

DIVISION AND BOARD OF VASCULAR SURGERY

Associated with the UEMS Section of Surgery.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Division and Board of Vascular Surgery associated with the UEMS Section of Surgery – Wednesday 3 Sept 2003, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin.

Present: (*alphabetically*)

K Balzer (Ger); F Benedetti-Valentini (It); P Berg (Lu); D Bergqvist (Swe); J Blankensteijn (NL); J van Bockel (NL); M Cairols (Sp); J Fernandes e Fernandes (Port); O Goëau Brissonnière (Fr); M Horrocks (ESVS); C Kelly (Ire); P Lamont (UK); Jon Largiadèr (Swi); C Liapis (Gr); A Lindahl (Nor); J Maeso-Lebrún (Sp); A Mansilha (Port); F Marxen (Lu); Menezes (Port).D Moore (Ire); H Myhre (Nor); A Nevelsteen (Be); L Norgren (Swe); T Nyheim (EAVST); D Palombo (It); M Railo (Fin); J-B Ricco (Fr); J Salenius (Fin); J Sandermann (Dmk); J Scott (UK); P Settembrini (It); H Sillesen (Dmk); T Sosa (Croatia); J Tomka (Slovakia); R Verheslt (Be); J Wolfe (UK).

1. Welcome

The Presidents of the Division and Board (Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini and John Wolfe respectively) welcomed the members present at the *Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland*, Dublin. A special welcome was extended to first-time representatives Piergiorgio Settembrini (It) Division Representative replacing Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini, who stepped down since his election as President of the Division; Patrick Berg (Lu), 1st Representative and former member Fernand Marxen (now as 2nd Representative) for Luxembourg; and Armando Mansilha, as Portuguese National Representative on the Division

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from N Angelides (Cy); M Adamec (Czech Rep); E Bastounis (Gr); J Belch (IUA); H-H Eckstein (Ger); A Genton (Swi); R Greenhalgh (EBS); R Perkmann (Aus); J Strassegger (Aus); V Sefranek (Slovakia)

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The President of the Division, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini, asked if there were any queries regarding the minutes of the previous meeting in April 2003. There were none, and the minutes were approved.

4. Secretary's Report

The Secretary began by acknowledging the untiring support of the membership for the activities of the Division and Board. In the six months from April to September 2003, the Division and Board of Vascular Surgery engaged in the following:

❖ **Opposition to the Doctors' Directive (COM) 2003 119**

The Division and Board of Vascular Surgery is strongly opposing the Directive under Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini, President of the Division with the full support of the President of the Board, John Wolfe and all the members. The Directive divides the specialties into 1st and 2nd class. During the 12 July Executive meeting, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini proposed an amendment in favour of Vascular Surgery. Upon discussion and full support by John Wolfe, President of the Board, the Secretary, Christos Liapis and the entire Executive present on 12 July, the proposed amendment was submitted to the European Parliament. Further action (proposed by ESVS Secretary Michael Horrocks) will be in collaboration with the other Vascular Societies, by sending a joint protest letter to the European Parliament. (Action 5b of these minutes)

❖ **Eu-Reg Vasc Registry under Chairman Jes Sandermann (Dmk):**

The membership, has, since the April meeting, provided more data for EuReg-Vasc on both National and Centre registrations. Maintaining updated information on the registry is of utmost importance in monitoring the status of Vascular Surgery in Europe, particularly with the recent EU enlargement by another 10 countries.

❖ **New:**

a) Committee on Territorial Expansion and Implementation of Vascular

Events: following a decision of the Executive Board and consequent agreement at the April Council Meeting, the *Committee on Territorial Expansion and Implementation of Vascular Events* was created under José Fernandes e Fernandes. He is working with the kind assistance of Johann Strassegger, Austria; Nicos Angelides, Cyprus; Jan Marusiak, Czech Republic; Olivier Goeau-Brissonniere, France; Mikael Railo, Finland and Anne Karin Lindahl, Norway. Other invitations will follow for collaboration with the recently inaugurated EU countries

b) Working Group on Examination/Certification of Endovascular Procedures: Upon discussion and full support of the Executive (Presidents of the Division and Board, Secretary, and Chairmen present at the July Executive Meeting), it was decided to form a working group under Jan Blankensteijn (NL), on examination/certification of Endovascular Procedures.

