

14th Annual Congress on

GASTROENTEROLOGY & HEPATOLOGY

August 06-07, 2018 Osaka, Japan

The management of portal hypertension and esophageal varices

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The main cause of portal hypertension and of the formation of esophago-gastric varices is cirrhosis of the liver. The prevalence of cirrhosis has been estimated at around 0.15% in the United States, with data that are substantially similar in Europe, with even higher numbers in most African and Asian countries (where chronic viral hepatitis B or C are common). Another cause of portal hypertension is schistosomiasis, affecting 200 million people worldwide. Right heart failure, pericarditis, Budd-Chiari syndrome, inferior vena cava thrombosis, extra-hepatic tumors (biliary tract, pancreas, stomach, retroperitoneum) cause portal hypertension. From the point of view of the Endoscopist Gastroenterologist, the main complication of this syndrome is digestive hemorrhage, which is also the main cause of death of the cirrhotic patient and of the patient with portal hypertension. In this presentation, the methods to diagnose this disease are reported with reference to the calculation of the risk of bleeding and the therapeutic techniques of prophylaxis and therapy of the acute event.

Biography

Antonio Iannetti has received his Degree in Medicine and Surgery and Specialty in Gastroenterology and Internal Medicine from the University of Rome and University of Los Angeles, USA, respectively. His research interests are on endoscopic sclerosis of esophageal varices and retrograde cholangiopancreatography-endoscopically. He is also the Head of the Digestive Endoscopy Service of the University Hospital Umberto I in Rome. Presently, he is the Professor of Endoscopy and Digestive System Diseases at the Faculty of Medicine, Sapienza University of Rome. He is also an Expert in the Ministry of Health for Gastroenterology.

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