



European Society for Paediatric
Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

ESPGHAN
European Society for Paediatric
Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
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Translational Research and Epigenetics in Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology And Nutrition (TREP GHAN) special interest group

Terms of Reference

1. Background

Research on epigenetic mechanisms in complex diseases has become part of many translational research projects. As a consequence, coordination and setup of such projects has become increasingly challenging. More specifically, epigenetic investigations differ substantially from genetic studies in their requirements and entail highly complex data analysis. Moreover, as epigenetic signatures are less stable than DNA sequence and are highly tissue and cell type specific, collection of specific samples is crucial and appropriate on-site expertise in this respect is essential. Samples need to be processed immediately after collection through protocols including cell separation and chromatin extraction. Hence, highly specific scientific expertise is required and needs to be transferrable from a core facility to the place of sample collection or collaborating units. Currently, lack of local expertise is a major limiting factor in larger sample collection in multi-centre studies.

Although the principal aim of this group was to develop a core European network, facilitating collaborative research into the epigenetics of paediatric GI, hepatology and nutrition, we have agreed to broaden our aims within the society.

The challenges of translational and basic research in epigenetics also apply to translational research more generally. Hence, in order to increase the critical mass of basic researchers collaborating within ESPGHAN, this group wishes to establish a platform for wider translational research efforts within the society, welcoming any members seeking like-minded, supportive individuals and units for collaboration.

2. Structure

The membership group is unlimited and is generally open to everyone but includes a core group, comprising the executive chair, secretary and 7 elected members.

3. Aims and functions of the TREPCHAN

- To promote collaborative basic scientific and translational research in GI health and disease amongst ESPGHAN members, with a specific focus on the role of epigenetic mechanisms
- To enthuse, inspire and teach ESPGHAN members about the importance of high-quality translational research
- To share scientific expertise and novel data within the group, by establishing joint research protocols, collaborative workshops, educational meetings and exchange programs
- To establish a key group of individuals with sufficient expertise and interest within ESPGHAN to study epigenetics and support translational research in paediatric GI disease

4. Role of individual group members

The role of the individual members of the TREP GHAN includes:

- attending regular meetings (at least once per year)
- demonstrating a genuine interest in the initiatives of the group
- actively contributing to the group's work
- representing the interests of all TREP GHAN members, as appropriate
- advocating for & supporting the outcomes pursued by the group

5. General

The special interest group is open to all ESPGHAN members interested in basic and translational research and is a special interest group of the ESPGHAN GI Committee.

Applications for membership have to be sent to the Chair of the special interest group. This should include a short statement explaining the reasons for joining and a current CV. Applications are approved twice / year at quorate group meetings following majority voting of the entire group.

5.1. Chair/Co-Chair/Meetings

The group will be chaired by the elected Chair. Meetings will be convened by the Chair and supported by the secretary (Co-Chair). Chair and secretary (Co-Chair) will be elected every 3 years by all group members. Elections will be held at the annual ESPGHAN meeting by majority voting of the membership group. Re-election of a Chair / secretary (co-chair) is possible for a second 3 year term. Each can serve a maximum of 6 years.

Agenda items of the SIG meeting

All agenda items should be forwarded to the coordinating Chair / secretary by close of business 20 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The agenda, with attached meeting papers, will be distributed at least 10 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

5.2. Minutes and meeting papers

The minutes of each TREP GHAN Group meeting will be prepared by the secretary. Full copies of the minutes, including attachments, will be provided to all TREP GHAN Special Interest Group members no later than 20 working days following each meeting. An annual special interest group report will be submitted to ESPGHAN GI Committee and Council as requested.

By agreement of the group, out-of-session decisions (e.g. by teleconference / email) will be deemed acceptable. Where agreed, all out-of-session decisions will be recorded in the minutes of the next scheduled meeting.

The group will aim to publish high quality collaborative work, original or review articles, at least once every three years.

5.3. Frequency of meetings

The TREPCHAN will meet twice per year. One of these meetings will be regularly held at the annual ESPGHAN meeting.

5.4. Proxies to meetings

Members of the TREPCHAN Special Interest Group will nominate a proxy to attend a meeting if they are unable to attend. The proxy does not necessarily have to be an ESPGHAN member but cannot vote if not an ESPGHAN member.

The Chair will be informed of the substitution at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled nominated meeting.

The nominated proxy will provide relevant comments/feedback about the attended meeting to the TREPCHAN Group member they are representing.

5.5. Quorum requirements

A quorum will be half the TREPCHAN special interest group membership plus one.

5.6. Review

The effectiveness and progress of the TREPCHAN Special Interest Group will be reviewed every 12 months, with regular reports provided to the ESPGHAN GI Committee. Progress reports will be distributed by the Chair among all members. These ToR will be reviewed and amended as necessary every 3 years.