2013 European Association Cardiovascular Imaging Research Grants

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Since its beginning, the European Association of Cardiovascular Imaging (formerly European Association of Echocardiography) Research Programme has funded eight grants and allowed the awardees to expand their research interests in outstanding centres in the field of echocardiography in Europe outside their home institution (for a full report, see: Eur Heart J Cardiovasc Imaging 2012;13:47–50).

The success of the initiative induced the Board to invest more money and four grants have been funded for the year 2013. The increment of funding with the possibility of higher chances of success increased significantly the applications with the record number of 25. A few changes have been made as regards the application format (which was prepared in a pre-specified format in order to homogenize the detailed description of the project), submission (all documents are now submitted electronically), the way of evaluating the projects by appointment of an independent committee of scientist external to the Board in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest, and the scoring system (20 point overall, 1–5 points for the candidate CV; 1–10 points for the overall project quality, and 1–5 points for the feasibility of the research over a year time span). The external committee was formed by the following scientists: Otto Smiseth (Oslo, Norway); Erwan Donal (Rennes, France); Mark Monaghan (London, UK); Antonella Moreo (Milan, Italy); Philippe Pibarot (Quebec, Canada); Gerald Maurer (Wien, Austria); and Jarek Kasprzak, Lodz, Poland.

EACVI Research grant 2013 winners are: Dr Philippe Debonnaire (Home institution: Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium; Host institution: Leiden University Medical Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands); Dr Gonenc Kocabay (Home institution: Kosuyolu Heart Education and Research Hospital, Istanbul, Turkey; Host institution: Department of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Sciences, University of Padua, Italy); Dr Damien Voilliot (Home institution: Cardiology Department—University Hospital of Nancy, France; Host institution: Department of Cardiology, CHU Sart Tilman, B-4000 LIEGE, Belgium); Dr Marijana Tadic (Home institution: University Hospital ‘Dr Dragisa Misovic’, Belgrade, Serbia; Host institution: Department of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Sciences, University of Padua, Italy). For those who are interested, all submitted projects can be seen here: http://www.escardio.org/communities/EACVI/research-grants/Pages/past-projects.aspx).

Despite a significant improvement of the submission and selection process over the years, there is still room for improvement. In particular, efforts are to be made in order to have more laboratories as host institution, especially those accredited by the EACVI. Most of the applicant’s projects were to be performed in a limited number of host institutions and, this year, two grants went to the same Institution. Last year, Club 35 committee launched an adhesion poll for high-level research laboratories in Europe willing to host young investigators with a detailed description of their main research areas in cardiovascular ultrasound that would have provided a wide view of the available research facilities in Europe. Unfortunately, the initiative was unsuccessful and very few laboratories replied to the call.

It is conceivable that a new set of rules should be defined in order to avoid the concentration of the grants in the same laboratories. To avoid the withdrawal of a potential winner, it would be advisable to suggest host institution to support only one grant application. In any event, this will be taken care of by the newly established EACVI Board, which will probably expand the areas of research interests to all the different imaging modalities. The new EACVI Scientific Documents Committee will further continue to maintain the transparency policy in the application process and prepare new recommendation documents on multimodality imaging in the transition period from EAE to EACVI. The committee will secure an active participation of the National Societies in these reviewing processes.

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