c) Organization of Vascular Centres: following full discussion and full support of the Executive members (as above at the July meeting in London) it was decided to form a working group on the Organization of Vascular Centres. The group will consist of the President of the Division and the Secretary of the Division and Board as ex-officio, 2 members of Council, ESVS Secretary, IUA Representative (to be nominated by IUA) and a representative from CIRSE.

d) Title of Fellow of the European Board of Vascular Surgery: the European Board of Surgery (EBS) has suggested a title of Fellow for the examinations. Upon full discussion, the Executive members present at the July 2003 meeting agreed on the abbreviation FEBVS (Fellow of the European Board of Vascular Surgery) for EBSQ-VASC certification. This could provide a link for all EBSQ examinations and will signify the importance of these examinations. The Executive has decided to go forward for 2004, and will coordinate with the EBS regarding the correct procedure.

e) Physician's Award: It was agreed at the July Meeting of the Executive to create an award for the accumulation of 100 CME points relating to a specific 3-year basis. The benefits of such an award are that it can be used as a) to accumulate points on both a national and European level, b) it will act as recertification and c) it will also assist in obtaining other qualifications where evidence of CME activities is required.

❖ **8th Annual EBSQ-VASC Assessments under Chairman David Bergqvist (Swe):** The assessments were held at the *Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland*, on 3 September 2003. Fourteen out of 15 initial candidates for Part 2 sat the examination with 12 passes and 2 failures (86% success rate/14% failure). **Innovations:** a) this year consisted of 26 new cases on CD - supplied by the assessors to David Bergqvist b) the Technical Skills Exercise under John Wolfe, President of the Board, was a full-scale one involving all the candidates. This year again, the final results of the assessments were not influenced by the Exercise. The Secretary, Christos Liapis drew up the scientific papers and coordinated the organization of the function. The Division and Board are grateful to Dermot Moore who, this year assisted in his capacity as a local organizer for the Dublin events.

❖ **EVCME (European Vascular CME) Committee under Chairman, J Hajo van Bockel:**

The committee received 15 requests this year for accreditation of meetings throughout Europe. Of special interest are applications from new countries such as Estonia and Andorra. Guidelines concerning Industry Support have been revised and the final draft of the guidelines was presented and approved at the Council Meeting of 3 September.

- ❖ **Logbook under Chairman Domenico Palombo (It).** This year the logbook comprised an integral part of the examination and candidates had to complete this as part of the application for admittance to Part 2 of the EBSQ-VASC examination. The layout of the logbook enables better scrutiny of indicator procedures and the electronic format can be adjusted according to changing needs.
- ❖ **Symposium: Reforming Training in Vascular Surgery, 4 September 2003 at Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin:** Chaired by: Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini (It), David Bergqvist(Swe), and Klaus Balzer (Ger). Speakers involved the kind participation of John Wolfe (UK), J Hajo van Bockel (NL), Giorgio Biasi (It), José Fernandes e Fernandes (Port), Christos Liapis (Gr), Bauer Sumpio (Yale), Alexei Svetlikov (Ru) EAVST, and Thomas Nyheim (Nor) EAVST. The speakers presented their views on how to adapt education and training to fit the new demands of the profession.
- ❖ **Book - “Status of Vascular Surgery across Europe”:** this is expected to go to print before end of 2003. Members have kindly supplied information on the status in their countries and there will also be special contributions from individuals connected with the creation of the UEMS Division and Board of Vascular Surgery. The ESVS has graciously undertaken the funding of this project. Editorship will be The Division and Board of Vascular Surgery/ESVS. Initially, 1000 copies will be distributed to vascular surgeons, starting with ESVS members.
- ❖ **Representation of the Division and Board at Section of Surgery Meetings June 2003 and Sept 2002:** André Nevelsteen (Be) kindly represented the views of the Division and Board at the May meeting in Leuven this year, as did Hans-Henning Eckstein at the Section of Surgery Meeting in Turkey in September 2002. The Division and Board are particularly grateful for such support that helps to keep Vascular Surgery in the top ranks of the UEMS specialties.
- ❖ **Finances:** The finances currently stand at 49.677,98 as opposed to 43.516,46 at the last April meeting. Income is derived from membership fees, accreditation and examination fees.

