

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



As we celebrate the beginning of 2012, everyone seems to be excited about making a fresh start. For many people, their New Year's resolution is to adopt better nutrition, hopefully shed a few extra pounds, and perhaps adopt a new look. While this issue of *Gastroenterology & Hepatology* does not include any meal planning tips or exercise advice, it does have 2 nutrition-related articles that may be of interest to gastroenterologists.

First, in the nutrition column on page 39, Donald F. Kirby discusses advances in parenteral nutrition and how to optimize outcomes with this nutrition support method. Specifically, he mentions the need for a team approach when managing parenteral nutrition, and he discusses the importance of using enteral feeding as an adjunct to parenteral nutrition whenever possible. Kirby also mentions the need for further nutrition training among gastroenterology fellows, a point that those in leadership positions may want to consider.

In a separate article by Robert J. Basseri and colleagues on page 22, the authors investigated whether intestinal methane production is associated with body mass index. Interestingly, the authors found that individuals with detectable amounts of methane measured via breath testing had a higher average body mass index than those without detectable levels of methane. This finding is particularly noteworthy because all the individuals in this study were overweight or obese; whether this finding would hold true in a study that includes normal-weight individuals remains to be seen. Basseri and coauthors suggest that the methane detected via breath testing is likely produced by methane-producing archaea such as *Methanobrevibacter smithii*. The presence of these archaea may indicate an alteration in enteric flora, which the authors suggest may contribute to obesity in part by increasing the efficiency with which energy is extracted from food. Further research in this

area is needed to shed light on how and why some individuals become obese and, perhaps, how to reverse this process.

In addition to these articles on nutrition-related topics, this issue of *Gastroenterology & Hepatology* also includes a feature on mucosal healing in patients with ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, as well as columns on the management of hepatitis C virus infection in liver transplantation recipients, the risk of lymphoma in patients with inflammatory bowel disease, endoscopic ultrasound elastography, and endoscopic treatments for gastroesophageal reflux disease. Finally, this issue includes a case of Whipple disease in which the patient presented with several extraintestinal manifestations.

Finally, in keeping with the New Year's spirit of renewal, this issue of *Gastroenterology & Hepatology* features our newly redesigned cover. While this update gives the journal a fresh look, our new cover also maintains several familiar elements, in recognition of the fact that the journal's core identity remains unchanged. While *Gastroenterology & Hepatology* will be adding some new columns and publishing more features during the upcoming year, it will also continue to include our existing columns and provide the quality features readers expect. I hope that you find this month's content interesting and useful, and I invite you to be on the lookout for new material over the next several months.

Wishing you the best in 2012,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary R. Lichtenstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary R. Lichtenstein, MD, AGAF, FACP, FACG