

Editorial



Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

We are approaching 2016, the year of the XIV ESC Congress in Basel, the first time an ESC Congress has been organised in a German-speaking country. I feel that the German-speaking countries are under-represented in our Society. The ESC Board of Directors believes that the Basel Congress could be the occasion to foster closer relations between German-speaking colleagues and our Society and hope many of them will then join us as ESC members.

2015 was full of ESC activities, the most important of which – the XII ESC Seminar – is reported by Professor Daniel Seidman in this issue of the newsletter.

Let me (on behalf the ESC Executive Committee and Board of Directors) also pass to all of you our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a healthy, prosperous and Happy New Year.

Best greetings
Medard Lech, ESC Secretary General

14th Congress / 2nd Global Conference of the ESC



14th ESC Congress / 2nd Global ESC Conference, Basel, Switzerland, 4 to 7 May 2016

Dear Colleagues,

Grüezi alle mitendand. A warm welcome to Basel to all of you. The title of the Congress “Contraception: from molecular biology to social science and politics” is the programme, a promise and a challenge. This Congress will provide the opportunity to create and maintain multidisciplinary networks between individuals, organisations and continents.

Announcement with detailed programme: www.esrch.eu/events/esc-events/2016.
Register now: www.esrch.eu/registrationform14th

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Basel in May 2016.

Best wishes,
Johannes Bitzer, Congress President

Membership



ESC membership 2016

As the end of the year is approaching fast, we will soon start our ESC membership 2016 campaign. However, there is no need to wait to renew your membership or to become a new member through the following link: www.esrch.eu/user/register

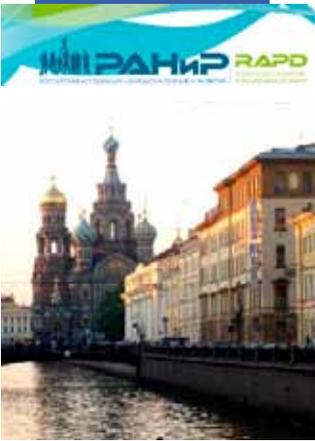
We are delighted to announce that the Journal (European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care) is again included in the membership fee (60 euro) without any additional cost.

We have listed here a few of the benefits you enjoy as a member:

- 6 free editions of the official ESC Journal,
- 3 newsletters,
- Members may apply to stand for the Board of Directors or Expert Groups,
- Members may apply to the ESC for educational grants,
- Members get free attendance at Seminars and a substantial reduction to the Congress fee,
- Personal access to the ESC website

International or national European organisations with similar or related aims may apply for affiliation to the ESC. Members of affiliated societies pay a 50 percent reduced yearly fee. Members of affiliated societies have the same rights as other ESC members including voting rights.

13th ESC Seminar



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ESC Seminar 2017, Saint Petersburg

The Russian Association for Population and Development (RAPD) warmly welcomes the Seminar of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health to Saint Petersburg, Russia in 2017. Saint Petersburg is the second largest city, situated in the North-West of Russia. It has more to offer than just the Hermitage Museum and the Mariinsky Ballet. It is one of the biggest cultural centres in the world, a city with an exceptionally rich history, centuries-old traditions and a promising future. Saint Petersburg has been named the best tourist destination in Europe by the prestigious World Travel Awards - Europe in September 2015.

RAPD, which applied to organise the seminar, is the largest NGO in the field of reproductive health and rights in Russia, striving for building the capacity and sensitisation of health care professionals, public health officials and general population in the field of modern contraception and family planning. The ESC Seminar in St Petersburg is fully supported by the City Hall of St Petersburg and the Department of International programmes "St Petersburg Convention Bureau". Despite regular scientific conferences and congresses in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology in Russia, it is rare that international scientific events are focused on contraception and reproductive choice exclusively. Reproductive healthcare professionals from Russia and Russian-speaking countries are very honoured to host the event for the first time in the territory of the Russian Federation.

The North-West region of Russia is characterised by highly dense population, good awareness of health issues, developed infrastructure and high concentration of medical and scientific entities. The second biggest Scientific Research Center in Russia (named after obstetrician-gynaecologist Dmitry Ott), five medical schools, many medical colleges and vocational schools are situated in St Petersburg. We hope the Seminar will be attended by 200-500 participants, including health care professionals, young specialists from the St Petersburg region, obstetricians and gynecologists from all over the country and other Russian-speaking countries, who would like to visit this beautiful northern city and are thrilled to grasp valuable experience of European and global experts, known from the pages of the ESC Journal.

RAPD also hopes that European specialists will find the northern capital of Russia an interesting tourist destination and inspiring scientific experience of meeting with colleagues, experts and young specialists.

RAPD and the Scientific Research Center for Obstetrics, Gynecology and Perinatology, as leading organisers of the event, are convinced in the success of the event and will try to embrace participants with traditional Russian hospitality, introducing them to scientific and practical achievements in the field of reproductive health care in Russia and acquainting them with a beautiful city of canals, architecture, world heritage, monuments, museums as well as great and exciting history.

