Scientists on the Spot: The past, present, and future of the Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science

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Biography: Johannes Waltenberger is Professor and Chair of Internal Medicine, Cardiology and Vascular Medicine at University of Münster. Professor Waltenberger is the incoming chair of the Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science (CBCS).

Biography: Jeremy Pearson is Emeritus Professor of Vascular Biology at King’s College London, in addition to being Associate Medical Director of the British Heart Foundation. Professor Pearson is the outgoing chair of the CBCS.

Tomasz Guzik: Welcome. As a part of our Cardiovascular Research Onlife interview series for this special European Society of Cardiology (ESC) edition, we have the honour of speaking to the outgoing chair of the Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science (CBCS), Professor Jeremy Pearson, and the incoming chair, Professor Johannes Waltenberger, to talk to us about the present and the future of basic science in cardiovascular research in the ESC. Thank you both very much for joining us.

Jeremy Pearson: Thank you. The Council on Basic Cardiovascular Science was founded originally after discussions in 2003 at the ESC between basic scientists who were interested in trying to grow the profile of basic science at the main ESC congress—which at that time was very small. We realized that underpinning basic science is vital for the translation into modern medicine and clinical practice. We felt that the ESC should be enabled to recognize this better by founding a council. There were discussions with the board of the ESC and in
In that time, the council has grown the activities of basic science within the ESC quite considerably. First of all, by building a stronger basic science programme within the main congress and after that, by providing extra activities for basic scientists to weld them together and to bring in basic scientists from across Europe, outside the ESC, who are cardiovascular researchers in order to integrate them into the whole council. So we have sister societies and working groups represented on our council. In 2009, we started the first CBCS summer school, which is run every other year in Nice in the Heart House for 70 students, which they love. It provides an introduction to modern cardiovascular science and also advice on career development.

Then in the intervening years, in 2010, we started the Frontiers in Cardiovascular Biology meetings. The fifth meeting was held in Vienna in 2018 and the sixth will be in Budapest in 2020. So, going forward, Johannes has the task now of trying to develop this very active council further. The other thing I haven’t said, and that he may wish to elaborate on, is that we have really been aided in this by developing the Scientists of Tomorrow within our council to help us get young blood into the council and young ideas—and develop what they do. And of course, the Scientists of Tomorrow have been highly successful, including in the development of the Onlife section for Cardiovascular Research.

So what we are going to do is: (i) maintain the positive achievements of this council and strengthen them further. Continuity and further development of our activities by continuous interactions with those who serve, deserve and benefit from it and (ii) challenge and channel the founding spirit of the CBCS from 2003. This will enforce the impact of the different bodies of the council both from within, namely the working groups, councils and associations; but also from outside, to embrace our cardiovascular sister societies in a more intense way. We will initiate discussions and intensify interactions across conceptual borders. We are sure that this is going to be the basis for further developments to strengthen the CBCS as a think-tank for basic science in Europe. Everyone has to be aware that basic science represents a fundamental home base for most of the subdisciplines of modern Cardiology. Basic science training is a fantastic and rewarding opportunity for future clinical cardiologists. An active CBCS will therefore be to the benefit of scientists, clinician-scientists, and the European Society of Cardiology.

Tomasz Guzik: Thank you both very much for this transcribed interview on the CBCS for Cardiovascular Research Onlife.