



Broadening perspectives in interventional cardiology. The role of EAPCI in supporting interventional cardiologists

Ampliando horizontes en cardiología intervencionista. El papel de la EAPCI para los cardiólogos intervencionistas

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INTRODUCTION

The European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions (EAPCI) was founded back in 2006 from the former European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Working Group on Interventional Cardiology. Within the ESC, and as 1 of 7 different sub-specialties associations, EAPCI mission is specifically aimed at reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease through percutaneous cardiovascular interventions.

EAPCI empowers interventional cardiologists through a robust network of resources specifically designed to meet the demands of contemporary practice. In the following sections, we will outline the key benefits of EAPCI membership across several domains, including science, content, education, advocacy, and collaboration (figure 1). Each of these pillars contributes to a framework that not only keeps members at the cutting edge of interventional cardiology, but also fosters collaboration with national working groups and societies to move the field forward collectively.

By highlighting these core advantages, we hope we can underscore the true value of EAPCI membership in helping interventional cardiologists navigate the current fast-paced clinical environment and drive the future of interventional cardiology to improve daily clinical practice and scientific projects.

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY EAPCI

EAPCI scientific documents provide guidance for the clinical management of topics not covered in the ESC clinical practice guidelines complementing them by providing more in-depth information in specific areas that cannot be expanded upon in the guidelines.

EAPCI produces scientific documents and consensus statements specific to the domain of percutaneous cardiovascular interventions and in collaboration with other ESC associations, councils and working groups on topics overlapping among the different subspecialties and with affiliated countries (ie, the Society for Cardiovascular

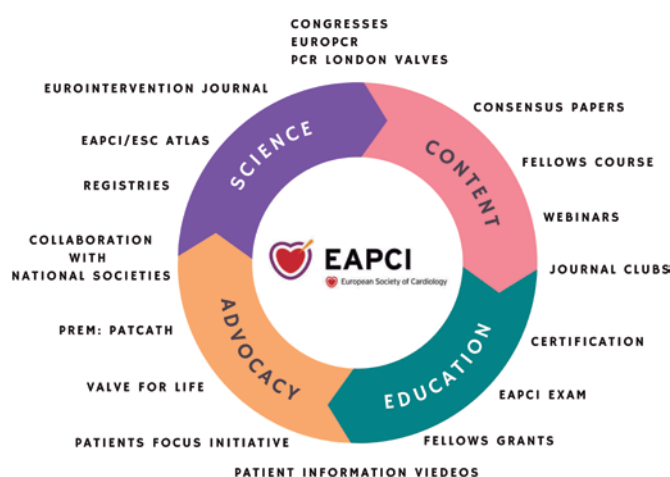


Figure 1. Why join the European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions (EAPCI)?

Angiography & Interventions, SCAI). A dedicated EAPCI website grants access to all EAPCI consensus documents and EAPCI position papers (2009-2024).¹

The 2022-2024 EAPCI Scientific Documents Committee conducted extensive work developing new standard operating procedures that have, recently, been more widely adopted by the ESC Scientific Documents Committee. These new standard operating procedures guarantee that all EAPCI members can participate in the drafting of these documents. In addition, to guarantee inclusivity a balance between geographies and sex is guaranteed.

CONTENT CREATED BY EAPCI

The aim of the unique EAPCI Journal Club format is to provide a true valuable platform for disseminating recent clinical trials, fostering discussions on clinical implications, and guiding the

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integration of new data into clinical practice. The discussion of recent clinical trials addresses different aspects of cardiovascular interventions and pharmacotherapy, offering insights into cutting-edge therapeutic strategies and evolving standards of care.

The EAPCI Journal Club enables attendees to engage directly with principal investigators of the clinical trials and clarify clinical questions.

By promoting interaction among global experts, EAPCI webinars are tailored to the latest advances and best practices in cardiovascular interventions. The webinars serve as a link between research and clinical application. All content is available on demand on the EAPCI official website² and the ESC365 platform for EAPCI members at any time.³

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES BY EAPCI

EAPCI offers comprehensive educational resources to support professionals in interventional cardiology.

