



# Minutes

## FOREGUT COMMITTEE

Date: March 11<sup>th</sup> 2025 Time: 5:00 PM-6:30 PM  
Hyatt Regency Long Beach: Regency Ballroom A

**Chair:** Ruchir Puri, MD

**Co-Chairs:** Alia Qureshi, MD, Anna Ibele, MD

**Attendees:** Arshad, Auyang, Banks-Venegoni, Beffa, Burke, Colavita, Dapri, DuCoin, Filicori, Galvani, Gould, Ibele, Kurian, McCormack, Nau, Newhams, Puri, Qureshi, Race, Reso, Spector, Speer, Ujiki, Vigneswaran, Wright, Wong, Zambito

**Guests:** Eckhoff, Grisell, Naqeeb

**Staff:** Linda Schultz

- I. Dr. Puri called the meeting to order, conducted introductions, and shared announcements from the Society. Disclosures were reviewed for conflicts.
- II. The minutes from the fall 2024 committee meeting were approved without any suggested changes.
- III. Dr. Puri reviewed the committee's goals, and no changes were proposed.
- IV. **Lap Fundo Video Based Assessment:**  
Dr. Ibele provided background on the overarching SAGES VBA project and shared additional information regarding the MIS Fundoplication VBA. This spring, fellows in accredited Advanced GI MIS programs will be invited to help pilot the Fundoplication VBA and its online platform by submitting videos to be scored.

It was noted that Dr. Christy Dunst, from the Fellowship Council, is considering a revision of the foregut curriculum. The SAGES VBA Task Force should coordinate with that effort to ensure alignment.

A question was raised regarding whether the VBA is intended exclusively for Nissen funduplications, as originally planned. Dr. Ibele clarified that the VBA has been used to score various types of funduplications (including Nissen and Toupet), as well as different operative techniques (laparoscopic and robotic).

- V. **AFS-SAGES Collaboration Update:**  
The AFS representatives to the committee were not present to discuss potential new collaborations.

The committee revisited a prior suggestion to conduct joint webinars, noting that AFS regularly hosts webinars through its various committees. However, concerns were raised about potential webinar fatigue among the target audience.



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Dr. Ujiki, a SAGES 2025 Program Chair, shared that there will be a SAGES-AFS joint session at the upcoming meeting in Long Beach. The idea of hosting a joint session at the AFS Annual Meeting was also discussed. One proposed topic was a session featuring surgeons and GI physicians discussing gastroparesis—a topic that had previously been well received and considered a successful collaboration.

The committee agreed to brainstorm additional topical session ideas for future meetings. They also discussed the possibility of partnering with ASGE. One potential topic for such a collaboration was:

"Are GI doctors doing more than they should? How can surgeons support them while also addressing scope-of-practice concerns?"

It was felt that a crosstalk-style session could be both important and educational.

The committee expressed support for pursuing collaborations with both AFS and GI colleagues, while emphasizing the need to clearly define the objectives of these partnerships. Sessions should aim to be inclusive, yet mindful of not giving away core surgical procedures. It was noted that referring physicians should not dictate surgical decision-making.

### VI. **Intraoperative use of EndoFLIP White Papers:**

Dr. Ujiki provided an update on the EndoFLIP project, which models the format of the Chicago EndoFLIP course. The 2.0 white paper is set to be published in the Foregut journal. The committee agreed that the 3.0 version of the paper will be submitted to Surgical Endoscopy.

Volunteers for the 3.0 paper have been identified; however, the paper is not expected to be completed until 2026.

### VII. **Social Media Videos**

Dr. Puri reviewed the two objectives of this initiative – to have both surgeon facing and patient facing foregut social media content.

