



Press release

50 years of international Falk Symposia

HALF A CENTURY OF PROMOTING MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE

***Freiburg:* This year, Falk can look back on 50 years of success. Since the first event in 1967, the international Symposia have built up a superb reputation; today they are considered to be among the best gastroenterology and hepatology training events worldwide. Their success can be attributed to the broad spectrum of topics addressed, which attracts both fundamental researchers and clinicians, as well as to the scientific independence governing topic selection. This approach makes for lively scientific exchange that encourages the development of further options in diagnosis and treatment and enjoys high esteem both nationally and internationally.**

The first symposium, held in Freiburg in 1967, was a week-long event dedicated to the liver. With 800 participants from 17 countries it already attracted enormous interest, even then. The Falk Foundation was established in 1978 in order to reinforce the principle of the neutrality of science and medicine, which has governed the Symposia from the very beginning, and to communicate this to the broader scientific community. Since then, the Foundation alone has been responsible for organizing the events. Over 130,000 physicians and researchers have now had the opportunity to benefit from the workshops, presentations and valuable discussions at 207 further Symposia. The events are held at varying locations all over the world so that interested parties can attend one in their area. Symposia have also already been held in Australia, China, and the USA.

Independent information at a high scientific level

The high quality of the science is a major factor in the success of the Symposia. The content and program for each event are developed independently by an external committee of experts. Each symposium is directed by a distinguished scientific organizer who, with the aid of the committee, puts together the content and invites the speakers. Over the past 50 years, more than 450 scientific organizers have been involved with the Symposia.

The concept of the international Symposia has remained the same throughout and should ensure the success of the event for many years to come. It is important that the speakers and organizers be among the pioneers in their fields and that the neutrality of the presentations be ensured by the Falk Foundation.

Support is also provided for the next generation. Each event includes a poster session giving young scientists the chance to present the results of their research to a specialized audience. An independent committee awards poster prizes to the best posters.

A congress report called *GastroScope* is produced after each event as a special service for attendees and interested parties; it summarizes the major topics of the symposium once again and adds interviews and background information. Since Symposium 205, which was held in Lucerne in October 2016, review articles are also written summarizing presentations on related topics. The first article of this sort will soon appear in an international peer-reviewed journal.

Future Falk Foundation Symposia will adhere to the same successful philosophy. Symposia 208 "Eosinophilic Esophagitis – Medical and Dietary Treatment" and 209 "IBD 2017 – Therapeutic and Biological Barriers" will be held in Berlin from October 4–7, 2017 as part of the IX Gastro Conference. You can consult and download the program for 2018 at www.falk-foundation-symposia.org.

Figures:

