

Working Groups

Annual Report 1999 - 2000

To be or not to be - what is the future of WG23?

Two years after taking over as Chair of WG23 from Professor Karl Karsch, I am about to hand over (in Amsterdam) to Professor Peter Weissberg. Presumably, his successor will be a non-cardiologist (see below), which will keep up our unwritten policy of alternating between a cardiologist (who make up 90% of the ESC membership, but a worrying minority of our WG) and a scientist from the wider Atherosclerosis community. Maintaining this balance has been one of the key achievements of the WG throughout its admittedly short history, but it is something I believe we should be content with. Indeed my election to the Science Council as its one and only basic scientist would certainly not have occurred had it not been for WG23. Notwithstanding the genuine insistence of the ESC that it wishes to encourage basic scientists to participate more, the actual position is remote from that goal. Despite its outstanding achievement in organising the largest annual gathering of cardiovascular researchers, the ESC remains fundamentally a Society for European Cardiologists rather than a European Heart Association on the American model. Of course the American model can not be followed, in part because the ESC has a trivial research-funding role compared to the AHA, and partly because the scientific societies in Europe predate by a long way the recent explosion in clinical cardiology. Should we then concentrate on gaining the benefits from our differences from the American model, e.g. the greater independence of basic science from clinical imperatives, or should we try to move towards it?

Herein also lies a dichotomy for WG23. It would be nice to function as the Council for Atherosclerosis of the European Heart Association but, as it is, this role is fulfilled largely by other organisations, such as the EAS. Moreover, there is more pressing work to be done as a few outnumbered basic scientists participating in the evolution of the ESC. I would like therefore to propose that the following should be our immediate objectives for the next 2 years.

- ▶ Continue to work hard to maintain a strong component of basic and applied atherosclerosis research with the annual congress of the ESC.
- ▶ As part of our strategy to get the basic science messages into the clinic, recruit more cardiologists into the WG.
- ▶ Co-operate with the rest of our cluster (Thrombosis and Platelets and Developmental Anatomy and Pathology) and with the Science Council to improve the basic science component of the ESC congress – particularly as a European forum for young clinical and basic scientists.
- ▶ Participate enthusiastically in the experiment to develop scientific satellite sessions, in co-operation with the European Vascular Biology Association, the EAS and the ISHR.

Participation of WG 23 in the 22nd Congress – Amsterdam

Once again the WG Pathogenesis of Atherosclerosis has been spectacularly successful in contributing sessions for the annual ESC congress in Amsterdam. The following sessions will take place:

Title	Suggested by	Date/Time	Location
The lipid related risk and lipid lowering treatment (with the EAS)	Klein	Sunday 27 08.30	9.1
Limitations in gene therapy and novel approaches for vascular targeting (main session)	Baker	Sunday 27 08.30	8.6
Inflammation thrombosis and atherosclerosis – the role of the endothelium (with the IAS)	Paoletti/ Newby	Sunday 27 11.00	3.1
I have a dream - Prognosis for future developments in interventional cardiology (with WG 10)	Karsch	Sunday 27 16.30	8.2
Local drug delivery: the year 2000 (with WG 10)	Karsch	Monday 28 08.30	3.2
Should we measure genetic markers in ischaemic heart disease? (EAS)	Ribichini	Monday 28 08.30	3.1
Vascular endothelial growth factor-expanding concepts	Baker	Monday 28 16.30	3.2
In vivo imaging of atheroma (with WG 26)	Van Rossum	Wednesday 29 08.30	2.2
Effect of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors on vascular function (with EAS)	Bohm	Wednesday 29 11.00	3.1

It is not difficult to see how collaborations have strengthened our case for many of these sessions. In particular, we need to thank Borge Nordesgaard, the adjunct member of the executive scientific committee from the EAS, for so many successes.

Looking forward to the 23rd ESC Congress in Stockholm 1-5 September 2001

An initiative between the Science Council and the European Vascular Biology Association will aim to deliver the first 'Scientific Session' of the ESC as a satellite to the Stockholm meeting. This will be an autonomously programmed one-day symposium organised by a subcommittee including Andrew Newby (WG23) and Göran Hansson (EVBA). The topic will be Immune and Inflammatory Mechanisms in Plaque Growth and Stability.

