



SASLT

الجمعية السعودية لأمراض الكبد وزراعة الكبد
Saudi Society for the Study of Liver Disease
and Transplantation



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WELCOME MESSAGE



Welcome to the 14th Edition of the SASLT Newsletter!

We are excited to bring you this special edition, which highlights the recent success of the Saudi Liver Meeting 2025 (SLM 2025), held from October 16-18, 2025, at the Voco Hotel Riyadh. This year's meeting was an important milestone in the ongoing journey of advancing hepatology in the region, featuring thought-provoking discussions and groundbreaking insights.

A particularly notable feature of SLM 2025 was the highly anticipated collaborative session between SASLT and the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL).

This session presented key insights from the EASL Congress, offering valuable perspectives on cutting-edge developments in liver research and treatment from a global standpoint. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in strengthening international ties in hepatology.

In this edition, we are pleased to share the reflections and key takeaways from esteemed experts who were part of this pivotal event:

- Dr. Karim Qumosani offers his perspectives on the Saudi Liver meeting, *"Driving the Future of Hepatology: Insights from the Saudi Liver Meeting 2025."*
- Prof. Maria Buti shares her inspiring journey through Riyadh, reflecting on the progress and collaborations formed during the meeting in *"My Visit to Riyadh: A Journey of Progress, Collaboration, and Inspiration."*
- Dr. Francesco Paolo Russo provides his valuable reflections on *"Advancing the Care of ACLF and Liver Transplantation,"* a core topic of discussion at the conference.

We hope you find these articles insightful and inspiring as we continue to advance the care and treatment of liver diseases. Thank you for being part of the SASLT community, and we look forward to sharing more updates in future editions!

Warm regards,

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DRIVING THE FUTURE OF HEPATOLOGY:

INSIGHTS FROM THE SAUDI LIVER MEETING 2025

The Saudi Society for the Study of Liver Diseases and Transplantation (SASLT) is pleased to share a brief overview of the SASLT–EASL Global Liver Conference 2025.

This year's meeting was especially meaningful, as it marked the first joint edition held in collaboration with the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) a partnership that reflects our continued commitment to building strong international connections and advancing hepatology across the region.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The conference brought together an exceptional group of experts and colleagues from around the world, including speakers from the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Spain, Greece, Kuwait, and several GCC countries. The scientific program covered a broad range of key topics, such as:

- Viral hepatitis
- Liver transplantation
- Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)
- Pediatric liver disease
- Autoimmune and cholestatic liver disorders

The meeting also featured Adult and Pediatric Board Review Courses, which were very well received by trainees. Another highlight was the Hepatology Jeopardy competition—a lively and interactive session that brought energy and engagement to the educational program.

We concluded the day with well-attended satellite symposia, followed by an elegant Gala Dinner, giving participants an opportunity to reconnect, share experiences, and strengthen professional ties in a warm and friendly setting.

IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This year's summit highlighted the growing role of the Kingdom in regional and global hepatology. Among the most notable outcomes were:

- Sharing of updated knowledge and new clinical insights
- Strengthening collaboration among hepatologists and transplant specialists
- Continued progress in liver transplantation practices and multidisciplinary care
- Reinforcing the importance of evidence-based approaches across all levels of practice
- Encouraging and supporting trainees who represent the future of our field

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

SASLT sincerely thanks all speakers, moderators, attendees, sponsors, organizers, and volunteers for their dedication and hard work, which played a key role in the success of this year's conference. We look forward to carrying this momentum forward and gathering again in October 2026.





Prof. Maria Buti

Senior Consultant and Professor of Medicine at Hospital General Universitari Valle Hebron in Barcelona Spain

MY VISIT TO RIYADH:

A JOURNEY OF PROGRESS, COLLABORATION, AND INSPIRATION MARIA BUTI.

This was my third time visiting Riyadh, and once again, I left deeply inspired. Every visit feels like witnessing a new chapter in the remarkable transformation of this country — a place that is not only growing rapidly but also embracing openness, collaboration, and shared knowledge in every field, including medicine and science.



What impressed me most at the *Saudi Liver Meeting (SLM) 2025* was the vibrant energy that filled every session — the diversity of voices, the active participation of colleagues from neighboring countries, and the genuine desire to learn and grow together. It is truly inspiring to see how SASLT continues to strengthen regional partnerships while building firm and lasting collaborations with international associations such as EASL and AASLD.

This year, I had the privilege of giving three presentations, each of them very special to me.

The first talk, *“The Best of EASL,”* focused on the exciting advances toward curative therapies for hepatitis B. We are entering an extraordinary moment in hepatology, as the goal of achieving a functional cure is becoming increasingly realistic thanks to innovative treatments currently in development.

