

Working Group 14

Annual Report 2000-2001

STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

In the new cluster system to encourage collaboration between working groups, the WG on Valvular Heart Disease is part of the Cluster "Structure and Function", represented by Alec Vahanian in the Science Council.

During the year 2000/2001, the Nucleus of the WG has been composed as follows:

Chairman: Eric G. Butchart (Cardiff, GB)
Co-chairperson: Christa Gohlke-Barwolf (Bad Krozingen, DE)
Chairman-elect: Roger J.C. Hall (London, GB)
Past chairman: Alec Vahanian (Paris, FR)
Secretary: Jean-Claude Schoevaerdt (Yvoir, BE)
Treasurer: Manuel J. Antunes (Coimbra, PT)

Members:

Bernard Lung
Yilmaz Nisanci
Celia Oakley
Ronald Scognamiglio
Pilar Tornos

Eric Butchart and Christa Gohlke-Barwolf begin their second year as Chairman and Co-chairperson respectively in September 2001. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer are open for re-election at the time of the Annual Congress.

MEMBERSHIP

At the time of the previous annual report, the WG had 159 members. However, at the business meeting of the WG in Amsterdam in 2000, there was discussion about the proportion of members who actually participated in the activities of the WG. It was noted that, quite apart from not attending the business meetings and other WG activities throughout the year, many members did not even attend the ESC annual congresses.

It was agreed that several approaches were necessary to address this issue:

- ▣ More publicity of WG activities was required via the website and other information routes.
- ▣ Measures should be taken to involve the membership more in making suggestions for meetings, symposia at the annual congresses, etc.
- ▣ Those members who had not attended the annual congresses for several years should be identified from ESC records and asked if they wished to retain their WG membership. They should also be asked why they had stopped attending, in the hope that issues may emerge which could receive remedial action. Our Secretary, Jean-Claude Schoevaerdt, agreed to look into this aspect and report back to the business meeting in Stockholm.
- ▣ In addition to receiving and processing applications for membership as in previous years, the WG should actively seek new members by invitation. Individuals who have made important contributions in the field of heart valve disease should be encouraged to join the WG. In order to broaden and strengthen the WG, it was felt that invitations should be extended to cardiac surgeons, cardiac pathologists, bioengineers, epidemiologists, basic scientists and others in addition to cardiologists. This process has already begun with many invitations issued both by personal contact and by letter.

The process will continue.

FINANCES

The financial statement of WG finances generated by the ESC at the European Heart House has been reviewed by our Treasurer, Manuel Antunes, and signed as correct. No new external funding was attracted during the year 2000/2001, and no expenditure took place.

ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP

The WG has been involved in many collaborative meetings and ventures throughout the year, as well as undertaking a very successful Education and Training Programme at the European Heart House, and organising the Valvular Heart Disease section of the Euro Heart Survey. The details are as follows:

Annual Congresses

At the ESC Annual Congress in Amsterdam in 2000, the WG participated in one main session on acute endocarditis and five symposia. This year, in Stockholm, we will participate in four symposia and in one main session on the interpretation and application of guidelines in valve 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

- ▶ French Society of Cardiology. In January 2001, the WG collaborated with the French Society of Cardiology at their annual meeting in organising a joint session on the management of asymptomatic patients with valve disease.
- ▶ French Society of Cardiology and World Heart Federation. In May 2001, the WG collaborated with these two organisations to stage the Second International Cardiology Congress of the South Pacific. This was held in Tahiti, French Polynesia, under the auspices of the WG on Valvular Heart Disease. The Congress was devoted to rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease. Many members of the WG joined other experts in this field from all over the world to share views on unresolved problems and discuss future research. The meeting was attended by many members of the World Health Organisation committee on rheumatic heart disease prevention who also participated actively in the programme.
- ▶ Society of Cardiovascular Infectious Diseases. In June, 2001, the WG collaborated with this society at their sixth annual symposium in Barcelona to organise a joint session on the role of echocardiography in the management of complications of infective endocarditis. Topics discussed included the diagnosis and treatment of perivalvular abscess, vegetation size and the risk of embolism, the role of echocardiography in the timing of surgery and the timing of surgery after cerebral complications.

Education and Training Programme

A very successful ETP course was held at the European Heart House in March 2001 entitled "Difficult Situations in the Management of Valve Disease". Topics covered included anticoagulation management, the management of the asymptomatic patient, moderate aortic stenosis in patients with significant coronary disease, prosthesis choice in the young and in the elderly, management of the dilated aorta, the place of balloon commissurotomy, endocarditis, mitral valve repair in complex lesions and the management of ischaemic mitral regurgitation.

Almost 100 participants attended the course and there was much lively discussion between the attendees and the faculty.

The course will be repeated in May 2002, on this occasion in conjunction with the Israeli Society of Cardiology at a location to be determined. Further details will be announced later this year.

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. Several meetings have taken place during the last 12 months to discuss the details of the questionnaire to be completed by the participating centres throughout Europe and to discuss the various organisational issues. The Survey on Valvular Heart Disease began in April 2001 and recruited patients until mid-July. Certain basic preliminary results of the Survey will be available by the time of the Annual Congress in Stockholm, but full analysis, including one year follow-up data, will not be available until the 2002 Congress in Berlin.

Recommendations and Guidelines

- ▣ Management of patients with asymptomatic valve disease. Recommendations for this difficult subject are currently in the final stages of preparation by members of the WG and will shortly be available. The different lesions (aortic stenosis, aortic regurgitation, mitral stenosis and mitral regurgitation) will be addressed respectively by Drs. Gohlke-Barwolf (Germany), Tornos (Spain), Lung (France) and Tribouilloy (France).
- ▣ Anticoagulation management in valve disease. Guidelines on this subject were developed by the WG in 1993 and published in the European Heart Journal (1995; 16: 1320-1330). However, much more published information on this subject is now available and these guidelines require revision. The revision will be undertaken during 2001/2002.

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. The current chairman of the WG (Eric Butchart) attended the last meeting of the WHO committee on rheumatic heart disease prevention in Geneva in December 1999 on behalf of the WG. Eric Butchart and the co-chairperson of the WG (Christa Gohlke-Barwolf) are currently assisting in the preparation of new WHO Guidelines on the Management of Rheumatic Heart Disease.

The factors which determine the progression of rheumatic heart disease remain poorly understood. The protocol of a research programme to investigate these factors is currently being developed in collaboration with the chairman of the WHO committee on rheumatic heart disease, Prof. Edward Kaplan. It is hoped that there will be further collaboration between the WHO and the WG on Valvular Heart Disease on this important issue.