

## The role of European National Journals in Medical Education

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The Editors' Network of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) defined its mission in a joint statement published in varied National Cardiovascular Journals in Europe in 2008. (1) Nowadays, the Editors' Network is studying the way in which its publications may achieve a more wide influence in the field of medical formation (Postgraduate course).

The need that cardiologists have to continue learning during their whole professional life will continue being essential. In fact, the recognition of the need of continuing education was already pointed by Hippocrates before being proposed it by specialists in medical formation and departments of public relations. "Ars longa, vita brevis" is a translation in Latin of the observation made by Hippocrates about the fact that, for a doctor, the need of learning the art of medicine remains during his whole professional life. In the Middle Ages, in the heart of universities, the foundations of the ethical medical practice of our time was established; the long-term future of the medical profession was based on the concept of doctors as men and women focus on the learning and knowledge, instead of being simple medicine suppliers with no scientific base.

Which is, then, the relationship between the editor of a national journal of cardiology of nowadays, in

front of his computer, and his medieval predecessor, the Abbot, the person in charge of the university library who chooses books to provide the academic knowledge? The more obvious difference is, clearly, that Internet provides authors with an easy access to the editor, and therefore, this is obliged to judge and take decisions about a greater number of manuscripts that his predecessor did not have to assess (Figure 1). However, this academic effort may be productive when allowing the editor the accumulation of updated knowledge which trains him to determine which authors combine, in a better way, knowledge about cardiovascular medicine and the appropriate style that will allow them to communicate them in a reliable way to doctors that want to learn them.

Which are the characteristics of doctors that want to learn? As adults, they prefer a self-guided approach, in which they identify their own needs of formation, they draw up learning objectives, identify resources to reach those objectives and assess their own learning. (2) Medical journals contribute an easy-access resource to reach the objectives of self-guided formation, especially through their publishing and checking articles, but their value depends on the quality of the contents, which depends on the following three factors:

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Full English text available from: [www.revespcardiol.org](http://www.revespcardiol.org)

This manuscript will be simultaneously published in all ESC National Societies and ESC Affiliated Societies' cardiovascular journals that consented to publication.

European Society of Cardiology (ESC) National Society Cardiovascular Journals Editors and ESC Affiliated Societies Cardiovascular Journals Editors

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<sup>(E)</sup> Editor in Chief. Hellenic Journal of Cardiology. Greece

<sup>(F)</sup> Ex Editor in Chief. Giornale Italiano di Cardiologia. Italy

<sup>(G)</sup> Editor in Chief. Kardiologia Polska. Poland

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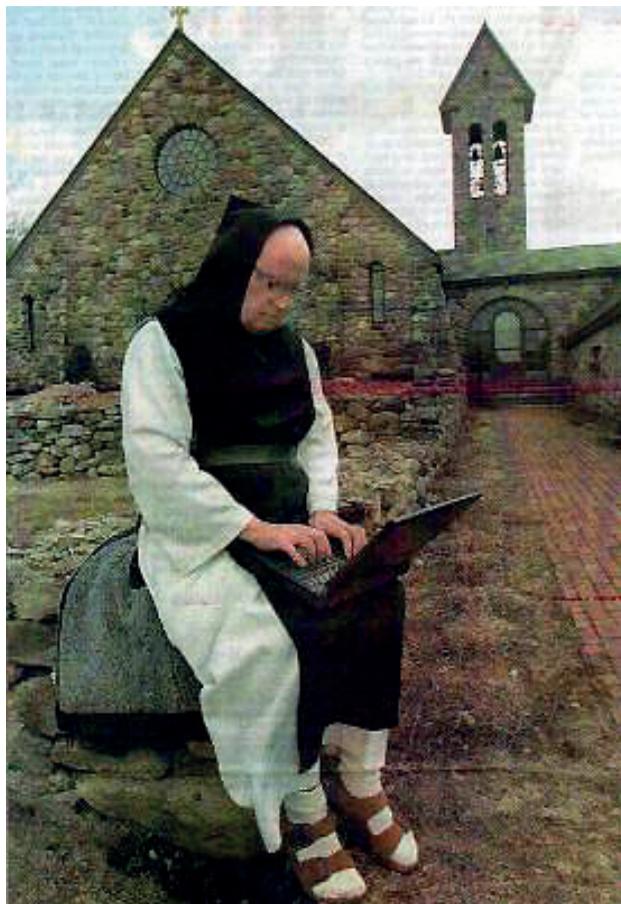


Fig. 1.