DIVISION OF VASCULAR SURGERY - President, Fabrizio Benedetti Valentini

5. Doctors’ Directive COM (2002) 119

The President of the Division, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini began his report with the proposed “Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications”, which also affects the medical profession. This means that only the 17 medical specialties enjoying pan-European recognition (throughout the initial 15 EU countries) will come under the “Sectoral” System whilst the remaining 34 will be in the “General” Sector - with severe restrictions on their authority. Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini explained that Vascular Surgery could well qualify for the Sectoral System since it has its own Examination Board and an active CME Committee. He had first alerted the membership regarding this destructive proposal in April 2002 and the efforts to obstruct it have continued until September 2003. In July 2003 he proposed an amendment at the Executive Board meeting concerning the proposal. After full discussion and approval by the President of the Board, John Wolfe, the Secretary Christos Liapis and the Executive Members present, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini submitted the amendment personally to Stefano Zappalà at the European Parliament. Euro-parliamentary elections will be held in 2005 so the profession has to act fast. Therefore Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini urged the members to support the objection dynamically by proving that Vascular Surgery is about 5000 strong and not a small, undefined number.

Michael Horrocks, ESVS Secretary suggested getting the presidents and secretaries of the vascular societies to send a joint letter with the ESVS Council, although the VSSGBI (Vascular Surgical Society of Great Britain and Ireland) did not want to take this on as a society. Some discussion followed regarding the difficulties in overturning the proposal: Jes Sandermann (Denmark) repeated Olivier Goëau-Brissonière's statement at the previous meeting, that recognition must first be achieved within the countries where vascular surgery is not a monospecialty; and José Menezes (Portugal) reported that he had heard through his medical society of possible conflict on this issue within the European Parliament. The President of the Division responded by asking the membership if they felt it was worth continuing the objection and a show of hands confirmed an overwhelming decision to continue. Henrik Sillesen (Denmark) added that without such recognition free movement within Europe would not function well. José Fernandes e Fernandes (Portugal) suggested getting other specialties in the same situation, such as cardiology, to join the objection. The President of the Board, John Wolfe, encouraged lobbying the amendment, which if successful, would help the profession to continue functioning in the same manner. The Secretary, Christos Liapis reiterated that the membership should react *now*, before the 2005 Euro parliamentary elections.

ACTION:

- a) The membership should resend the letter to their Vascular Societies asking for their consent to include the names of their presidents and secretaries to a letter in conjunction with the ESVS council
- b) The ESVS Secretary will draw up a letter from the Council and send it to the Athens office for inclusion of the names of the presidents and secretaries, so the consent response of the vascular societies should be submitted by the membership to the Athens Secretariat as soon as possible.

6. Organization of Vascular Centres – Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini

The President of the Division, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini, reported that the issue has been under discussion for some time now and this was one of the reasons for welcoming the IUA on board. The organizations of vascular centres was fully discussed and supported by the both Presidents of the Division and the Board (Fabrizio Bendetti-Valentini and John Wolfe respectively), the Secretary Christos Liapis, and the Executive Board Members at the July Executive Meeting and it was decided to form an ad hoc working group, comprising the following participants and/or specialties:

- Coordinator: President of the Division, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini (ex officio)
- Secretary of the Division and Board, Christos D Liapis (ex officio)
- 2 Council Members – Marc Cairols (Spain) and Hans-Henning Eckstein (Germany)
- ESVS Secretary – Michael Horrocks
- IUA Representative to be nominated by IUA
- CIRSE Representative (Dierk Vorwerk)

The members present approved the ad hoc group. The President of the Division said the group's task is to study how vascular centres can be organized and if they will be useful. He added that politicians are in favour of this so the profession might be at an advantage here. ESVS Secretary, Michael Horrocks suggested creating guidelines based on the best model. This was supported by Lars Norgren (Sweden) who said that vascular medicine/angiology is organized differently in various countries so the working group should look at the successful ones. Henrik Sillesen suggested pooling thoughts at the next meeting in April. Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini said Vascular Surgery should take the initiative and start discussion with vascular specialists on vascular care.

