EBCOG
European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Second EBCOG Annual Report

2015
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1. Foreword

Welcome to EBCOG’s Second ever Annual report. In this report, I hope to provide you with an overview of EBCOG’s, activities and work during the past year.

It has been an extremely busy and challenging year which has seen EBCOG launch its EFOG-EBCOG Exam for specialists across Europe and the globe, thanks to the huge efforts of the Examination Standing Committee; re-locate the European Congress to Torino because of the UN Summit in Istanbul; launch the first UNFPA-EBCOG Scholarship; have the Standards of Care translated into Russian and launch the PACT curriculum project, all of which is in addition to our usual activities. We have also developed closer and very positive relationships with the EU, WHO and UNFPA which have led to some very exciting new projects described in this report.

I would like to thank my fellow Officers and all our EBCOG friends and colleagues such as ENTOG and our subspecialist sisters: the European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO), the European Association of Perinatal Medicine (EAPM), the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) and the European Urogynaecology Association (EUGA) and special interest societies such as the European Association of Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology (EURAPAG), the European Federation of Colposcopy (EFC), the European Society of Contraception (ESC), the European Society of Gynaecological Endoscopy (ESGE), the European Society of Sexual Medicine (ESSM) and the International Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ISPOG) for all their contributions to the work we are doing for the benefit and well being of women and their babies, in Europe and beyond.

I hope this Report will both interest and inform you. More information about all of the activities covered in it is available on our web site: www.ebcog.eu and in the President’s Newsletters.

Best wishes,

Dr Tahir Mahmood CBE
MD, FRCPI, MBA, FACOG, FRCPE, FRCOG
President, European Board & College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (EBCOG)
Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Clinical Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology: Universities of Edinburgh, St. Andrews and Dundee, Scotland.
2. WHO’s WHO IN EBCOG?

Council is the decision-making body of EBCOG and is made up of two national delegates from each of our 37 member countries. National delegates are members of both EBCOG and the UEMS Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Councils and Council meetings are joint meetings of the EBCOG and Section Councils.

EBCOG has four Officers, (President, President-Elect, Secretary-General and Treasurer) and an Executive Committee. Subscription fees are payable annually and are calculated according to the UEMS ‘key’, which has recently changed and will be implemented by EBCOG for the first time in 2016.

There has been a rapid expansion in EBCOG’s membership since we were founded in 1996. Of particular importance has been the involvement of the countries of Europe which are new members of the European Union.

There are now 37 countries represented on our Council:

Albania (Observer member), Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, FYROM, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo (Observer Member), Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

EBCOG Officers: November 30th 2014 - November 2017

- President: Dr Tahir Mahmood (UK)
- President-Elect: Prof Jacky Nizard (France)
- Secretary-General: Dr Rolf Kirschner (Norway)
- Treasurer: Prof Peter Hornnes (Denmark)

EBCOG Executive as at 1st December, 2015

EBCOG has five elected Executive members:

- Dr Rudi Campo (Belgium)
- Dr Angelique Goverde (Netherlands)
- Prof Johannes Bitzer (Switzerland)
- Prof Ioannis Messinis (Greece)
• Prof Vlad Tica (Romania)

Representatives of the four subspecialist societies also sit on the Executive as do the Chairs of our Standing Committees and Working Parties, the Webmaster and the President of ENTOG.

Chair Standing Committee on Training and Assessment
Dr Angelique Goverde (Netherlands)

Chair Standing Committee on Training Recognition & Training the Visitors Working Group
Prof Juriy Wladimiroff (UK)

Chair EBCOG Examination Standing Committee
Dr Rolf Kirschner (Norway)

Director of Examinations
Prof Ioannis E Messinis (Greece)

Coordinator for EBCOG Position Statements
Prof Allan Templeton (UK)

Course Leader the Training the Trainers
Prof Ziva Novak Antolic (Slovenia)

EU Funding Lead
Prof André Van Assche (Belgium)

European Uro-Gynaecology Association (EUGA)
Prof Stefano Salvatore (Italy)

European Association of Perinatal Medicine (EAPM)
Prof Gerard H. A. Visser (Netherlands)

European Society of Gynaecological Oncology (ESGO)
Dr Frédéric Goffin (Belgium)

European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE)
Prof Anis Feki (Switzerland)

President of the Congress Scientific Committee
Dr Rudi Campo (Belgium)

Local President of the Torino Congress 2016
Prof Chiara Benedetto (Italy)

Webmaster
Dr Nuno Martins (Portugal)

