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European Academy of Andrology Newsletter 2-2015

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Dear EAA Academicians and Affiliated Members,

Six months after the first Newsletter, I am back to you with a short summary highlighting the most relevant EAA-related activities since March 2015. Given that in June we have already circulated an *online* Newsletter among our members, I apologize in advance if you are already familiar with some of the news which is going to be announced in this "Society Corner".

In May, novel actions have been taken towards the recognition of the "Clinical Andrologist" title also at the UEMS level. The ESE Executive Council has invited me to take part in their meeting in Dublin and to present our plans concerning the UEMS "Multidisciplinary Joint Curriculum in Andrology". I am happy to announce that the ESE Council does support our request and further actions are ongoing with the UEMS Endocrinology section and are planned with the Urology sections. I am going to keep you posted on further progresses in my next letters.

Last June the ECA 2016 Programme Organizing Committee meeting took place in Rotterdam and the scientific programme has been defined (please visit the ECA 2016 website!).

In July, the EAA President, Secretary and two EC members (W. Weidner and G. Dohle) have been invited to Moscow in order to attend the International Forum "New Horizons in Reproductive Health" organized by Prof Apolikhin (Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation). This meeting allowed an intense interaction between the EAA representatives and Russian andrologists and represents an important starting point for future collaboration.

Concerning our educational activities, you have already received the information about the establishment of the "EAA Ultrasound School". Following the presentation of the preliminary data on the EAA multicenter study entitled "Standardisation of male genital tract colour – Doppler ultrasound parameters in healthy, fertile men" (ECA 2016, Barcelona), interest towards this diagnostic tool has greatly increased. In order to provide an appropriate training for those who are willing to learn this technique, an "EAA Ultrasound School" has been established in Florence. The school is starting in November 2015 (further information are provided in this Newsletter and on the EAA website).

In order to help education and research activities of our young Affiliated Members, two scholarships were awarded in September 2015 (more details below).

I hope you find our modernized website, designed by our webmaster Philip Steer, useful for news about travel grants,

scholarships and meetings. We have established a "virtual library" as well which includes abstracts of recently published top andrology papers, a list of "the best papers" from our EAA centres and the coming EAA Guidelines (see further details in this issue). You are already familiar with the "librarians" appointed by the Executive Council, Professors Andreas Meinhardt and Hans-Christian Schuppe from Giessen. The mandate of our librarians will expire in September 2016 and until that date you are all welcome to contact them about andrology-related papers.

While on the subject, I cannot avoid to mention the exciting news from the world of genetics of male infertility where growing evidence suggest a truly masculine role for the X chromosome! After the discovery of the first recurrent, patient specific X chromosome-linked deletion with potential clinical significance (Lo Giacco *et al.* 2014), now an even more promising finding has been announced: the first X chromosome-linked gene mutation, with potential diagnostic and prognostic value which has been published in NEJM (Yatsenko *et al.*, 2015). A short description of the study can be found in this issue from Dr Tuettelmann, one of the PIs directing the study. In July, a second study on the same gene has been published by the laboratory of Dr Wang (from Philadelphia) further supporting the clinical importance of TEX11 genetic screening. Needless to say, this publication is of great benefit to andrology because publishing in such a prestigious journal confers further importance to our field. Let us hope it will help promote male reproductive health-related research topics in the frame of Horizon 2020.

Finally, I am very happy to announce that during the first 9 months of 2015, **27 new members**, both clinicians and biologists, have joined the EAA. For the first time, three Portuguese scientists applied to the EAA, increasing the number of countries of origins of our members to 33! The EAA, by its statute, represent a platform for interaction between basic and clinical andrologists and as I wrote in my first presidential letter, the promotion of new affiliated members is one of the priorities.

With all my best wishes.

LATEST NEWS

We welcome our new affiliated members!

Prof. Medhat Amer (Egypt)

Dr. Marco Bonomi (Italy)
 Dr. Karen Czeloth (Germany)
 Dr. Brigitte Decallonne (Belgium)
 Dr. Mats Holmberg (Sweden)
 Dr. Kirils Ivanovs (Latvia)
 Prof. Zdravko Kamenov (Bulgaria)
 Dr. Antonio Leen (Belgium)
 Dr. Katarina Link (Sweden)
 Dr. Thaer M. Farhan (Iraq)
 Dr. Daniel Moreno Mendoza (Spain)
 Dr. P. Navarro Costa (Portugal)
 Dr. Maria-Fernanda Peraza-Godoy (Spain)
 Prof. Taneli Raivio (Finland)
 Prof. Vincenzo Rochira (Italy)
 Dr. Daniele Santi (Italy)
 Dr. Marta Sochaj (Poland)
 Dr. José Vinay (Spain)

EAA training centres

The EAA Training centre of Giessen has been re-accredited by the EAA EC on the 30th March 2015 for a period of 3 years.

