

Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes
European Union of Medical Specialists
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Bergschenhoek, January 20, 2014

Concerning: application Multidisciplinary Joint Committee for Phlebology in the UEMS

This letter has the goal to outline the current position of phlebology in relation to the different medical specialties in Europe. In addition the desired education and acceptance of phlebology by the UEMS will be explained. This letter, as well as attached letters of support from the UEMS sections of Dermatology, Surgery, Vascular Surgery and Radiology, will contribute to the discussion during the UEMS board meeting in April 2014.

The following items will be discussed:

- I. What is phlebology?
- II. How to practice phlebology?
- III. Relevance for society
- IV. Education
- V. Certification
- VI. Conclusions

I. What is phlebology?

Diagnosis and treatment of venous diseases is a multidisciplinary issue. Phlebology is the study of the anatomy, physiology and diseases of the veins. Veins are part of the human circulatory system and linked to the microcirculation. Many complaints and clinical signs of venous disease are related to disturbances of the cutaneous microcirculation. Venous diseases concern mainly the lower legs, and can be acute e.g. thrombosis, varicose vein bleeding or chronic, e.g. varicose veins and leg ulcers. Patients present themselves with complaints as pain, fatigue in the legs etc. Clinical signs are edema, hyperpigmentation, white atrophy, dermato-et liposclerosis and leg ulcers. Genetic factors play an important role in phlebology. Patients with varicose veins usually have a positive family history for the disease, and in the analysis of deep vein thrombosis patients inherited thrombophilia risk factors are sometimes discovered. Some venous diseases are congenital, e.g. Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome. Diseased of the lymphatic system usually belong to the working area of phlebology.

II. How to practice phlebology?

Phlebology is a (sub) medical specialty, which is practiced mainly by dermatologists and (vascular) surgeons. In some EU countries, like France, the 'phlebologist' profession is seen as distinct from other medical professions. In other countries, like Switzerland, angiologists also practice phlebology. The management of the phlebology patient demands not only extensive knowledge of the venous anatomy, pathophysiology and diseases, but also a variation of invasive and non-invasive diagnostic and therapeutic skills. The fact that phlebology in most countries does not exist as a distinct (sub) specialty, and the diversity of medical knowledge and skills that is needed to treat phlebology patients, explains why physicians of different specialties practice phlebology. This broad spectrum of medical doctors justifies a separate representation in the UEMS.

III. Relevance for the society

The incidence and prevalence of venous diseases is high. According to recent epidemiologic studies the prevalence of varicose veins with or without edema reaches 25% and of severe chronic venous insufficiency with skin changes and venous ulcers 5% in the European adult population. The incidence of varicose veins and CVI is 2% / year. Therefore, the cost of the management of venous diseases for society is significant.

One percent of the Western European population will develop a leg ulcer in their life. Diagnosis and treatment of venous leg ulcers mounts up to 1-2% of the total healthcare budget in these countries, not calculating the indirect costs because of the loss of working days due to venous diseases.

As the incidence of venous diseases increases with age, the need for phlebological care will increase in the near future due to the aging European population. Until 2050 the incidence of chronic venous diseases will increase by more than 20%.

Skilled phlebologists can offer highly cost-effective treatments. Research on new diagnostic investigations like Duplex ultrasound and treatments like endovenous thermal ablation techniques are recently introduced and contribute to evidence-based treatments, with significantly lower costs than before. For example phlebography and hospitalization are nearly disappeared for varicose vein treatment. Good evidence-based phlebology will contribute to higher cost-effectiveness for this enormous medical and social burden.

IV. Education

Phlebology touches dermatology due to the relation veins-microcirculation-skin and as well due to many invasive techniques (vascular) surgery.

There is a great need for a well-defined educational program to assure patients that they can obtain the best possible treatment from a registered phlebologist. From well-defined qualification terms a scholarship phlebology is designed by different European societies, including the Union Internationale de Phlébologie (UIP) which has a worldwide coordinating role in the field of phlebology. After founding an MJC on phlebology within the UEMS, containing representatives of all phlebological societies, it is possible to control certification of phlebology and therefore phlebologists. This is necessary to guarantee a high level of phlebological care for the EU community.