EAPCI Certification is an exam designed to assess knowledge and skills in percutaneous cardiovascular interventions. Earning this certification is a significant accomplishment for professionals, as it verifies a high level of competence and dedication in interventional cardiology. For nurses and health care support specialists, achieving such a certification provides career advancement opportunities, enhances confidence in clinical practice, and solidifies their role in a multidisciplinary care team.

EAPCI online courses are another key offering providing structured, modular learning opportunities for participants to explore specific topics at their own pace. These courses include interactive elements, such as case studies and assessments, reinforcing knowledge and promoting practical understanding. For nurses and health care support specialists, online courses focus on essential areas such as perioperative care, device management, and complication prevention, providing them with essential, job-specific skills to improve patient outcomes.

Altogether, EAPCI Certification, EAPCI webinars, and EAPCI online courses foster a supportive and enriching learning environment empowering nurses and health care support specialists to expand their knowledge, achieve certifications, and deliver high-quality, patient-centered cardiovascular care.

In addition, EAPCI is further expanding its educational offers through an agreement signed between the ESC and Europa Group. EAPCI official courses are EuroPCR, the EAPCI PCR Fellows Course, and PCR London Valves. The official textbook is the PCR-EAPCI Textbook⁴ and EuroIntervention⁵ is EAPCI official journal.

Advocacy provided by EAPCI

In terms of advocacy, the key objectives of EAPCI are to understand and overcome barriers preventing patients from receiving the appropriate diagnostics and treatment, and evaluate and improve patient experience during interventional procedures.

To achieve the first goal, the ATLAS in Interventional Cardiology has been developed as the landmark project, allowing comparisons across different contemporary interventional cardiology practices in multiple ESC countries and the use of this information when negotiating reimbursement policies with national regulatory bodies. Data collection started in 2016 and the first report was published

in 2020⁶ mainly on human resources, infrastructure and procedural volumes.

To achieve the second goal, the Patient Experience in the Catheterization Laboratory (PATCATH) tool,⁷ patient information videos⁸ and Valve for Life initiative⁹ have been launched in collaboration with the EAPCI Patient Engagement Committee. The PATCATH tool has been developed to try to understand and improve the patients' experience while undergoing interventional cardiology procedures and is now fully available in 10 different languages. In addition, 5 patient information videos on percutaneous cardiovascular interventions have been produced to help patients understand these procedures, which remain available for use by EAPCI members in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The use of PATCATH demonstrated that patient understanding of common cardiovascular procedures may be suboptimal.^{7,10} In turn, patients who were shown a dedicated video animation prior to the procedure tended to have more positive informational experience.¹¹

Finally, the Valve for Life initiative launched in 2015 aims to improve transcatheter aortic and atrioventricular valve interventions across Europe to raise awareness, facilitate access to transcatheter heart valve interventions and, last but not least, reduce age and gender discrimination regarding access to health care.⁹ Recently, a survey has been distributed to all national societies to identify current gaps in structural valve procedures to identify the countries and topics that should be addressed in the next edition.

EAPCI INITIATIVES FOR THE YOUNG

Identifying and addressing the needs of the young community is one of the key EAPCI goals. Currently, almost 50% of all EAPCI members are younger than 40 years and 25% are in training.

The EAPCI Young Committee has identified networking, education and mentoring as the priorities for 2024-2026. The networking opportunities for young EAPCI members include the possibility to participate in joint sessions during national society congresses, expand collaboration with other ESC associations, working groups, and affiliated countries.

In terms of education, young EAPCI members have access to online educational resources, including a step-by-step video library created for early career interventional cardiologists.