My second presentation was dedicated to the *new clinical guidelines for hepatitis B management*, developed through a Delphi consensus panel in which I was honored to participate. These updated guidelines represent an important step forward: they simplify access to treatment and broaden recommendations to include more patients, with the ultimate goal of improving care and outcomes worldwide.

Finally, I took part in a *satellite symposium on hepatitis D and primary biliary cholangitis (PBC)* — two diseases that have long had very limited treatment options. Today, thanks to new therapeutic approaches, we can finally offer patients real hope and meaningful progress in their management.

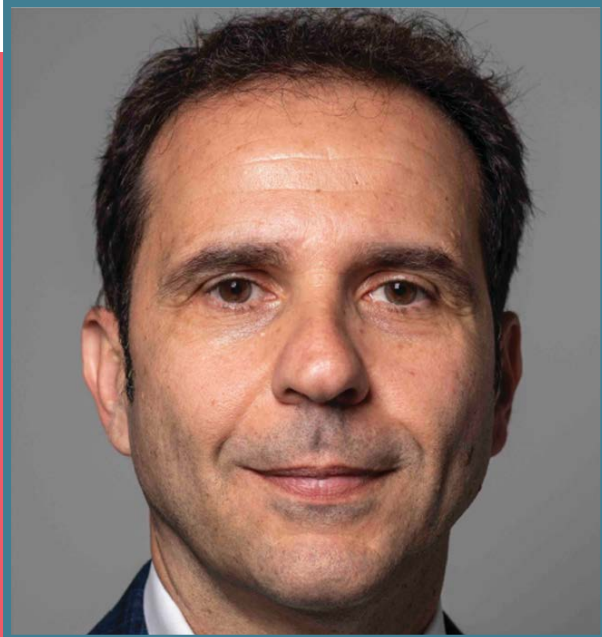
Beyond the science, what makes this meeting truly special is the human connection. The hospitality, warmth, and genuine enthusiasm of everyone involved create an atmosphere where collaboration feels effortless and inspiring. It is not just a conference — it is a celebration of shared purpose and vision.

During this visit, I also had the chance to return to *Diriyah*, the heart of old Riyadh, where history and tradition speak through every stone. Later, I visited the iconic *Kingdom Tower*, and from its sky bridge, I admired a breathtaking panoramic view of the city — a sea of lights stretching endlessly into the desert. The contrast between Diriyah's timeless beauty and the Tower's modern elegance perfectly captures the soul of Riyadh: a city where heritage and progress coexist in harmony. Before leaving, I couldn't resist buying *an abaya* — a small but meaningful gesture, as I truly hope to come back soon.



I leave Riyadh with deep admiration and gratitude — for the people, for the progress, and for the spirit of collaboration that defines SASLT. The future of hepatology is bright, and Saudi Arabia is clearly helping to shape it with vision, openness, and determination.





Dr. Francesco Paolo Russo MD PhD FAASLD

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SAUDI LIVER MEETING (SLM) 2025:

ADVANCING THE CARE OF ACLF AND LIVER TRANSPLANTATION

It was a great pleasure and an honor to participate in the Saudi Liver Meeting (SLM) 2025, an event that continues to distinguish itself for its scientific rigor, clinical relevance, and growing impact across the region. The commitment of the Saudi Society for the Study of Liver Disease and Transplantation (SASLT) to advancing hepatology and liver transplantation was evident throughout the entire meeting.

For me, this participation also held an additional significance: the opportunity to represent the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL). EASL is deeply interested in strengthening its presence and collaborations throughout the Gulf region, recognizing the area's rapid development, emerging clinical excellence, and the enormous potential for building structured and long-lasting partnerships. SLM 2025 offered an ideal platform to reinforce this dialogue and to further connect the European and Gulf hepatology communities.

As part of this shared effort, we had agreed to organize a dedicated session entitled Best of EASL, in which each of us would present a topic of major clinical and scientific impact and highlight one of the most recent EASL Clinical Practice Guidelines. In my case, I focused on ACLF and on the newly updated liver transplantation guidelines.

ACLF remains one of the most complex and rapidly evolving conditions in hepatology. Defined by acute decompensation, organ failure according to the CLIF-C OF score, and high short-term mortality, ACLF requires immediate recognition and continuous reassessment. One of the key messages emphasized during SLM 2025 is that ACLF is not a static condition: its trajectory over the first 72 hours often predicts prognosis better than the initial presentation. Recent evidence reaffirms the importance of distinguishing ACLF grades, understanding



precipitating factors, and applying bundled, guideline-based care. This includes prompt identification of infection, early organ support, and timely involvement of transplant teams. Liver transplantation is feasible and highly beneficial even for selected patients with ACLF grade 3, provided that structured evaluation confirms stabilization and acceptable post-operative survival odds.