7. Territorial Expansion and Implementation of Vascular Events –José Fernandes e Fernandes

The Chairman reported that the first step was to understand the condition of Vascular Surgery in the member countries and in order to gain useful information he had prepared 2 questionnaires, which were presented to the members. Christos Liapis said that territorial expansion would gain importance in the next few years, as a result of the recent expansion of the EU. Some countries have already expressed a keen interest in joining the Division and Board, such as Georgia and Serbia, but first their national medical unions have to gain entry into the UEMS as such. José Fernandes e Fernandes said that hopefully there would be more data as a result of the questionnaires, for the next meeting and the Secretary,

8. EuReg-Vasc Registry

The Chairman of EuReg Vasc, Jes Sandermann presented the latest entries regarding completed Centre and National registration. He remarked that the latest status was up by only one-third since 1999. National Data for 2003 has been received only from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and UK. Centre Data for 2003 has been received only from Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Slovak Republic, Switzerland and UK. Since Jes Sandermann is writing a chapter in the book "Status of Vascular Surgery in Europe", it is essential to have as much data as possible to substantiate the chapter with a valid statement on the "Differences in Training" within the various training centres. Jan Blankensteijn (NL) suggested maybe a shorter, simpler form with an overview of training centres but Jes Sandermann reiterated that it is imperative to have as much information as possible on the existing centres. Thomas Nyheim (EAVST Norway) asked if he could prepare a proposal for Trainee Registration under EuReg-Vasc and get feedback for the next meeting. This was welcomed by the Council and the President of the Division, Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini urged the national representatives to continue their efforts despite the obstacles.

ACTION:

- a) representatives who have not yet done so, should (in conjunction with their national counterpart) contact the top training centres and should ask them to fill in the form. The completed forms should then be returned to Jes Sandermann *via the representatives.* Please refer to the separate attachment with these Minutes for more information.
- b) Thomas Nyheim will prepare a proposal for Trainee Registration for the April 2004 meeting.

BOARD OF VASCULAR SURGERY – President, John Wolfe

9. Vascular Training/Examinations

The President of the Board, John Wolfe expressed his satisfaction with the smooth execution of the 8th Annual EBSQ-VASC Assessments, held at the Royal College in Dublin prior to the Meeting of the Division and Board on 3 September 2003. He thanked the Secretary, Christos Liapis for his successful organization, and added special thanks this year to Dermot Moore in his capacity as local organizer. John Wolfe commended the assessors for their dedicated support and last, but not least, thanked the following observers for their participation: Chris Russell of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, Michael Lee of CIRSE and Murat Aksoy (EAVST Turkey).

a) EBSQ-VASC Assessments 2003 under Chairman, David Bergqvist (Sweden)

The President of the Board, John Wolfe invited EBSQ-VASC Chairman David Bergqvist to report on the 8th Annual Assessments. David Bergqvist expressed contentment with the smooth operation and thanked the assessors for providing 26 new cases which, this year were on CD. Fourteen out of fifteen initial candidates sat and twelve passed (86%success/14%failure). The Technical Skills Exercise under John Wolfe and Research Fellow Vikas Pandey, was enthusiastically received by candidates, assessors and observers

alike. David Bergqvist said that the Examiners' Debate that took place after the examination provided some constructive criticisms for improvements in the next assessments.

The Secretary, Christos Liapis remarked on the reduced numbers of candidates this year and said it was the responsibility of all the membership to actively promote the examination through their vascular societies and amongst their trainees. Another way would be to investigate travel grants via the societies to encourage more candidates to apply.