#### Action Items:

- a. Dr. Qureshi will coordinate the Surgeon Facing content, with the following topics and assignments:
  - How to pull the wrap around: Pete Nau
  - Taking shorties safely: Lauren McCormak
  - Approximating the hiatus: Pete Nau, Carlos Galvani, Micaela Esquivel
  - Defining HREM – IRP: Emily Speer
  - Basics of endoFLIP: Mike Ujiki
  - Sizing the endoFLIP: Mike Ujiki



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- b. Dr. Nau will coordinate the Patient Facing content, with the following topics and assignments:
  - What is GERD: Emily Ortega Goddard
  - What is a hiatal hernia: Carlos Galvani
  - What surgical options do I have for GERD: Amy Bank Vegenoni
  - What tests do I need before surgery: Aaron Sachs
  - What to expect after surgery for GERD: Hope Jackson
  - Diet post Fundoplication- Nissen/Toupet/ LINX: Emily Speer
- c. Dr. Puri will send out these assignments by email with production deadlines.
- d. Staff will send out the branding elements (similar to what was used for the Ergonomic Committee's content). Group wants to brand videos for SAGES and for the Foregut Committee.
- e. Staff to set up a group meeting with both groups on how to create them the branded content. It was suggested that trainees are especially comfortable with content creation.

### VIII. **Foregut Registry:**

Dr. Puri shared that SAGES is currently not investing in new registries due to several factors, including cost and concerns over data ownership.

The committee discussed the AFS registry, noting that members can enter their own data and compare it only to aggregate registry averages. This registry is modeled after the American Hernia Society's registry.

A question was raised about whether foregut procedure volumes are declining in members' practices. The committee conducted a brief poll and discussed the topic. It was suggested that the NSQIP contact at individual institutions may be able to provide relevant data.

- IX. **Foregut Video Atlas:** Dr. Puri reviewed the status and the next steps for the remaining videos atlases. The materials are due by fall 2025.

#### Action Items:

- a. Dr. Galvani to coordinate the Toupet Video Atlas.
  - i. Dr. Galvani also agreed to provide a video on a Toupet fundoplication over a Bougie. Procedure can be robotic.
  - ii. Dr. Mittal will provide video of a Toupet fundoplication without a Bougie.
  - iii. Dr. DuCoin will provide a video of a Toupet w/ a flip.
- b. Dr. Speer will coordinate the MSA Video Atlas.
  - i. Dr. Preston will provide the "Isolating the posterior vagus" video topic.
  - ii. Dr. Bildzukewicz will provide "Sizing the LINX."



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iii. Dr. Speer will provide "Placing the LINX"

X. **Seminal Top 10 Articles:** Dr. Puri reviewed the papers being revised using Dr. Beffa's librarian. He would like the papers finished by the fall committee meeting.

- Lap Fundo/Nissen- **Beffa & Lo Menzo**
- Heller- **Patel & Puri**
- PEH- **Puri**
- Redo-Fundo- **Ibele/ Qureshi**

XI. **Updates from Other Committees / Organizations**

- **Fellowship Council** – Dr. Wright gave a brief update on the Foregut fellowship designation co-sponsored by SAGES, AFS, ASMBS and SSAT. The fellowship programs are accredited by the FC and the sponsoring societies certify the fellow's training completion. Accredited foregut fellowship programs and the number of foregut fellows both continue to grow.
  - The committee agreed to conduct a research project on the number of foregut cases being handled once surgeons are out of fellowship. Volunteers were solicited.
- **Education Council** – Dr. Puri informed the committee that the SAGES Ed Council is exploring a new learning management system and has a new core curriculum format for which foregut continues to be a key focus.

XII. **New Business**

- Drs. Qureshi and Puri discussed a possible collaboration with the SAGES Robotics Committee on a educational curriculum that is similar to FLS. A question was raised about whether there is an overlap with Ed Council's role. Anyone interested should contact Drs. Qureshi and Puri.
- Dr. Dylan Grissel, a member of the SAGES VBA Task Force, requested help with a VBA research project comparing experts vs. non-experts video raters for the Fundoplication VBA. It was agreed that a follow-up email would be sent to the committee to solicit volunteers.
- The committee briefly discussed whether there was a white paper and/or SAGES advocacy for coverage on G-Poem and E-Poem. The committee may want to collaborate with the SAGES Advocacy and Health Policy Committee on this.
- There was no other new business and the meeting was adjourned.