Early communication between referring hospitals and transplant centers remains a crucial determinant of success. These collaborations help identify the 'transplantation window', a narrow but decisive opportunity to offer lifesaving intervention.

The second part of my contribution at SLM 2025 focused on the new EASL Clinical Practice Guidelines for liver transplantation, which reflect significant shifts in candidate evaluation, donor utilization, and graft preservation.

Expanded indications now include selected patients with ACLF, older recipients, patients with severe alcohol-related hepatitis, and certain oncologic cases. Modern transplant evaluation incorporates cardiovascular assessment, renal and pulmonary evaluation, frailty assessment, and oncologic history review.

The donor pool continues to expand through the use of HCV- and HBV-positive grafts, extended criteria donors, DCD donors, and increasing living donor transplantation. Machine perfusion techniques, both hypothermic and normothermic—are transforming organ preservation and increasing graft utilization.

Post-transplant management is shifting toward personalized care, with tailored immunosuppression, surveillance strategies, metabolic risk management, and multidisciplinary approaches for alcohol-related liver disease.

The discussions at SLM 2025 highlighted a shared commitment to improving outcomes for patients with advanced liver disease. The integration of dynamic ACLF management, updated transplantation guidelines, expanded donor utilization, and personalized post-transplant care represents a transformative moment in our field.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this important meeting and to collaborate with colleagues dedicated to advancing hepatology and transplantation in Saudi Arabia and beyond. I look forward to continued exchange and the progress that will shape the future of liver care.



SIGNING OF THE MOU BETWEEN SASLT & EASL AT THE SAUDI LIVER MEETING:

MILESTONE FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND ADVANCEMENTS IN HEPATOLOGY

On October 16, 2025, a momentous event took place during the Saudi Liver Meeting at the luxurious Voco Hotel in Riyadh. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Saudi Society for the Study of Liver Diseases and Transplantation (SASLT) and the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) marked a significant milestone in the collaboration between these two leading organizations in the field of hepatology. The MoU, aimed at advancing research, education, and clinical practices related to liver diseases, was signed in the presence of key leaders from both organizations.

The primary objective of this partnership is to foster collaboration between EASL and SASLT in organizing scientific content, enhancing the Best of EASL programme, and increasing the visibility of both organizations within the hepatology community. This strategic collaboration will provide a platform for exchanging cutting-edge knowledge and fostering innovation in liver health research.

The event was a key highlight of the Saudi Liver Meeting. This strategic partnership between SASLT and EASL is set to enhance the exchange of knowledge and foster collaborative research in liver diseases, a pressing global health concern. The MoU is expected to contribute significantly to the development of clinical hepatology in the Middle East and beyond.

The ceremony was graced by several prominent figures from both SASLT and EASL, underscoring the significance of the collaboration. Lead by Prof. Francesco Paolo Russo - EASL External Affairs Councillor and Dr. Faisal Abaalkhail - SASLT President. Mr. Benjamin Hainsworth - CEO of EASL, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership and its potential to drive innovation and research in liver disease treatment and management. His leadership in fostering international collaborations has been instrumental in positioning EASL as a key player in advancing global hepatology.



Prof. Francesco Russo, EASL's Scientific Chair, highlighted the importance of the MoU in expanding EASL's reach and influence in the Middle East. Prof. Russo's commitment to advancing scientific research was

echoed in his remarks about the immense value this partnership holds for both organizations.

Dr. Faisal Abaalkhail, President of SASLT, emphasized the significance of this agreement in strengthening the society's role in fostering liver disease education and promoting liver transplantation across the region. His leadership has been pivotal in advancing SASLT's mission to raise awareness about liver health.

Dr. Hamad AlBahili, Vice President of SASLT, and Dr. Nasser AIMasri, SASLT Treasurer, were also present, representing the organization's senior leadership together with the rest of SASLT's board members and senior members, whose unwavering dedication to advancing hepatology in Saudi Arabia and the region played a key role in making this collaboration possible.

The signing of the MoU is just the beginning of what promises to be a fruitful and transformative collaboration between SASLT and EASL. Both organizations are committed to driving innovations that will have a lasting impact on liver health in Saudi Arabia and the broader Middle East region.

As both parties move forward with their shared objectives, the signing ceremony in Riyadh serves as a reminder of the importance of international partnerships in tackling some of the most pressing challenges in global healthcare.

The Saudi Liver Meeting provided the perfect platform for this landmark moment, bringing together the region's top medical professionals and liver disease experts to celebrate a new era of collaboration and progress.