European Network of Trainees in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ENTOG)
Dr Anna Aabakke (Denmark)
EBCOG COUNCIL Members as at 1\textsuperscript{st} December, 2015

\textbf{Albania}  
Dr Rubena Moisiu

\textbf{Austria}  
Prof Wolfgang Umek  
Prof Uwe Lang

\textbf{Belgium}  
Dr. Willem Ombelet  
Prof Sophie Alexander

\textbf{Bulgaria}  
Prof Milko Sirakov  
Prof Blagovest Pehlivanov

\textbf{Croatia}  
Prof. Ivan Kuvacic

\textbf{Cyprus}  
Dr. Marios Liassides  
Dr. Patroklos A Patroclou

\textbf{Czech Republic}  
Prof. Jaroslav Feyereisl  
Prof. Vladimir Dvorak

\textbf{Denmark}  
Prof Charlotte Hasselholt Søgaard  
Dr Alexander Laschke

\textbf{Estonia}  
Prof. Helle Karro

\textbf{Finland}  
Prof Seija Grenman  
Prof. Juha Räsänen

\textbf{France}  
Prof Bernard Hédon

\textbf{FYROM}  
Dr Slavejko Sapunov

\textbf{Germany}  
Dr Klaus König  
Prof Frank Louwen

\textbf{Greece}  
Dr Nicolas Linardos  
Professor Basil Tarlatzis

\textbf{Hungary}  
Professor József Bódis  
Prof Nandor Acs

\textbf{Iceland}  
Prof Ragnheidur I. Bjarnadottir

\textbf{Ireland}  
Dr Michael Robson

\textbf{Italy}  
Prof Domenico Arduini  
Prof Yoram Jacob Meir

\textbf{Kosovo}  
Dr Albert Lila  
Prof Shefqet Lulaj

\textbf{Latvia}  
Prof. Dace Rezeberga

\textbf{Lithuania}  
Prof Ruta Nadisauskiene  
Prof Daiva Vaitiene

\textbf{Malta}  
Prof Mark Brincat  
Mr Mark Formosa
3. STANDING COMMITTEE AND WORKING PARTY REPORTS

3.1 Standing Committee on Training and Assessment (SCTA)
Chair: Dr Angelique Goverde

The main interest of the SCTA is the review of the current speciality post-graduate curriculum and the refurbishment of the Logbook as a basis for education in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Thanks to a successful grant of €400,000 from the Erasmus programme in 2015, we are in the process of developing an updated and future-proof specialist training curriculum. This project, the EBCOG Project for Achieving Consensus in Training (PACT) Project, began officially in September 2015 and will run until August 2018. As we know within Europe, there is considerable diversity of clinical practices. Each country within Europe therefore has its own training programme and specialists in Obstetrics & Gynaecology from different

countries acquire variable levels of skills. The implementation of a pan European curriculum will create a workforce with comparable skills and training to ensure patient safety. It will also allow the free movement of specialists across Europe whose training has been quality assured. Developing this Curriculum is fully in line with EBCOG’s focus on Standards of Care, as it intended to improve and harmonise the level of training across Europe.

The new Curriculum will help to improve and harmonise the level of training across Europe. The challenge will lie in encouraging countries to implement the curriculum for the benefit of their trainees and we are relying on the full support of all of EBCOG’s 37 National Societies to help us achieve maximum impact.

Creating a new, fully up to date and future proof curriculum for postgraduate training in Obstetrics & Gynaecology involves far more than a complete revision of the existing EBCOG Curriculum. Society and medicine are changing rapidly. Expectations of what doctors can and should be able to do are shifting, knowledge is progressing fast, and doctors need to have different skills in order to respond to new demands.

The new curriculum will also act as the basis of the EBCOG Examination and all the issues covered in the exam will be drawn from the curriculum. This will be an invaluable tool for all candidates.

The EBCOG-PACT Project is being led by Professor Fedde Scheele and Dr Angelique Goverde, with Dr Jessica van der Aa as project manager, and I would like to wish the whole team every success in this very important work.

Members of the PACT Project Board

3.2 Standing Committee on Training Recognition (SCTR)
Chair: Prof Jurij Wladimiroff

2015 was another year of many activities related to the process of quality assurance of training programmes across the EU. The EBCOG Standing Committee on Training Recognition (SCTR) convened four times on: 19th March, Brussels; 12th June, Utrecht; 4th September, Brussels; and 27th November, Brussels.

In 2015 the SCTR continued its efforts to create more awareness of quality assessment of ob/gyn training across the EU.