ACTION:

- a) The examination will be reviewed by the Examination Board for possible changes
- b) The Presidents of the Vascular Societies will be approached by the Executive Board to investigate travel grants for candidates

b) Technical Skills Exercise - John Wolfe

The President of the Board, John Wolfe reported his satisfaction regarding the Technical Skills Exercise which, this year, was on full scale for all candidates. The examinees felt that the models were fair and valid. Consequently, if the results can be validated the Exercise will go forward as an integral part of the assessments for 2004.

c) Endovascular Procedures

Following earlier discussions of the Executive Board and the Council, it was decided to investigate the inclusion of endovascular procedures in the Assessments. A sub-committee under Jan Blankensteijn was agreed upon at the April Council Meeting and consequently he presented his preliminary report in Dublin as follows: Endovascular Diploma based on a) whether to model this after EBSQ-VASC or a different approach? b) Generic Endovascular Accreditation for vascular surgeons and... radiologists and cardiologists? c) Disadvantages of a combined diploma – such as: this qualification may abolish the need to cooperate, may affect multidisciplinary evolution adversely, and, is it realistic? d) Strategies for moving ahead: Committee on endovascular examines, analysis of national situations, seeking advice from CIRSE/cardiology, deciding on the title of the diploma and starting with basics then expanding. A number of members expressed their support and views on this move, such as André Nevelsteen (Belgium), Henrik Sillesen (Denmark), Hajo van Bockel (NL), Marc Cairois (Spain), Jordi Maeso-Lebrún (Spain), Peter Lamont (UK), José Fernandes e Fernandes (Portugal), José Menezes (Portugal), David Bergqvist (Sweden). The Secretary Christos Liapis, emphasised the importance of endovascular procedures in the next examination, and consequently emitting a strong signal that vascular surgery is open to other procedures. The President of the Board, John Wolfe reiterated this by adding that other specialties, i.e. cardiology, are starting to take the lead on certain procedures and the Division and Board should move fast.

ACTION: Jan Blankensteijn will coordinate with the above members and get back to the Council in April 2004. Peter Harris will also be contacted.

d) Part 1 – EBSQ-VASC

Jes Sandermann repeated his suggestion of 2 years ago, with his co-representative for Denmark, Henrik Sillesen, that Common Trunk should not in any way act as index procedures, and he requested that Part 1 be re-written for next year. This was supported by José Fernandes e Fernandes (Portugal), as by most members

ACTION: the Executive Group will bring this issue to the April 2004 Council Meeting

The President of the Board, John Wolfe said the format of the whole examination should be looked at closely to see what could be done to ensure its future viability. The Secretary Christos Liapis, said the examination should be promoted to young fellows with criteria based on 2 years of experience instead of 5. He asked how it could be implemented as an exit examination and John Wolfe suggested the following:

- a) for candidates from countries where vascular surgery is not a mono-specialty and therefore do not have a CCST in vascular surgery

b) for candidates eligible for CCST within 6 months, only on approval from their national vascular societies.

There followed some discussion as to whether the latter would be viewed as a way of bypassing national examinations, and Peter Lamont (UK) said that the JCST are very concerned with the EU Board Examinations becoming a back-door entry. He added, however, that since the UK training year is October to October, the majority of candidates become eligible for EBSQ-VASC too late. If however, the EBSQ-VASC could follow closely on to the CCST, it might attract such graduates. John Wolfe mentioned that the UK is seeking Europe's assistance with small numbers of people in specialties, and that only 5 countries in Europe have national examinations. Some members expressed their reservations, such as Fabrizio Benedetti-Valentini, President of the Division, who said the initial criteria were based on accepting *only CCST holders*. José Fernandes e Fernandes (Portugal), added that he would be concerned if a candidate wanted to bypass the national examination. The President of the Board, John Wolfe said the Division and Board would have to come to a decision, as it was not worth bringing in so many assessors for only 14 candidates. Thomas Nyheim (EAVST) Norway, suggested developing a curriculum for the examinations as a training tool and a reference. Chris Russell, observer from RCENG reiterated the importance of a clear curriculum and also a revision course, as was done independently of the Division and Board, for the first time this year.

e) Special Diploma for non-Europeans with partial EU training

The Secretary, Christos Liapis raised the issue of the right of examination for non-EU applicants who cannot sit under the present entry criteria i.e. those who have only partial EU training and cannot obtain the CCST as they have no right of abode in the EU. Some members argued that creating a special diploma would be like shooting holes in the recognition system. However, since the UEMS Diploma does not entitle candidates to work or reside in Europe the issue could be investigated.

