

Report from the 12th Meeting of the Myocardial and Pericardial Diseases Working Group of the European Society of Cardiology, 2015 in Florence, Italy

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Nowadays, with a constant accumulation of data and knowledge, specialized and dedicated to particular problems meetings are thriving. The Working Group (WG) of the Myocardial and Pericardial Diseases of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) meeting is a perfect example. Although not the largest or the richest, our WG is officially recognized as a source of high-quality data, positions statements, and recommendations that have far reaching impact. This year, the annual meeting was organized for the third time in the magical city of Florence, Italy. Despite the fact that several centuries have passed, the names and works of Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo are still living in every corner of this city-museum.

The Congress started on Thursday 22nd October with the three separate courses dedicated to: Clinical electrophysiology and peri-operative care; Pathology, genetics and basic science, and Clinical evaluation. The session focused on cardiac pathology was conducted by three brilliant Italian pathologists: Cristina Basso from Padua, Gulia D'Amanti from Rome, and Ornella Leone from Bologna. It was a superb concert of very experienced pathologists in the difficult assessment of cardiac samples and a feast of numerous pictures of cardiac biopsies with utilization of various histo-pathological and immunohistochemistry techniques. The Inaugural Session started in the afternoon and was officially opened by professor Alida Caforio from Padua who is the Chair of the WG. The main topic of the session was "Filling the evidence gap in cardiomyopathies". First lecture, as brilliant as always, was delivered by professor Perry Elliot from London who focused on the last-year guideline on hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). Professor Elliot beautifully pointed out the facts we know about HCM and those that are still ambiguous. During his lecture, he referred to the ongoing Registry on Cardiomyopathies and Myocarditis, that our Centre is proud to be a valuable part. This issue was further developed by doctor Carolyn Ho from Boston, US who discussed the hot-topic problem of genotype positive but phenotype negative HCM. She presented the promising, preliminary results of the study that explored the concept of treating those patients with Diltiazem. Subsequently, professor Phillippe Charon from Paris discussed the looming prospects of wide application of the Next Generation Sequencing in

daily clinics. The first day of the Congress was beautifully summarized by one of the fathers of cardiomyopathy research – professor Gaetano Thiene from Padua in a little artistic lecture, entitled "The Heart in Leonardo da Vinci".

The morning session on Friday 23rd October was divided into three paralleled sessions focused on: basic research into cardiac sarcomeres, dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), and application of cardiac magnetic resonance. During the session dedicated to DCM, doctor Yagal Pinto from Amsterdam presented, for the first time, the new definition of DCM. As it may be expected, there is an ongoing shift towards genetic testing in DCM. Doctors Pinto and Ales Linhart from Prague both discussed new diagnostic algorithm with special attention towards genetic testing and relatives cascade screening. Next, professors Phillippe Charon and Alida Caforio focused on the novel therapeutic strategy in DCM – genetic based DCM and inflammatory DCM, respectively. The lunch-time session was dedicated to challenges in myocarditis. The Speakers, including Alida Caforio, Karin Klingel from Tübingen, Marco Matucci-Cerinic from Florence, and Renzo Marcolongo from Padua analyzed various aspects of myocarditis diagnosis and treatment. The main conclusion was, that thanks to the 2013 WG position statement on myocarditis, the optimal management of myocarditis is no longer a mystery or do-whatever-you-like but rather a logical and structured approach with endomyocardial biopsy in the center of all decision-making process. The afternoon session was dedicated to the new tools for risk-stratification and sudden death prevention in HCM. Among the Speakers were Franco Cecchi from Florence, Perry Elliot, Martin Maron from Boston, US, Claudio Rapezzi from Bologna, and Aris Anastasakis from Athens. Obviously, the main discussion was devoted to the newly-developed HCM SCD-Risk calculator and its wide-spread application in daily management of HCM. The role of late gadolinium enhancement (LGE), determined by magnetic resonance, in the risk stratification process is a matter of furious debate and this topic was explored in detail by doctor Martin Maron.

The Saturday 24th October morning session was about 2015-published guideline on Pericardial Diseases. The overview of the guideline was presented by its main authors doctors Massimo Imazio



Figure 1. Doctor Pawel Rubis during presentation of the study results, in front of his two posters

from Turin, Yehuda Adler from Ramat Gan, Israel, and Phillippe Charon. It should be acknowledged that new guidelines are clear, very well structured, and provide condensed recommendations on this somehow neglected topic. The Congress was finally closed with keynote lecture, delivered by one of the pioneers of cardiomyopathy research – professor Barry Maron from Minneapolis, US. Professor Maron once again focused on the important topic of sudden death prevention in HCM and provided data from contemporary US cohorts that are slightly critical of the European HCM SCD-Risk calculator. He presented American perspective that favors an old approach to risk stratification that uses binary classification of major risk factors.

Finally, just few words about our own scientific activities. Doctor Pawel Rubis who was the representative from the Krakow Center for Rare Cardiovascular Diseases presented the results of two studies entitled “Relationships between fibrosis of extracellular matrix and cardiac morphology and function in dilated cardiomyopathy” and “Distribution of predictor variables of sudden cardiac death in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Insights into new HCM risk-SCD model” during abstract sessions. The fruitful discussions, particularly on the fibrotic process in DCM proved that this is really hot-topic and warrants further investigations.

In summary, the annual meeting of the Myocardial and Pericardial Diseases WG of the ESC in Florence was a great scientific experience which has profound impact on our daily work in the cardiomyopathies area. The exchange of thoughts and ideas with the Leaders and Pioneers is priceless and eventually helps to create our own ‘center-of-excellence’.