Two programs are dedicated to young members:

1. The 12-month EAPCI Online Coaching Program that promotes the personal development of young interventional cardiologists with practical, research and personal development tips in a one-to-one mentor-mentee relationship. The upcoming coaching program includes further development of the existing mentorship program and will include more mentors among the EAPCI members on interventional skills and career development ("leadership accelerator") and create mentorship for very early career colleagues and even students with young mentors ("young to young").
2. The Education and Training Grant program provides an opportunity for clinical training in the interventional cardiology field in a country from ESC National Cardiac Societies other than their own. The goal of this grant is to help young candidates attain clinical competence with hands on activities and acquire experience on high-quality cardiological clinical practice to contribute to improving academic and clinical standards upon return to their own country. The number of grants has increased in the last term.

To underline the valuable contribution of young members, EAPCI introduced a 50% reduced membership fee of €75/year for people younger than 40 years.

EAPCI-EMPOWERED COLLABORATION

ESC National Cardiac Societies are the founders and principal constituent bodies of the ESC. Currently, there are 58 national cardiac societies.¹² As institutional members they pay a membership fee and vote to help shape the future of cardiology and drive ESC activities. They are also instrumental in ESC research, dissemination of clinical practice guidelines and a wide range of other activities.

The presidents, or their official representatives, make up the EAPCI National Cardiac Societies Committee whose aim is to promote interactions across countries and help understand the diverse needs of different geographical areas to foster collaboration. For example, in collaboration with the German Interventional Working Group (AGIK) EAPCI became a cooperation partner in a 2-day Complete Higher Risk Indicated Percutaneous Coronary Intervention course held in Berlin in 2024 called AGIK CHIP International. Many joint sessions have recently been held at various national society congresses, including the Romanian Society of Cardiology, APIC (*Associação Portuguesa de Intervenção Cardiovascular*), and GISE (*Società Italiana di Cardiologia Interventistica*).

With EAPCI global scope collaborative relationships with many ESC Affiliated Cardiac Societies,¹³ for the first time, an EAPCI International Committee was established for 2024-2026 whose plan is to build bridges and promote global collaborations through joint sessions in congresses and courses, creating scientific documents and preparing webinars together.

An agreement has already been reached with the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions (SCAI) with a joint session at the SCAI meeting in 2024 and 2 scientific documents with collaboration between SCAI and EAPCI are already being drafted. A joint session between EAPCI and the Latin American Society of Interventional Cardiology (SOLACI) was held in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in 2024 demonstrating the importance of global collaboration and education to achieve common goals. More collaborative events and scientific projects are in the pipeline with other affiliated countries.

THEN, WHY JOIN EAPCI?

EAPCI serves as a vital platform for interventional cardiologists to address the challenges of a rapidly evolving medical landscape. By offering access to cutting-edge scientific content, innovative educational opportunities, and robust collaborative networks, EAPCI provides its members with tools to stay at the forefront of interventional cardiology. From contributing to the development of groundbreaking scientific documents and consensus statements to leveraging platforms such as the Journal Club and ESC365 for continuous learning, EAPCI ensures its members are prepared to deliver optimal patient care. Additionally, advocacy initiatives such as the ATLAS project and Valve for Life underline EAPCI commitment to improving access to cardiovascular interventions across Europe and beyond. In addition, it provides an ideal platform for early career doctors and those in training to have access to educational offers, a one-to-one coaching program, fellowship grants providing access to an international network to become the future leaders of tomorrow. The EAPCI membership not only fosters professional growth but also strengthens global collaboration, making it an essential step for those wishing to lead and innovate



Figure 2. EAPCI membership QR code.

in the field of interventional cardiology. Join EAPCI and become a member by scanning the QR code (figure 2) to access these benefits and help shape the future of our specialty.

FUNDING

None declared.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

E. Rafflenbeul is chair of the EAPCI Educational Content, Courses and Webinars Committee (2024-2026). M. Iannaccone is chair of the EAPCI Young Committee (2024-2026). A. Gasecka is co-chair of the EAPCI Young Committee (2024-2026). N. Ryan is chair of the EAPCI Online and Communication Committee (2024–2026). A. Chieffo is EAPCI president (2024-2026).

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