As for the main programme, proposals for Symposia (4-5 speakers), Working Group Sessions (4-5 speakers), Debates (2 or 4 speakers) and How-to sessions (2 speakers) need to be in to the ESC by September 15th. Suggestions are particularly welcome at or before the business meeting in Amsterdam. All suggestions should be sent or handed to the new chairman, Prof. Peter Weissberg, Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, ACCI Level 6, Box No. 110, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ, GB. Suggestions must provide the following minimum of information.

- Names of 2 chairmen
- Names and suggested Titles for the requisite number of presentations.

Contact details (including fax or email) will be needed later and should be included if at all possible.

Proposed streamlining of the way in which sessions are selected will give working groups an even stronger voice in the composition of the Congress. So if you feel the Congress does not presently reflect your interests, making good suggestions now is the way to put that right. Furthermore, lobbying with the Chairman and Nucleus members to get your proposal a high priority with the WG may be productive. Sessions that provide opportunities for collaboration with other WGs will also be more likely to be accepted. So the earlier you start to think and talk to us about this the better.

Activities outside the main ESC Congresses

WG 23 has occasionally organised small symposia; notably the excellent pair organised by Karl Karsch in Garmisch. With the rapid proliferation of meetings of all sizes and on all topics, however, adding further to our already overloaded calendars has not been a primary goal. This year, in particular, Europe has been blessed with at least 2 highly relevant, large, international meetings, the IAS in Stockholm and the IVBM in Geneva. Our priority has understandably been to ensure the high quality and relevance to both scientists and clinicians of these two headline meetings. Members of the Nucleus have therefore been actively involved as members on the Scientific Committees. I hope that many of you have (will) participate in these meetings. The IAS was certainly first class and the IVBM programme promises to be as good.

In 2001 a satellite meeting to the EAS annual congress in Glasgow (20-23 May) is planned for the 18/19th of May in Bristol. The first announcement will be circulated soon. Members of the Nucleus of WG23 will also be members of the Scientific Committee of the Second Vascular Biology in Medicine Conference, which will take place in Frankfurt in the autumn of 2001. This meeting has the official backing of WG23. Don't forget that members of the ESC can have access to the data base of WG members when advertising their own meetings. Contact Barbara Lefèvre at the Heart House.

Working Group Business

Clusters

Following decisions of the ESC Board, WG 23 officially became part of Cluster 1 under the heading Cardiovascular Biology. We are clustered with WGs on Thrombosis and Platelets and Developmental Anatomy and Pathology. The importance of clusters is to foster greater links between WGs with common or overlapping portfolios and to provide a framework for democracy on the Executive Scientific Committee. Clusters each elect a member of the 9 member Science Council, which itself forms the greater part of the Executive Scientific Committee. The Science Council also meets several times a year to develop policy for consideration by the Board. Present initiatives include promoting basic science and giving WGs more say in the planning of the ESC congress.

The nucleus members of the WGs in a cluster constitute the electoral college for members of the Science Council. Following a somewhat hurried electoral process, I became the representative of cluster 1, which was perhaps good for WG23 but really meant my taking on too much. In future chairmen of WGs will not be allowed to be elected to the Science Council.

For more details about the identity and purposes of clusters, visit the ESC web site (www.escardio.org).

New Chairman

Professor Peter Weissberg will take over from Prof. Andrew Newby after the Business Meeting at the Amsterdam conference. Prof. Weissberg's address is Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, ACCI Level 6, Box No. 110, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ, GB. Tel +441223331504. Fax +441223336846.

New Co-chairman

Nominations should be sent to me urgently. In the mean time, I am proud to propose Prof. Seppo Ylä-Herttua. I am sure you all know Seppo's work, the quality and impact of which speaks for itself. He has had the onerous job of treasurer for the last 2 years. More importantly, Seppo is a leading member of the atherosclerosis community. Many of you will know him through the EAS and IAS. He is also as at home with the US as European scene. For all these reasons he would make an excellent eventual successor to Peter Weissberg.

New Nucleus Members

There are vacancies for at least 3 new nucleus members, even if there are no resignations of the existing nucleus. Nominations with the name of the proposer and seconder plus a signed statement of willingness from the candidate should be sent to Professor Weissberg before September 30th 2000. Depending on the numbers of nominations received, a postal ballot will be conducted in October.

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