

ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC REPORT 2001 - 2002

ESC WORKING GROUP ON

VALVULAR HEART DISEASE (#14)

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

During the year 2001/2002, the Nucleus of the WG has been composed as follows:

Chairman:	Eric G. Butchart (Cardiff, GB)
Co-Chairperson:	Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf (Bad Krozingen, DE)
Chairman-elect:	Roger J.C. Hall (London, GB)
Past Chairman:	Alec Vahanian (Paris, FR)
Secretary:	Jean-Claude Schoevaerds (Yvoir, BE)
Treasurer:	Manuel J. Antunes (Coimbra, PT)
Members:	Bernard Iung Yilmaz Nisanci Celia Oakley Ronald Scognamiglio Pilar Tornos

It was agreed in Stockholm in September 2001 that changes would be necessary to the composition of the Nucleus, beginning in September 2002. Eric Butchart and Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf will come to the end of their tenure as Chairman and Co-Chairperson respectively. Eric Butchart will become Past Chairman and Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf will take over as Chairperson. Roger Hall will become Co-Chairman and Manuel Antunes will relinquish the position of Treasurer and become Chairman-Elect. Jean-Claude Schoevaerds has indicated a wish to resign from the position of Secretary and that position will be taken on by Bernard Iung. The position of Treasurer will be decided in Berlin. Changes in the Nucleus membership will also take place. Doctors Nisanci, Oakley and Scognamiglio have come to the end of their terms and will be replaced by Ole Lund, Bernard Prendergast and Raphael Rosenhek. The WG would like to express its gratitude for the valuable contributions of the retiring members of the Nucleus.

MEMBERSHIP

As discussed in the previous annual report, measures have been put in place to review the active participation of WG members, to seek feedback from the membership and to invite new members who have made important contributions in the field of heart valve disease, in order to strengthen the WG.

ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP

The WG has been involved in collaborative meetings and ventures throughout the year, as well as organising and analysing the results of the Valvular Heart Disease section of the Euro Heart Survey, and initiating a Guidelines Committee on Management of Patients after Heart Valve Surgery. Plans have also been made for meetings later this year and in 2003. The details are as follows:

Annual Congresses

At the ESC Annual Congress in Stockholm 2001, the WG participated in four symposia, one main session and one cluster session. This year, in Berlin, we will participate in six symposia and in one main session on the results of the Euro Heart Survey on Valvular Heart Disease. In addition we will participate in one Cluster symposium with the WGs in our Cluster (The WG on Heart Failure and the WG on Pulmonary Circulation and Right Ventricular Function) and one symposium sponsored by Edwards Lifesciences.

Joint Meetings with other Organisations and Societies

1. **French Society of Cardiology.** In January 2002, the WG collaborated with the French Society of Cardiology at their annual meeting in Paris. Eric Butchart and Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf chaired sessions on Sports in Patients with Prosthetic Valves and Echocardiography in Infective Endocarditis respectively. Alec Vahanian presented the preliminary results of the Euro Heart Survey on Valvular Heart Disease and Bernard Jung gave presentations on the prognosis of ischaemic mitral regurgitation and valvular interventions in asymptomatic patients.
2. **German Society of Cardiology.** In April 2002, the WG collaborated with Edwards Lifesciences in organising a symposium on mitral valve repair at the German Society of Cardiology meeting which was chaired by Eric Butchart and Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf. This was well attended and successful.
3. **University of Lisbon.** On 25/26 October 2002, a joint meeting will be held with the University of Lisbon, Portugal, entitled "Update in Valvular Heart Disease". Members of the WG Nucleus were part of the organising committee of this meeting and are heavily represented as speakers and chairmen on the programme.
4. **EuroEcho.** On 4-7 December 2002, the WG will be a major collaborator in the EuroEcho meeting in Munich. Eric Butchart is a member of the Scientific Committee and both he and other members of the WG Nucleus have been involved in organising several joint sessions on valvular heart disease with the WG on Echocardiography.
5. **Polish Cardiac Society.** On 8-10 May 2003, the WG is collaborating with the Polish Cardiac Society to stage an International Congress on Valvular Heart Disease in Krakow. Members of the WG Nucleus are part of the organizing committee and will participate actively in the programme.