Similar to 2014, a more focused approach to hospital visiting was adopted by the SCTR through forging joint ventures between EBCOG and national bodies responsible for training
of medical specialists in EU countries like Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

President’s Visit to Malta

Germany:
Based on thirty Hospital Visits in Germany over the last 15 years, EBCOG has made a considerable effort to introduce a more solid platform for hospital visiting in this country. In November 2014 a letter was sent to the newly appointed President of the DGGG, Prof D Wallwiener to request a meeting to re-discuss options as to how to introduce a more structured approach to the principle of quality assessment of ob/gyn training in Germany. The President of the DGGG replied in March acknowledging hospital visiting as a tool for quality assurance of training. The President and the Chair of SCTR will progress this matter in 2016.

Visit in Berlin

Italy:
EBCOG fared better in Italy. Following six hospital visits in a joint venture between EBCOG and the Osservatorio Nazionale in 2014, a further joint hospital visit was conducted in Verona in June. The Osservatorio Nazionale was represented by Professor Enrico Sartori and Dr Andrea Cocci.

A meeting took place between the newly elected President of the Osservatorio Nazionale, Professor Roberto Vettor, Professor Pantaleo Greco (EBCOG SCTR) and Professor Jurij Wladimiroff (Chair EBCOG SCTR) in Padua to discuss the possibility of giving the joint EBCOG/Osservatorio Nazionale venture a more official status.
This would need an official confirmation from the Italian Ministry of Health. Professor Vettor proposed to first present the issue to the Board of the Osservatorio Nazionale and subsequently to the Ministry of Health. A decision is expected in early 2016. The support from Professor Pantaleo Greco in organising hospital visits in Italy is greatly appreciated.

**Belgium:**
Progress has also been made in Belgium. So far 15 visits have been carried out resulting in 14 accredited training units in Flemish Belgium and one in the French speaking part (Wallonia, University of Liege). A further four visits were conducted in Flemish Belgium in 2015. Dr Patrick Waterbley, Secretary to the Supreme Council of Medical Specialists and General Practitioners (Hoge Raad van Geneesheren-Specialisten en Huisartsen) in Belgium took part in one of the visits as an observer.

The contribution from Dr Johan van Wiemeersch (EBCOG Council member for Belgium and Chair of the Flemish Belgian Recognition Committee for Ob/Gyn training) to the organisation of the visits in Flemish Belgium is greatly appreciated.

EBCOG will have reached its objective of having all university and most community hospital training units in Flemish Belgium audited by the end of 2015. There is still no activity regarding hospital visits in the French speaking part of Belgium. Renewed efforts will be made through Professor Sophie Alexander, EBCOG Council member for French speaking Belgium.

**Central Europe:**
EBCOG Hospital Visiting has also progressed well in Central Europe, notably in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary and Slovenia. Much support was given by our SCTR member, Professor Jaroslav Feyereisl. Whereas it is unlikely these countries will be able to introduce their own national Auditing and Accreditation Authority in the foreseeable future, there is increasing involvement of colleagues in the region in the hospital visiting process. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have been very supportive.
of the programme with 14 university training units accredited or re-accredited for their training programme in general obstetrics & gynaecology. Both countries work closely together through their respective scientific organisations.

While one of the prime objectives of the visiting programme is to introduce the accreditation programme at national level, this is currently not feasible in the Czech Republic and Slovakia where the Ministries of Health are responsible for all aspects of medical specialist training in their respective countries. However, the Presidents of both Societies of Obstetrics & Gynaecology are keen to play a more active role in quality assurance of training programmes in their countries with EBCOG providing background technical expertise.

The EBCOG Executive Board has agreed to the appointment of a local co-ordinator who will be responsible for organising and monitoring the hospital visiting process in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

To maintain confidentiality the Lead visitor will remain responsible for sending the final report directly to the Chair of the EBCOG SCTR who will circulate it to the EBCOG Executive Board for a decision on accreditation. The Chair of the EBCOG SCTR will inform the training unit visited about the decision made by the Executive Board.

The position of local co-ordinator will rotate between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The appointment will be for a period of two years. The local co-ordinator must be supported by a representative of the Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology of the other country.

Professor Jaroslav Feyereisl, President of the Czech Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and member of the EBCOG SCTR will act as the local co-ordinator and Professor Jan Danko, President of the Slovak Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology will play a supportive role.

**Poland:**

EBCOG’s role and ambitions regarding standardisation of patient care and quality assessment of training were explained at the annual conference of the Polish Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Lodz, October, 2014. This was followed by three successful hospital visits in Warsaw, Krakow and Lodz in November 2015, led by the President, Chair of SCTR and ENTOG.