V. Certification

As mentioned above certification is mandatory to guarantee the highest phlebological quality for society. UEMS seems to be the only European body, which is able to host this certification.

As the certification is open to a wide group of physicians with many different backgrounds, this certification will not create barriers and serves only to guard the desired minimal levels of quality of care in phlebology.

VI. Conclusions

There is a great medical social and financial burden related to venous diseases. Well-educated physicians can only give best medical care. As many different medical specialties as dermatology and (vascular) surgery are involved in daily phlebological practice, it's only realistic to cooperate, defining minimal requirements and creating an educational program with UEMS labeled certification, to guarantee cost-effective, evidence-based phlebological care of the highest level in the EU. A Multidisciplinary Joint Committee for Phlebology in the UEMS can best reach this goal.

Sincerely,



Prof. dr. C.H.A. Wittens,
representing European Society of Vascular Surgery

Also on behalf of:

Prof. dr. A.H. Davies, representing UK and European Venous Forum

Prof. dr. med. E. Rabe, representing the Union Internationale de Phlébologie

Prof. dr. H.A.M. Neumann, representing the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology



**UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS**

**Section de Dermato-Vénérologie
Section of Dermato-Venerology**

President: : Prof.Dr.M.Czarnecka-Operacz (PL)
Secretary : Prof.Dr. Petr Arenberger (Cz)
Treasurer: : Prof.Dr.Veli-Matti Kähäri (Fin)

Poznan, October 10 2013

Concerning : Creation the MJC on Phlebology

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the Section and Board of Dermatology and Venereology after discussing this important issue last week in Istanbul during our Autumn Meeting I would like to state that in case a proposition of creating the MJC on Phlebology comes up we, as dermatologists and venereologists dealing with phlebology in our daily clinical practice as well as strongly participating in the research and scientific progress in this field , support the idea. We are willing to participate and provide an important input in further action undertaken within the MJC.

Sincerely Yours,

Prof.Magdalena czarnecka-Operacz
President of the Section and Board
Dermatology and Venereology, UEMS.

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EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

Section de Dermato-Vénérologie
Section of Dermato-Venerology

With best and warmest regards,

Magdalena Kamecka-Operas

President of the Section and Board



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

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UEMS SECTION OF RADIOLOGY

Brussels, 10th January 2014

To Prof. Cees Wittens

Dear Prof. Wittens

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to you with regard to your request for support to create a Multidisciplinary Joint Committee (MJC) in Phlebology under the aegis of the UEMS.

We would like to confirm that the Section of Radiology supports your initiative to create a MJC in Phlebology.

We look forward to further co-operating with you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Remy Demuth

President Section

Signed

Dr Eric Guillemot

Secretary Section

signed



UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS SPÉCIALISTES
EUROPEAN UNION OF MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

THE UEMS Section and Board of Surgery

December 30th 2013

Professor Alun Davies

Professor Cees Wittens

Re: Proposal for the establishment of a UEMS Multidisciplinary Joint Committee of Phlebology

Dear Colleagues,

Many thanks for your recent communication regarding your intention to proceed with a formal application to the UEMS Management Council for the establishment of a Multidisciplinary Joint Committee (MJC) of Phlebology.

I understand from your communication that this proposal has been reviewed and has the support of the Section of Vascular Surgery of the UEMS. If this is the case, we would be delighted to add the support of the Section of Surgery and declare our willingness to participate in this project.

As you know, the UEMS has established a formal process for applying for the establishment of a new MJC. The proposal has to be submitted to the UEMS office ahead of the next Management Council meeting which will take place in Brussels on the 11th and 12th of April 2014. Since we are a supporting Section, I would be most grateful if we could review the proposal prior to the submission to the UEMS.

We are looking forward to working with you.

With kindest regards,

Professor Vassilios Papalois

President, UEMS Section of Surgery



European Union of Medical Specialists
SECTION AND BOARD OF VASCULAR SURGERY



Porto, 14th October 2013

To whom it may concern

It was approved by the UEMS Section and Board of Vascular Surgery Council Meeting our support for the creation of the European Board of Phlebology.

We'll be more than happy to actively participate in this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Armando Mansilha MD, PhD, FEBVS
UEMS SBVS Secretary General