1. Election of the topic: It should be based on a curricular program. The ESC core curriculum tries to provide a reference framework for continuing medical education of the European cardiologist. Dealing with the main and peripheral matters is necessary. The need of doing updates, especially in those fields where new discoveries appear quickly, should be taken into account.
2. Election of the author: Editors are privileged due to they may choose among active authors who, then, will train others. A clear presentation should be combined with the intellectual rigor and statements should be supported by evidence derive from a critical assessment of the appropriate medical bibliography.
3. Presentation: It should be designed in such a way that it may stimulate the reader, using organized content, relevant illustrations, boxes with presentations of summaries and bibliography which allows the reader to find the source as reference.

However, adults who want to learn ask for more than comments or review articles of high quality in medical journals. They also need a feedback mechanism in their formation, provided by accrediting organizations, which object is to consolidate their learning and obtain credits of continuing medical

**Table 1.** Summary of EBAC criteria for the accreditation of CME articles

- Internationally known authors
- Conflict of interest statement
- Absence of advertising in the article
- Inclusion of an objective instrument of assessment (multiple choice questionnaire)
- CME certification system through the Web if you correctly answer a 60% of the questions or more

education (CME) which, in some countries, is an essential requirement for doctors in exercise. The European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology (EBAC), for example, demands cardiologists to obtain a minimum of 250 credits of CME in a period of 5 years, and 125 of such credits should be “external CME”, that is, from planned external activities, such as education articles. (3) EBAC accreditation policy regarding CME articles is summarized in Table 1 and it includes the demand of “an objective instrument of assessment”, for which the use of multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ) available online is recommended. Articles with more than 3500 words and with 6 MCQ are considered equivalent to 1 hour of educational activity and they provide 1 credit of CME.

Almost all National Journals of Cardiology in Europe include review articles of high quality (4-7) (Table 2). Heart, the International Journal of Cardiology, which is published in the United Kingdom, has been the leader in the formation field based on medical journals since 10 years (8) and nowadays it contains more than 95% of continuing education articles which provide credits for CME in EBAC Website. Its section of continuing education has a semiautonomous functioning inside the journal, under the guidance of an editor and a team of specialist consultants. Heart continuing education is free through Heart and ESC Websites; (9, 10) their articles received a great number of visits among all journals (11-15) Another National Journals of Cardiology include a continuing educational content of high quality and they also provide local CME credits (16, 17) (Table 2). The ESC Editors’ Network provides another real opportunity of extending these initiatives of formation through the National Journals of Cardiology in Europe (10).

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<b>A. Articles published at present</b>
84% of the journals publish editorials (63% with external revision)
92% of the journals publish review articles (83% with external revision)
82% of the journals publish supplements (62% with external revision)
<b>B. Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG)</b>
79% of the journals publish CPG:
- 67% national CPG
- 73% CPG from ESC:
- 50% translated into national languages
- 36% in English
- 14% translated into national languages and English
<b>C. Continuing Medical Education (CME)</b>
42% of the journals have CME programs
32% of the journals obtain credits from national CME
76% of the journals would be interested in obtaining credits from CME (ESC)
<b>D. Interest in additional educational material</b>
92% of the journals interested in education articles from ESC
92% of the journals interested in the publication of formation material which is organized by ESC
71% of the journals consider that formation material should not be differentiated or centered in the country
82% of the journals believe that pre-degree and post-degree formation should be covered

ESC: European Society of Cardiology. The Editors' Network Nucleus designed a questionnaire with 38 questions which was sent to the editors from ESC National Journals (44 national societies y 16 affiliated societies). Data from 38 national journals (33 journals from national societies [response rate, 75%] and 5 affiliated societies) were obtained.