The EAA Training centre of Barcelona Fundació Puigvert has been re-accredited by the EAA EC on the 19th June 2015 for a period of 3 years.

EAA clinical andrologist examination

The EAA Clinical Andrologist Examination took place in Roma on the 2nd of October 2015 at the University "La Sapienza". We welcome our novel EAA Clinical Andrologists:

Dr. Christos Tsamietis, EAA Centre Thessaloniki
 Dr. Davide Francomano, EAA Centre Rome
 Dr. Loa Nordkap, EAA Centre Copenhagen
 Dr. Anne Kirstine Bang, EAA Centre Copenhagen
 Dr. Pia Ekbohm, EAA Centre Copenhagen

European Congress of Andrology 21–23 September 2016, Rotterdam

The Preliminary program of ECA 2016 and additional information are available on the ECA website: <http://www.ecacongress2016.com/>.

Establishment of the EAA ultrasound school

As already announced in our online Newsletter, the European Academy of Andrology (EAA) Executive Council approved the establishment of an "EAA Ultrasound School" focusing on "Male Genital Tract and Penile Ultrasound" with a dedicated course. The main objective of the Ultrasound School is to offer high-quality training to all physicians interested in andrological ultrasound. This will help to (a) train highly competent operators in andrological ultrasound, and (b) standardize andrological ultrasound methods in Europe.

The first edition of the Ultrasound Course will take place at the EAA Centre of Florence (coordinator Dr. Francesco Lotti) in collaboration with the EAA Center in Rome (Prof. Andrea Isidori) and a maximum of five fellows per year will attend the Course (EAA members have priority access). The Course contains two modules: (i) a theoretical part, lasting for a full day, will host all the fellows; (ii) a practical part, based on several ultrasound sessions, lasting for a total of 4 weeks (either consecutive or not). Fellows will individually take part in

ultrasound sessions of scrotal, transrectal and penile ultrasound, under supervision. After a final theoretical and practical examination, the fellows will obtain the EAA ultrasound school certification.

The selection process of the five fellows has been terminated in September and the course will start on the 14th of November 2015. The first edition will be a truly international one with fellows originating from Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Switzerland and Chile.

EAA grants

EAA is proud to announce the winners of the summer 2015 grants.

EAA scholarships

The "scholarship grants" have been announced in the June issue of the online Newsletter:

(1) EAA Scholarship Grant, worth €5000, to be awarded to a young clinician or researcher (age limit 40 years), member of the EAA, who submit the best application to attend a minimum of 4 months training in one of the EAA centres to improve personal knowledge and research skills in clinical/basic andrology.

The **winner is Dr. Yongning Lu** (EAA affiliated member - China), who will attend the Giessen EAA training center. In the Institute of Anatomy and Cell biology, Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, he will work on an UPEC-induced epididymo-orchitis and inflammation model that causes blood–testis barrier (BTB) dysfunction. The aims of the study are as follows: (1) To investigate BTB dysfunction related to structural and functional abnormal testis post-UPEC infection; (2) To discover abnormal activation of cell signalling pathways that contribute to UPEC-induced BTB impairment; (3) To confirm the virulence factors secreted from UPEC, together with inflammatory cytokine-induced abnormal activation of specific signalling pathways. This project will be carried out under the supervision of Prof. Andreas Meinhardt.

(2) Bayer- EAA scholarship, worth €1500 is awarded to a clinician, member of the EAA who submit the best application to attend a minimum of 4 weeks training in one of the EAA centres to improve personal skills in clinical andrology.

The **winner is Dr. Jose Ingazio Vinay** (EAA affiliated member) who will attend the EAA Ultrasound course in Florence, starting from November 2015.

Thanks to the generous offer of Bayer, Besins Healthcare, IBSA Foundation and Fundació Puigvert, travel grants are awarded to clinicians or researchers, members of the EAA, to attend an educational activity that has been included in the EAA scientific calendar.

The **winner Dr. Daniel Moreno** (EAA affiliated member) has attended the Munster course (Grant: 500 euros).

Please note that travel grants can be used both for EAA accredited meetings/courses and for short-term visits to EAA Centers.

EAA virtual library

At the beginning of June, a letter has been sent to all EAA members from the co-directors of the Virtual Library, Prof. Andreas Meinhardt and Prof. Hans-Christian Schuppe. New entries into the library are scheduled three times per year.

Each term, a couple of recently published papers covering both basic and clinical research in Andrology will be selected and highlighted on the library webpage. Links to the respective abstracts or, if open access is available, full texts are installed. The focus of this section is on news from 'outside' the EAA. An additional section of the new virtual library should reflect what is going on 'inside' EAA, and includes papers with high interest to our community published by the EAA centers. The papers are selected by the Centre directors.