A joint hospital visiting programme between EBCOG and the Polish National Committee for Medical Specialist Training is proposed.

*Visit in Poland*
A meeting is being planned between EBCOG and the Polish National Committee for Medical Specialist Training with participation of the President of the Polish Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Professor Wielgos in Warsaw.

Ukraine:
EBCOG was invited to the annual Congress of the Ukrainian Society of Obstetrics & Gynaecology in Kiev in September, 2015.

The SCTR Chair gave a presentation on quality assurance of training and it was well received. The EBCOG representatives enjoyed the wonderful Ukrainian hospitality provided by Dr Andrii Tkachenko, Professor Vyacheslav Volodimirovich Kaminskiy and Professor Valery Zaporozhan.

Other activities:
EBCOG Accredited Hospital Visitor
A document was produced describing the role of the Lead EBCOG visitor, EBCOG Co-visitor and ENTOG visitor in more detail.

As EBCOG has to deal with an increasing number of requests for a hospital visit, there is a clear need for more trained hospital visitors. More than half of the participants in the Training the Visitors Course in Brussels, November, 2014 has acted as a Co-visitor at various hospital visits this year.

Based on their extensive experience as a Lead Visitor, EBCOG has appointed 17 colleagues to become an EBCOG Accredited Hospital Visitor.

Review of the application forms
A review took place of the application forms for a hospital visit. A section on “Skills drills” and on “Simulation” has been added. A Glossary for terms that may be ambiguous within the application forms was produced.

Total number of Hospital Visits for basic ob/gyn training programmes in 2015:
In total, 23 training units were (re)visited and (re)accredited for their basic ob/gyn training programmes in 2015.

The EBCOG Hospital Visiting Programme cannot be successful without a proper website. The EBCOG webmaster, Dr Nuno Martins has produced an up-to-date overview of all basic and subspecialty accredited training units in
EU countries without a national Auditing & Accreditation (A & A) Authority. Whereas hospital visiting reports are confidential, strong points regarding training in a particular training unit are now visible on the website. This may be of interest to those colleagues who wish to expand their skills abroad.

**Quality assessment of subspecialist ob/gyn training programmes:**
EBCOG’s focus on quality assessment of training is not limited to basic ob/gyn training programmes. The EBCOG Representatives of the four European Scientific Societies, ESGO (Prof Rene Verheijen, Prof Reynir Kimmig), ESHRE (Prof Roy Farquharson, Prof Anis Feki), EUGA (Prof Linda Cardozo) and EAPM (Prof Gerard Visser) have contributed to Hospital Visiting in their subspecialties.

In total seven subspecialty Hospital Visits were conducted in 2015:
ESGO: 4 visits, ESHRE: 2 visits, EUGA: 1 visit, EAPM: no visits

**Network of Accredited Clinical Skills Centres in Europe (NASCE)**
NASCE is a Multi-Disciplinary Joint Committee formed within the UEMS with a mission to enhance the standards of clinical skills Centres throughout Europe and promote collaboration between centres. This is achieved by defining the standards expected and then assessing conformance with the standards. The process of the assessment of performance involves a formal visit to the site for verification of information in the application. The body responsible for this is the Accreditation Review Board (ARB). The Chair of the EBCOG SCTR attended the NASCE meeting in Dublin, February 2015 and the 1st Annual Scientific and Business meeting in Istanbul, 14th/15th September, 2015.

**3.3 Standing Committee on Examination**
**Chair: Dr Rolf Kirschner**

The European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EBCOG) is organising for the first time this year, a postgraduate medical assessment in Obstetrics and Gynaecology by setting up a European Examination process. The purpose of the examination is to assess the level of competency of candidates regarding their knowledge and judgement, although skills and attitude are also evaluated. This will facilitate mobility of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists throughout the European countries. Candidates who will pass the exams will become EBCOG Fellows in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EFOG-EBCOG) and will be given a certificate of Fellowship.

The Examination Standing Committee of EBCOG is responsible for the organisation of the Examination process. The Examination Standing Committee is Chaired by the Secretary-General of EBCOG, Dr Rolf Kirschner, and the Committee has worked very hard throughout 2015 to ensure that, in addition to the practical and organisational aspects, an examination question bank has been established and that all the questions have been fully quality assured. The Committee, together with the Director of Examinations, Prof Ioannis Messinis, have also produced full guidelines for candidates on all aspects of the application and
examination process. These Guidelines are available on the website. A KBA pre-examination course was also organised and an effective website for the examination has become operational.