**Table 2.** Questionnaire about aspects of continuing education: Cardiovascular Journals from ESC National Societies

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15. Jukema JW, Bergheanu SC. Statins: established indications and controversial subgroups. *Heart* 2008;94:1656-62.
16. Cruz-González I, Solís J, Inglessis-Azuaje I, Palacios IF. Patent foramen ovale: current state of the art. *Rev Esp Cardiol* 2008;61:738-51.
17. Badimon L, Vilahur G. Coronary atherothrombotic disease: progress in antiplatelet therapy. *Rev Esp Cardiol* 2008;61:501-13.

**APPENDIX**

Journal names (by country of origin, in alphabetical order) and members (editors in chief from the Editors' Network)

<b>Sociedad nacional</b>	<b>Revista</b>	<b>Editor Jefe</b>
Austrian Society of Cardiology	Journal für Kardiologie*	Kurt Huber
Belgian Society of Cardiology	Acta Cardiologica	Hugo Ector Patrizio Lancellotti
Association of Cardiologists of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Medicinski Arhiv	Izet Masic
Croatian Cardiac Society	Kardio List	Mario Ivanusa
Cyprus Society of Cardiology	Cyprus Heart Journal	Loizos Antoniadis
Czech Society of Cardiology	Cor et Vasa	Michael Aschermann
Danish Society of Cardiology	Cardiologisk Forum	Jørgen Videbæk
Estonian Society of Cardiology	Seminars in Cardiovascular Medicine**	Aleksandras Laucevičius
Finnish Cardiac Society	Sydänääni (Heart Beat)	Pirjo Mustonen
French Society of Cardiology	Archives des maladies du cœur et des vaisseaux Pratique	Jean-Yves Artigou
Hellenic Cardiological Society	Hellenic Journal of Cardiology	Panos Vardas Christodoulos Stefanadis
Italian Federation of Cardiology	Journal of Cardiovascular Medicine Giornale Italiano Di Cardiologia	Massimo Chiariello Leonardo Bolognese
Latvian Society of Cardiology	Seminars in Cardiovascular Medicine**	Aleksandras Laucevičius
Lithuanian Society of Cardiology	Seminars in Cardiovascular Medicine**	Aleksandras Laucevičius
Netherlands Society of Cardiology	Netherlands Heart Journal	Ernst E. van der Wall
Polish Cardiac Society	Kardiologia Polska – Polish Heart Journal	Piotr Kulakowski
Portuguese Society of Cardiology	Revista Portuguesa de Cardiologia	Fausto J. Pinto
Romanian Society of Cardiology	Revista Română de Cardiologie	Eduard Apetrei
Russia Fed Society of Cardiology	Cardiovascular Therapy and Prevention Rational Pharmacotherapy in Cardiology	Rafael G. Oganov Rafael G. Oganov
Slovak Society of Cardiology	Kardiológia	Gabriel Kamensky
Spanish Society of Cardiology	Revista Española de Cardiología	Fernando Alfonso
Swiss Society of Cardiology	Kardiovaskuläre Medizin Médecine Cardiovasculaire	Thomas F. Lüscher René Lerch
Tunisian Society of Cardiology	Cardiologie Tunisienne	Habib Haouala
Turkish Society of Cardiology	Archives of the Turkish Society of Cardiology	Vedat Sansoy
Ukrainian Association of Cardiology	Ukrainian Journal of Cardiology	Valentin Shumakov
British Cardiovascular Society	Heart	Adam Timmis
<b>Sociedad afiliada a la ESC</b>		
Argentine Society of Cardiology	Revista Argentina de Cardiología	Carlos Daniel Tajer
Hong Kong College of Cardiology	Journal of the Hong Kong College of Cardiology	Chu-Pak Lau
Mexican Society of Cardiology	Archivos de Cardiología de México	Manlio Márquez
Heart Association of Thailand	Thai Heart Journal	Rungroj Krittayaphong
Venezuelan Society of Cardiology	Avances Cardiológicos	Kaduo Arai

\* It is not an official journal from a National Society, but it is an important Journal of Cardiology in Austria.

\*\* Common Journal from the Baltic States.