeting of the presidents of the liver societies of certain countries bordering Ukraine: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova and Romania. On behalf of EASL, Professor Berg arbitrated a text of declaration in which EASL condemned the war in Ukraine and supported the peoples of and colleagues from Ukraine. The Declaration was unanimously voted through, together with financial support for Ukraine in the form of donations via donate.unhcr.com/en/ukraine.

However, some of the leaders demanded that EASL assume a much more radical position: to expel Russian hepatologists from the professional community altogether and not allow them to attend any EASL events, including the International Liver Congress 2022. Various official statements of position were evoked – a mild statement from the UEG on one hand and, a more radical statement from the ESCMID on the other; together with names of science not to be forgotten or thrown out of the window for their ethnicity or nationality. Heated discussion has followed for days on end via the internet.

Caught unawares by this millenia-long dilemma operating in hepatology and gastroenterology, I decided to forward it to you – gastroenterologists and hepatologists from the region with intimate historical experience – in order to try to scrutinise together our feelings as compared to our thoughts and knowledge. What side are we on? In our unquestionable quest for a better world, which evidence-based approach do we con-

sider to be a more effective way to lasting peace? And, for that matter, is there any high-quality evidence to support our standpoint – a kind of a meta-analysis of therapeutic approaches to evil that Czech and Slovak hepatology and gastroenterology could leverage? Literature on the topic is voluminous and opinions vary.

An eye for an eye
A tooth for a tooth
Collective guilt
Viktor E Frankl
Hannah Arendt
I have a dream
Socrates

I hope that when you read Gastroenterology and Hepatology, you will be unimpeded by anything other than your thoughts.

Yours sincerely

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