News from the EAA journal "Andrology"

The first impact factor (IF) of "Andrology" has been released by the Thomson Reuters Web of Science. The IF is 2.3 and this figure is expected to increase next year because the first IF includes citations gathered within one year only (2014) to articles published during one year (2015), instead of the customary two-year period of citations and publications.

Multicenter studies

EAA multicentre ultrasound study: an update

In 2012, the European Academy of Andrology (EAA) promoted a multicentric study entitled "Standardisation of male genital tract colour - Doppler ultrasound parameters in healthy, fertile men", aimed at investigating the colour-Doppler ultrasound (CDUS) features of the entire male genital tract (MGT) in healthy fertile subjects, to obtain "normative" parameters for scrotal and transrectal CDUS. The study is designed as a prospective, cohort, multicentric, international, observational study. Currently, 14 EAA Centres are joining the project: Ancona, Italy; Barcelona, Spain; Catania, Italy; Cairo, Egypt; Florence, Italy; Giessen, Germany; Halle-Saale, Germany; L'Aquila, Italy; Leipzig, Germany; Lodz, Poland; Muenster, Germany; Rome, Italy; Stockholm, Sweden; Tartu, Estonia. Florence is the coordinating Centre and the coordinator is Dr. Francesco Lotti. 200 healthy, fertile subjects will be enrolled in the study. So far 127 subjects have been enrolled, 127 scrotal and 100 transrectal ultrasound tests have been performed. The Coordinator Centre informs all the other Centers about the advancements of the project every two months by issuing an updated report, which will soon be available on the EAA website. Standardization of MGT-CDUS parameters in a healthy, fertile population is an essential step for improving our diagnostic skills in identifying aetiological factors of male infertility.

Preliminary data (evaluation of 55 subjects) have been presented at the ECA Congress in Barcelona in October 2014 (see pdf file of the proceedings and detailed information about the study at the EAA website www.andrologyacademy.net)

EAA GUIDELINES

The EAA Council and the Guideline Committee (E. Rajpert-De Meyts and Giovanni Corona) have selected a number of topics in need of uniform management guidelines.

Invitations to lead authors, who are recognized as authorities in these topics, have been sent. We are pleased to inform the EAA members that the work has begun on the following guidelines:

- Management of Klinefelter syndrome in adults (lead authors: Michael Zitzmann and Ebo Nieschlag, Germany)

- Management of oligo-astheno-teratozoospermia (lead author: Aleksander Giwercman, Sweden)
- Management of azoospermia (lead author: Csilla Krausz, Italy)
- Diagnosis and management of male osteoporosis (lead author: Dirk Vanderschueren, Belgium)
- Management of sexual dysfunction in patients with thyroid disease (lead author: Emmanuele Jannini, Italy)
- Diagnosis and management of gynaecomastia (lead author: Niels Jorgensen, Denmark)
- Cryopreservation of semen (lead author: Herman Tournaye, Belgium)
- Ultrasound examination of the male reproductive tract (lead author: Francesco Lotti, Italy)
- Diagnosis and management of male accessory genital gland infections (lead author: Hans-Christian Schuppe, Germany)

Suggestions from the EAA members for additional topics are welcome!

Breaking news

Successful identification of an X-linked gene causing meiotic arrest and azoospermia

In this collaborative study recently published in the New England Journal of Medicine and led by Frank Tüttelmann (Institute of Human Genetics and Centre of Reproductive Medicine and Andrology, Münster, Germany) and Alexander Yatsenko (Magee-Womens Research Institute, Pittsburgh, USA), mutations in the X-linked testis-expressed gene 11 (*TEX11*) were identified as the cause for meiotic arrest and azoospermia. In the first step of this study, a high resolution array-CGH was used to screen azoospermic men and, indeed, a recurring deletion of three exons in *TEX11* was identified in two patients. Because this gene was previously shown to be a prerequisite for completing meiosis in knock-out mouse models, it immediately became an interesting candidate for further analyses. By sequencing *TEX11* in larger groups of azoospermic men, more pathogenic (truncating and splice) mutations were detected, while no mutations were found in controls. Overall, mutations in *TEX11* could be identified in 2.4% of azoospermic men and in as many as 15.2% of patients with meiotic arrest.

In conclusion, mutations in *TEX11* are to date the first major single-gene defect in azoospermia and mutation screening may be introduced into routine diagnostics in the fertility workup. This study also underlines the superiority of broad, genome-wide mutation screening in comparison to candidate gene approaches and the need for collaborative research in male infertility.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Forthcoming EAA accredited meetings

- EDMaRC Workshop: From primordial germ cells to spermatozoa; 24–27th November, 2015; Copenhagen, Denmark.
- The 2nd International Workshop on Klinefelter Syndrome, March 10–12, 2016 Münster, Germany.
- European Congress of Andrology 21–23 September 2016, Rotterdam.