

The future of EHRA : a personal viewpoint

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Membership

Our members are the essence of our Association, and growth in membership is one of our priorities to maintain our momentum. Our Young EPs are a driving force of our Association and we should continue to encourage their active participation. EHRA Fellowship (FEHRA), which has more stringent standards than FESC, is a title which increasing numbers of our members should aim to obtain. We should make this title and its advantages better known. We are proud to be part of the ESC family, but should nonetheless preserve our identity and cater to the specific needs of our community. Being part of the ESC Membership Committee since 2020, I have been involved in liaising between EHRA and the ESC to defend our interests.

Education

Knowledge is a gift which should be shared, for the benefit of our patients. Having chaired the EHRA Education Committee, I realize the opportunity we have at EHRA to transfer knowledge from key opinion leaders to the younger generation. The plethora of free webinars hosted by the industry should encourage us to continue to develop high-quality, independent and affordable educational resources.

Certification

EHRA certification in cardiac pacing and in electrophysiology contributes to set the benchmark for qualification in our field. I am convinced that certification improves standard of care to our patients, and underwent certification myself back in 2006 when it was launched. I introduced EHRA certification for device therapy and electrophysiology in practice guidelines in Switzerland in 2011, which has since encouraged many Swiss colleagues to sit the exam. Recently, EHRA certification is being delivered remotely, thus facilitating participation of colleagues from around the world. This is an opportunity for us to collaborate with National Working Groups and encourage its adoption in national standards, much as with the ESC General Cardiology Exam.

Annual congress

The EHRA congress is our annual get-together which has been challenged by the COVID pandemic. I had the privilege of chairing the successful EHRA2019 congress in Lisbon, and coordinated EHRA Essentials4U directly after EHRA2020 had to be cancelled. The challenges we face should be seen as opportunities for us to develop hybrid solutions. The full experience of an in-person meeting will never be matched by virtual alternatives, and we are fortunate in Europe to have many locations which attract participants from worldwide. Nevertheless, much as our virtual environment is evolving towards a Metaverse, we should also continue to develop attractive alternatives for colleagues who are unable to travel, thus providing an opportunity to increase overall attendance.

Scientific publications

The EHRA consensus documents and the ESC guidelines provide guidance for daily clinical practice. We should strive to maintain a high standard of these documents, but perhaps limit their number so as to focus on key topics. Our journal, EP-EUROPACE, should continue to position itself in the competitive environment of scientific journals by attracting and selecting high-quality submissions, delivering fast turnaround and exploiting dissemination of content by social media, and moving towards open access, all of which should serve to increase the journal impact factor.

Position of EHRA

The diversity of our national societies provides us with an opportunity for fruitful exchanges, and contributes to our strength. Our Association is a key player within the ESC and has close ties with sister societies (HRS, LAHRS, APHRS, CASSA etc), which are of mutual benefit. EHRA has evolved over the years to become a global leader in the field. This position needs to be maintained by the continued dedication of its members (who should also perceive benefits for their efforts) and strategic planning of EHRA leadership.