Lyubov Erofeeva, ESC Board member Russia

GA 2016

General Assembly 2016

All paid-up members for 2016 will be welcome to attend the General Assembly (GA) which will take place on Thursday, 5 May 2016 from 17:15-18:15. Place of the meeting: Congress Center Basel, Messeplatz 21, 4058 Basel, Switzerland. Members who wish to add an item(s) to the agenda can do so by email to info@esrh.eu no later than 4 April 2016. The final agenda will be available on the ESC website from 20 April 2016.

WCD

World Contraception Day



World Contraception Day (WCD) takes place on September 26th every year. The annual, worldwide campaign centres around a vision where every pregnancy is wanted. Launched in 2007, WCD's mission is to improve awareness of contraception and to enable young people to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health. The latest news on World Contraception Day can be found at www.your-life.com "It's your life, it's your future!" This year's World Contraception Day was accompanied by the #AFriendOfMine digital campaign. It was aimed directly at teens and young adults, and will get us closer to reaching our goal: a world in which every pregnancy is wanted. WCD is supported by a coalition of 12 international Non-Governmental Organizations (including ESC) with an interest in sexual and reproductive health and is sponsored by Bayer HealthCare.

Kai Haldre, ESC WCD representative

ESC Medal



ESC Medal 2016

An ESC Congress Medal is established to honour outstanding national or international recognised activity in contraception, abortion, sexual or reproductive health in accordance with the aims of the Society. The Board of Directors elected Prof. Dr Vera Prilepskaya (Russia) for the 2016 Congress Medal. The award will be conferred at the next ESC Congress in Basel, Switzerland (4 to 7 May 2016). Prof. Prilepskaya is Deputy Director at the Federal State Institution Research Centre in Obstetrics, Gynecology and Perinatology, named after the academicians Professor V.I. Kulakov. She is the President of the Russian Society of Contraception (RSC).

Board representation



Representation of your country in the Board

The reference point to count the number of paid-up members versus board representation is 31 December 2015. A minimum of 10 members are needed to have one board member; 50 or more members offer a country two board representatives. In January 2016, we will alert all members on the situation for their country, together with a call for board membership (if any vacancies). E-voting will occur in early April 2016. Only paid-up members in 2016 (not 2015) will be allowed to vote, if needed. The number of paid-up members per country can be monitored permanently at: www.esrh.eu/membership/paid-members

Changes rules / policies

Changes in rules and policies

The Board of Directors agreed on a few changes in the ESC Rules and Policies. These changes are:

- The 'old' and the 'new' Board will meet at the same time at each ESC Congress on Wednesday from 11:00 to 15:00. This meeting will be followed by a meeting of the new Board only, from 15:00 to 16:00, in order to vote for the different committees and groups. The 'old' Executive Committee will chair the General Assembly.
- There will be no replacement in case of Board membership resignation.
- The appointment of two deputy Editors-in-Chief (currently only one is foreseen in the Rules)
- Election process for Editors and Editor-in-Chief
- Combined membership Expert Group and Internal Scientific Committee
- Multiple choice in case of voting for long lists of applicants
- The mandate period for expert group members is changed from 2 to 4 years, renewable once. The changes will be implemented on the relevant website pages.

Guidelines EC

Guidelines on Emergency Contraception

The guidelines on Emergency Contraception that were published in December 2013 by the European Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ECEC), with the support of the ESC, have already been adapted and published for use in 3 countries: Romania, Italy and Spain. You can see the national editions on the website: www.ec-ec.org/resources/publications

Summary 12th ESC Seminar



Summary of the 12th ESC Seminar

The 12th ESC Seminar took place on September 2-4th 2015 in Tel-Aviv. This was the first ESC event organised in Israel and was hailed as very successful and enjoyable by participants. The scientific programme of the seminar was centred on the chosen theme: "Removing Medical, Social, Cultural and Religious Barriers to Effective and Safe Contraception."

The welcome address was followed by a tribute to Prof. Carl Djerassi, who passed away this year, given by Dr. David Serfaty. Djerassi is often considered to be "the father of the pill" due to his 1951 synthesis of norethisterone, the initial step in the development of oral contraceptives. Dr. Serfaty, one of the founders and past presidents of ESC, received a certificate of recognition from the Israeli Society for Contraception in light of his long contribution to the field.

The first scientific session focused on the cultural barriers for contraception in Europe. Prof. K. Gemzell-Danielsson, the current President of ESC, noted that the Nordic countries are currently the world leaders in the uptake of the intrauterine levonorgestrel releasing system (LNG-IUS). She presented new, unpublished data showing that the use of intrauterine contraception, and especially the LNG-IUS, in young and nulliparous women are reassuring and should be used to update local guidelines and current practices beyond the Nordic countries.