Collaboration with National Societies

Only 11.6% of the national societies have WGs devoted to Valvular Heart Disease:

Bosnia/Herzegovina
Czech Republic
France
Turkey
Yugoslavia

All of these National Society WGs have been contacted, inviting them to submit proposals for joint programmes with our WG.

Education and Training Programme

Following a very successful ETP course at the European Heart House in March 2001 entitled "Difficult Situations in the Management of Valve Disease", organised by the WG, arrangements were made to repeat this course in Haifa, Israel in May 2002 in collaboration with the Israeli Society of Cardiology, who were going to provide some of the speakers. Unfortunately, the deteriorating political situation in Israel with its associated high security risks led inevitably to the cancellation of this course.

However, the course will be re-activated on 10-12 April 2003, when it will be held in Florence, Italy. The programme directors will be Eric Butchart, Alec Vahanian and Alfredo Zuppiroli, who will act as the local organiser.

Euro Heart Survey

Members of the WG formed the Scientific Committee of the Valvular Heart Disease section of the Euro Heart Survey, under the chairmanship of Alec Vahanian. Meetings began during the previous year. The Survey on Valvular Heart Disease began in April 2001 and recruited patients until mid-July 2001. Meetings have been held this year also (sadly not fully supported by the ESC due to shortage of funds) in order to discuss the results and prepare presentations for the Annual Congress in Berlin. The WG wishes to express its sincere gratitude in particular to Alec Vahanian for chairing the Scientific Committee and for much unseen work in pursuing logistical problems relating to organisation, data collection and funding, and to Bernard Lung who has performed the arduous task of cleaning and validating the database and performing the analyses on which the presentations in Berlin will be based. Their contributions have been vital to the success of the project.

Recommendations and Guidelines

1. Management of Patients with Asymptomatic Valve Disease.

Recommendations for this difficult subject have now been finalised by members of the WG and have been accepted for publication in the European Heart Journal. The authors, on behalf of the WG, are Bernard Lung, Christa Gohlke-Bärwolf, Pilar Tornos, Christophe Tribouilly, Roger Hall, Eric Butchart and Alec Vahanian.

2. **Guidelines on the Management of Patients following Heart Valve Surgery.**

In the last annual report, the WG stated its intention to revise its previously published recommendations on the management of anticoagulation in valve disease. However, following further discussion, it was decided to broaden the scope and develop Guidelines on the Management of Patients following Heart Valve Surgery, to include the following topics:

- Rehabilitation
- Follow-up methods
- Anti-thrombotic management
- Endocarditis prophylaxis
- Management of prosthetic endocarditis
- Management of valve thrombosis
- Investigation and management recurrent embolism
- Pregnancy
- Non-cardiac surgery and trauma
- Investigation and management of haemolysis

Many of these aspects of the management of patients after heart valve surgery have not previously been addressed in European Guidelines and many are addressed only extremely briefly in American guidelines. Following submission of this proposal to Werner Klein in his capacity as Chairman of the Practice Guidelines Committee, he agreed that work on the project by the WG should commence and that the ESC would then appoint additional members and 'raise' the recommendations to the status of official ESC Guidelines.

Although matters relating to funding of the project remain unresolved, these have been discussed with Udo Sechtem, and in the meantime, work has begun on the project. It is hoped that the funding issues will be clarified at the time of the Annual Congress in Berlin.

It is hoped to submit a final document by 1st July 2003.

Collaboration with the World Health Organisation

The WHO is actively involved in the prevention of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease through its programme in many developing countries. Eric Butchart has represented the WG as a member of the WHO Guidelines Committee on Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease and

has contributed to the revision and updating of previous guidelines produced by the WHO, writing the section on Valve Surgery. New Guidelines should be published in the near future.

Prof. E.G. Butchart
Chairman, Working Group on Valvular Heart Disease