ACTION: José Fernandes e Fernandes will collaborate with David Bergqvist for a proposal for the Council in April 2003.

10 Logbook – Chairman, Domenico Palombo (Italy)

The Chairman Domenico Palombo, pointed out the versatility of the logbook in its electronic format that permits easy adjustment according to changing needs. He appealed to the membership to encourage its use, particularly among the younger surgeons and the Secretary, Christos Liapis, emphasised the need to promote this valuable tool.

11 EVCME – Chairman, J Hajo van Bockel (Netherlands)

The EVCME Chairman Hajo van Bockel, reported on the current status for 2003. The Committee had received 15 applications this year for meetings in France, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, UK. Of interest are requests from new countries such as Estonia and Andorra. The most important 2003 EVCME activity was the revision of the Guidelines concerning industry support. The final draft was put before the Council on 3 September and the President of the Board, John Wolfe, invited comments. André Nevelsteen (Belgium) mentioned that in general, there was too much use of financial support and that Industry should provide other forms - such as logistic assistance. Henrik Sillesen (Denmark) found the Guidelines satisfactory and in his opinion, felt they would not offend Industry. José Fernandes e Fernandes (Portugal) agreed that it was a balanced document and the Guidelines* were approved by all present.

**Since these Minutes the Guidelines have been prepared for publication and will be submitted to the EJVES for this purpose.*

12 BOOK – Status of Vascular Surgery across Europe

The book has been warmly received by the member countries that kindly contributed by presenting their status of vascular surgery and also completing a questionnaire on the '48-hr Week' Directive. The book will also contain individual contributions, mainly from people

associated with the Division and Board since the inception. Distribution: primarily to 1000 ESVS members at the next ESVS Annual Meeting in Innsbruck, in Sept 2004.

Note: since the 3 September Meeting, the ESVS has kindly approved this venture for financial support. The Division and Board of Vascular Surgery are most grateful to the ESVS President, Tomislav Sosa, the Secretary Michael Horrocks and all the ESVS Council Members for this support.

13 Elections

The current Executive comprises of a President of the Division, a President and Vice President of the Board, and a Secretary/Treasurer of the Division and Board. The current status of the April 2002 elections stands as follows:

Division – President, F Benedetti-Valentini – 4-year term ending 2006

Board – President, J Wolfe – 2-year term ending 2004

Board – Vice President, K Balzer – 2-year term ending 2004

Secretary/Treasurer – 4-year term renewable C Liapis (re-elected 2001) – term ending 2004

The requirements of the next Secretary were drawn up as follows:

1 The nominee should be a national representative (i.e. Council Member)

2 Should be enthusiastic

3 Should have good secretarial support

4 Office space

5 Suitable geographical location

The current Secretary/Treasurer, Christos Liapis suggested there should be an external audit on the financial status before the takeover – maybe by Juha Pekka Salenius (Finland).

ACTION: all members are kindly requested to put forward their nominations to the Secretary at liapivas@panafonet.gr by **15 November 2003** and the formal elections will take place during the London Meeting of the Division and Board of Vascular Surgery on Saturday, 3 April 2004.

14 Report of the Secretary/Treasurer, Christos D Liapis

The Secretary thanked the membership for their unbending support of the activities of the Division and Board. He reported that the finances currently stand at €49,677,98 as opposed to €43,516,46 at the April meeting. Although the increased activities are adding a burden on the funds, they stand higher than the same period last year, which was €40,904,83. For logistic reasons, the membership fees for each current year will now become payable on 1 January of each year. Consequently, the membership will be invoiced accordingly before the end of 2003.

15 Date of next meeting

The next Council Meeting of the Division and Board of Vascular Surgery will take place in London on Saturday 3 September 2003.

There being no further business, the Presidents of the Division and the Board (F Benedetti-Valentini and John Wolfe respectively) thanked the members for participating and the meeting was closed.

Yours respectfully

C D Liapis, MD FACS FRCS
Secretary General
UEMS Division and Board of Vascular Surgery

Minutes, 3 September 2003