Prof. D. Seidman discussed the poor acceptability of oral contraceptive pills (OCP) in many developed countries, from Japan to Russia. He showed data from an unpublished survey suggesting that once women emigrated from the former Soviet Union (FSU) countries they adopted the high rate of OCP use seen among Israeli-born women. He suggested that the current low prevalence of OCP use in FSU countries may be improved by better communication of its safety and ease of use. It was also proposed that changing views among physicians may be crucial when attempting to improve the use of OCPs in low prevalence countries. The session was closed by Prof. S. Skouby who attempted to answer an intriguing question: "Who is afraid of permanent contraception (PC) of women and men?" He noted that, although permanent methods are widely available worldwide, they are marginalised and stigmatised in some countries and highly restricted in others. He suggested that concerns about reversibility and side effects may limit access in some more developed countries, while inadequate availability of surgical facilities and trained personnel can present a significant barrier to use in many developing nations. Furthermore, cultural background and present life situation have a great impact on the attitude toward, and acceptance of, PC thus influencing the final choice. He concluded that detailed counselling about PC is essential and should be improved.

The second session revolved around a topic rarely discussed -- How can better understanding of religious beliefs be applied to promote contraceptive use? The religious concerns regarding the use of contraception were eloquently presented by Dr H. Marwan for Christianity, Dr A. Kubba for Islam and Dr H. Katan for the Jewish faith. Many in the audience were surprised by our lack of knowledge on this important topic. Dr H. Marwan concluded that, looking forward, medical professionals must reconcile their respect for the patient's religious ideals with care for the patient's wellbeing. Only then can a suitable solution to the ever unresolved barrier for effective contraception be attained.

The next session dealt with "Contraceptive choices for special medical conditions" and was a very practical session with immediate benefit to anyone prescribing contraceptives: Prof. L. Shulman reviewed the concerns regarding obesity; Dr A. Ber discussed the special needs of diabetic patients; Prof. G. Merki delivered some of her immense experience with patients suffering from migraines; Prof. A. Gompel presented the needs of patients with SLE and thrombophilia; Dr N. Porat that of women with congenital heart disease; and Dr A. Yeshaya described the new evolving understanding of the special requirements of post organ transplantation patients.

The second Seminar day was opened by a session concerning the issue "Do social and economic factors still play a role in gaining access to contraception?" The impressive achievements of Estonia, showing the clear cost-effectiveness of school-based sexuality education, were presented by Dr K. Haldre. Dr R. Lertxundi discussed whether the price of contraception still serves as a barrier to its widespread use. Prof. L. Shulman assessed the ongoing role of the internet in the development of counselling programmes, including interactive programmes, to optimise the process by which women and couples initiate contraception. He suggested that 'Dr Google' currently plays a growing role in the decision-making process of many women when choosing their contraceptive method. This session was followed by a lively debate on whether contraception can or should be provided over the counter without medical counselling and consultation advocated by Dr A. Kubba and Prof. J. Bitzer.

The first workshop dealt with Prevention of STIs, HPV vaccination, HIV prophylaxis, HSV and Chlamydia. Dr P. Greenhouse tackled the somewhat provocative topic of "How much "safer" is Oral Sex?" He concluded that the only way to reduce oral sex-related STIs – and to prevent the emergence of untreatable gonorrhoea – is to mount a vigorous condom-for-all-fellatio campaign amongst MSM and all heterosexuals, which is unlikely to succeed as the fear of HIV acquisition has receded. He stressed that no practical protection is available for dedicated cunnilinguists, other than universal HPV vaccination. Prof. G. Donders discussed how vaginal flora factors may influence transmission risk. He pointed out that women with a healthy lactobacillus-dominant microflora are better protected against potential invading pathogens than women with disrupted microflora. He also discussed the potential use of probiotics. Prof. B. Frey Tirri deliberated on progress with vaccines that are now available for the prevention of STIs. She also confirmed that there are great efforts in developing vaccines for HSV-1/2, HIV and Chlamydia trachomatis.

The second workshop tackled the topic of "Contraception and the cycle of life". Is it appropriate to use OCPs in adolescents for non-contraceptive indications? Prof. D. Apter noted that age, as such, is no contraindication for any contraceptive method. According to WHO medical eligibility criteria, combined and progestogen-only contraceptive pills can be used from menarche onwards. Prof. R. Beerthuisen challenged the uncertainty of whether LARCs, Condoms or OCPs are best for the nulliparous. He concluded that LARCs are the most effective modern methods of contraception and should therefore also be offered during counselling of nulliparous women. The seminar was concluded by Prof. M. Lech's enthusiastic presentation on when we should stop OCPs during the perimenopause. He stated that family planning is a very important issue in the life-course of contemporary men and women, regardless of where they live and their social status. He contemplated there is no simple answer when to stop hormonal contraception in women who have used this method for a very long period of their lives.

The Seminar Organizers, Dr Amos Ber and Prof. Daniel Seidman, thanked the Faculty and the ESC staff for their great support. It was concluded that the scientific programme was exceptionally interesting and thought-provoking. We are now all looking forward towards an exciting ESC Congress in Basel next year.

Daniel Seidman, ESC Board Member Israel