

The Role of European National Journals in Education

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The Editors' Network of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) defined its mission in the statement published across the national cardiac journals of Europe in 2008.¹ The Network is now considering ways in which their publications can have a broader influence in the field of postgraduate education.

The need for cardiologists to continue to learn throughout their professional life will remain essential. Indeed recognition for the need for postgraduate education was highlighted by Hippocrates long before it was espoused by the Medication Educationalists and Public Relations Departments. "*Ars longa, vita brevis*" is the Latin translation of Hippocrates' recognition that for a doctor, the need to continue learning the art of medicine, lasts for all of our professional life. In medieval times, the foundation of modern day

ethical medical practice was laid within the heart of the universities; the long term future of the medical profession was founded in the concept of doctors as men, and women, of learning and knowledge, rather than the purveyors of non-scientifically based remedies.

So how does the modern day Editor of a national cardiology journal, crouched over his computer screen, relate to his medieval predecessor, the Abbot in charge of the university library selecting the books for scholarly enterprise? The most obvious difference, of course, is that the Internet provides modern day authors with easy access to the Editor and consequently the Editor is obliged to make judgements on a much larger number of manuscripts than his predecessor would have been asked to do (Figure 1). The academic effort however is potentially very valuable, allowing the Editor to accumulate a current wisdom of which writers combine both the knowledge of cardiovascular medicine, with the style with which to communicate that knowledge, in an authoritative way to doctors who wish to learn.

What are the characteristics of doctors who wish to learn? As adults, they prefer a self-directed approach, in which they identify their own learning needs, formulate learning objectives, identify resources to achieve these objectives and evaluate their own learning.² Medical journals provide a

*See Appendix for complete affiliations.

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

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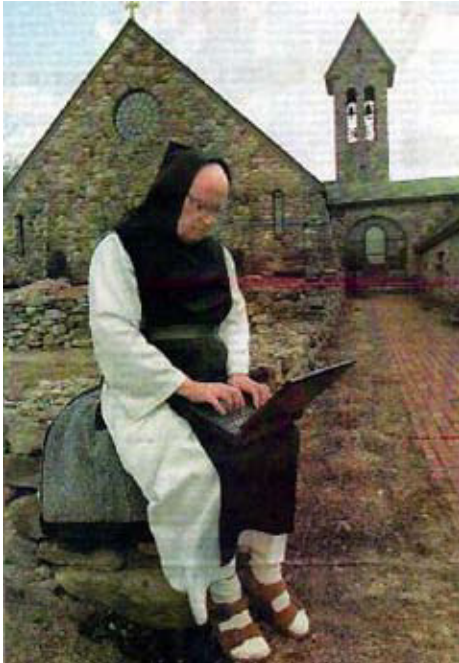


Figure.

ready resource for meeting the aims of self-directed learning, particularly through their commentary and review articles, but the value of the resource is critically dependent on the quality of the content, which in turn depends on 3 factors:

1. *Subject selection:* ideally this should be curriculum-based, the core curriculum of the ESC intending to provide a framework for the continuing medical education of the general European cardiologist. Both mainstream and more peripheral subject matter are required for comprehensive educational coverage, and so there will be a need for updates, particularly in areas where new discoveries are proceeding most rapidly.

2. *Author selection:* Editors are in an unrivalled position to select from currently active authors, those best able to educate others based on their subspecialty expertise and writing skills. Clear presentation must be coupled with the intellectual rigor to back up assertions with evidence derived from critical appraisal of the relevant literature.

3. *Presentation:* this should be designed to help stimulate the reader, using highly structured content, relevant illustrations, summary box displays, and annotated references that allow the reader to refer back to source material.

TABLE 1. Summary EBAC Criteria for Accreditation of CME Articles

Internationally recognised authors
Disclosure of conflicts of interest
No advertising within article
Provision of objective evaluation instrument (MCQs)
Web-based system for provision of CME certificate if $\geq 60\%$ of questions are answered correctly

Adults who wish to learn, however, require more of medical journals than high quality commentary and review articles. They also require educational feed-back provided by accrediting organisations in order to consolidate their learning and acquire the continuing medical education (CME) credits that in many countries are becoming an essential requirement for practising doctors. The European Board for Accreditation in Cardiology (EBAC), for example, requires that cardiologists earn a minimum of 250 CME credits over a period of 5 years, 125 of which must be “external CMEs” from formally planned external activities, including educational articles.³ The EBAC accreditation policy for CME articles is summarised in Table 1 and includes a requirement for “an objective evaluation instrument,” recommending the use of a multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ) made available on-line. Articles of >3500 words and 6 MCQs are considered equivalent to 1 hour of educational activity and provide 1 CME credit.

Nearly all the national cardiac journals of Europe carry high quality review articles⁴⁻⁷ (Table 2). Heart, the UK-based international cardiac journal, has been a leader in the field of journal-based education for 10 years,⁸ and currently accounts for >95% of educational articles attracting CME credits on the EBAC web site. Its educational section runs semi-autonomously within the journal under the direction of a dedicated editor and a team of specialist advisors. Education in Heart is available for free access via the Heart and ESC web sites^{9,10} and its articles are among the most highly accessed of all the journal’s papers, consistently appearing in the top ten web-downloads during 2008.¹¹⁻¹⁵ High quality educational content with provision of local CME credits is also available in other national cardiac journals¹⁶⁻¹⁷ (Table 2) and the Editors’ Network now provides a real opportunity to extend these educational initiatives throughout the national cardiology journals of Europe.¹⁰

TABLE 2. Questionnaire on Education Issues: ESC National Society Cardiovascular Journals

Currently published articles	84% journals publish Editorials (63% peer-reviewed) 92% journals publish Review Articles (83% peer-reviewed) 82% journals publish Supplements (62% peer-reviewed)
Clinical practice guidelines (CPG)	79% journals publish CPG: 67% National CPG 73% ESC CPG: – 50% translated into national languages – 36% in English – 14% translated into national languages and in English
Continuous medical education (CME)	42% journals have CME programs 32% journals obtain national CME credits 76% journals would be interested in obtaining ESC CME credits
Interest in additional educative material	92% journals interested in ESC joint educative papers 92% journals interested in “occasional” publication of educative material directly organized by the ESC 71% journals consider that educative material need not to be distinct/country focused 82% journals believe that both undergraduate and postgraduate education should be covered

ESC indicates European Society of Cardiology.

A 38 item questionnaire was devised by the Editor’s Network Nucleus and sent to ESC National Journal Editors (44 national societies and 16 affiliated societies). Data was obtained from 38 national journals (33 national society journals [75% response rate] and 5 affiliated societies journals)

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APPENDIX. Journal Names (by Alphabetic Order of Country Origin and Members (Editors-in-Chief of the Editors' Network)

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

^aNot official National Society journal, but major cardiology journal in Austria.^bCommon journal for the Baltic countries.