The word ‘mentor’ originates from Homer’s character Mentor in his epic poem Odyssey. Mentor was Odysseus’ trusted friend: the one Odysseus asked to look after and teach his son when leaving to fight in the Trojan War. However, the concept of mentorship has since evolved to transcend the simple act of ‘teaching’ and is currently considered a means to further enhance work performance and engagement—providing career guidance, psychological support, and skill development. Among healthcare providers, mentorship is acknowledged as an essential step in both professional and personal development. However, both early career doctors and scientists are often faced with the challenges of identifying a mentor, and establishing an effective mentor relationship. Unfortunately, opportunities can be limited.

The European Heart Journal (EHJ) is an international, peer-reviewed journal, committed to representing clinical and scientific research of the highest quality within the field of cardiovascular medicine. The editors of the EHJ, responsible for selecting the journal’s content, are identified for their impressive experience in clinical and research fields. They also have great responsibility towards the authors, the peer-reviewers, and, most importantly, towards the journal’s readers and scientific community. Hence, they represent potentially invaluable mentors for junior cardiologists and/or cardiovascular medicine researchers who are specifically interested in developing their careers to acquire the skills necessary to be potential members of an editorial board.

The EHJ is therefore proud to announce the new EHJ Mentorship Programme, which provides the unique opportunity for one-on-one training and mentorship with an active Associate Editor of the journal. The main objective of this programme is to strengthen the mentee’s skills by providing constructive feedback on their performance of peer-reviews. Even more important, however, is teaching the mentees to understand the responsibilities and values of academic publishing (transparency, ethics, and robustness) as well as the metrics and parameters of peer-reviewed journals.

Figure 1 Names and photos of the EHJ mentors.
The programme was launched as a pilot in February 2022, and five outstanding young cardiologists and researchers were selected and appointed to six editors of the EHJ (Figures 1 and 2 with photos and names). The duration of the programme is currently set to 1.5 year, ending during the ESC Congress 2023, when the mentees will be acknowledged with a certificate of completion. During the ESC Congress 2023, a new call for mentees will be launched.

After attending a virtual introductive lesson about the purpose of the project, each mentee was put in direct contact with his/her mentor. The programme has been designed to focus on two main aspects:

1. **Peer-reviewing.** As editors of the EHJ, we fully believe that peer-review is at the heart of scientific publishing. It provides authors with the opportunity to discuss and improve upon a manuscript before publication and helps journals to ensure quality standards of articles published. Peer-reviewing is also an essential skill for any researcher, enabling critical appraisal of advancements in the field with the aim of ensuring the integrity of scientific research. Providing a balanced and robust review is therefore a crucial skill for any researcher and/or clinician. With this aim in mind, the mentor will regularly assign submitted manuscripts to the mentee for peer-review, for a minimum of 10 reviews over the course of the pilot programme. A ‘guideline to review’ for the EHJ has been developed to ensure a consistent approach in reviewing across editors. After the mentee has provided each of his/her assessments, the mentor responds with personal constructive feedback, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of their review while providing a publishing perspective on the value of the submitted manuscript.

2. **Editorial decisions and responsibilities.** The mentee will have the opportunity to contact the mentor for further discussion about editorial decision-making regarding the overall criteria and the robustness of research in the cardiovascular field. The mentee will also be invited to the weekly editor meetings, where they will experience how each manuscript they have evaluated is discussed, while also observing the editorial board’s decision-making process on selecting high-quality content for the journal.

The EHJ mentorship programme is therefore a unique initiative aimed at strengthening the educational role of the journal and honouring its commitment to train and shape the careers of the next generation of outstanding researchers, reviewers, and clinicians. As editors of the EHJ, we also recognize the bidirectional value of the mentorship: being mentored is believed to have an important influence on personal development, career guidance, and career choice. However, mentors themselves will also further develop and enrich their abilities by learning to share knowledge and skills, and by enjoying the excitement of witnessing the improvement and the success of younger colleagues.

**Conflict of interest:** None declared.