The Examination has two parts. Part 1 is a knowledge-based assessment (KBA), written examination, while Part 2 is an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE). Part 1 of the Examination will take place for the first time in Torino on 18th May 2016, one day before the start of the EBCOG Congress, while Part 2 will take place on 19th November 2016 in Norwich, UK. Information regarding Part 1 eligibility criteria and instructions for the candidates can be found on the EBCOG website. The application process for Part 1 closed on 1st April 2016.

For the KBA written exams, there are two papers, one is the Obstetrics paper and the other is the Gynaecology paper. Each paper comprises of three types of questions, i.e. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), Single Best Answer (SBA) and Extended Matching Questions (EMQ). The duration of each paper is 180 minutes. The Obstetric paper will be given in the morning and the Gynaecology paper in the afternoon. The time schedule template for the written exams can be found on the EBCOG website.

A Pre-Exam course for the candidates was organised in Brussels for January 2016. This course is intended to give the opportunity to those who attended to familiarise themselves with the examination process. Only candidates who will pass Part 1 can sit the Part 2 examination.

A set of Guidelines for candidates is available on the website and the Webmaster produced FAQs for the website which have reduced the number of e-mail enquiries. OSCE Guidelines will be available in 2016. I am extremely grateful to Mr Stefan Hallin, the CEO of Orzone, for providing a high level of support to
deliver this project. During the inception of the project, Dr Mourad Seif FRCOG played an active role and I am grateful to him for his contribution.

EBCOG also attended two UEMS CESMA meetings, and is now a full member. CESMA is the Council for European Specialists Medical Assessment. It is an advisory body of UEMS created in 2007 with the aim of providing recommendations and advice on the organisation of European examinations for medical specialists at the European level.

3.4 Training the Trainers (TTT) Course
Co-ordinator: Prof Ziva Novak Antolic

The TTT working group was formed in November 26, 2011. To date, 37 TTT/professionalism events have taken place, and 9 of these were in 2015 in Estonia, Malta, Slovenia and Ukraine.

In addition, Prof Ziva Novak delivered a lecture at the Nordic OBGYN – Training – are we good enough? in Copenhagen in May 2015. The title was: The EBCOG/ENTOG way.

In Slovenia, Prof Ziva Novak started having workshops on Professionalism for professors and students. She has begun giving lectures on Burnout in physicians and plans to do workshops and other activities regarding burnout/abuse.

3.5 CME/CPD

EBCOG established a short life working party under the Chairmanship of Dr Rolf Kirschner which met on 3 occasions and produced a policy document which was adopted by the EBCOG Council in 2013.

The CME/CPD activities in 2015 were mostly related to EACCME and EBCOG was represented at two EACCME meetings during the year by the CME Lead and Secretary-General, Dr Rolf Kirschner and by the EU Funding Lead, Prof André Van Assche. Both are also responsible for assessing the application for CME accreditation.

EBCOG attended both the CME Committee sessions and the Patient safety/QI sessions at the UEMS Council meetings.

3.6 Standards of Care
Chair: Dr Tahir Mahmood

As part of our focus on quality assurance and patient safety, EBCOG has produced two sets of Standards of Care for Women’s Health; one for Obstetric and Neonatal Services and One for Gynaecology Services. These documents were officially launched in the European Parliament in November 2014.
In February 2015, EBCOG met with the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Dr Vytenis Andriukaitis. Commissioner Andriukaitis said that he and his Cabinet would be delighted to engage with EBCOG and to explore how the Commission and EBCOG could support each other to achieve our mutual vision of equitable, safe, efficient and sustainable healthcare systems in the EU.

At the request of WHO, EBCOG also agreed to discuss sexual and reproductive health (SRH), maternal mortality and child health with the European Commission with regard to prioritising them as part of EU policy.

The UNFPA has also given us a grant to translate the EBCOG Standards of Care for Women’s Health into Russian. These documents were translated by the UNFPA and the Russian Society of Ob/Gyn, which is a member of EBCOG. UNFPA is planning to launch these standards at the 24th European Congress of EBCOG in Torino. This event will be fully supported by the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia. We are keen to see the Standards implemented as widely as possible for the benefit of all women and their babies.

### 3.7 Position Statements

**Coordinator: Prof Allan Templeton**

EBCOG’s Position Statements are published on our web site and in the *European Journal of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology* which is now the official Journal of EBCOG. These are intended to be used as formal statements on issues of public health in Europe.

*Six position statements have now been produced on:*

- IVF Treatment and Single Embryo Transfer;
- The Public Health Importance of Antenatal Care;
- Obesity and Women’s Health
- Alcohol and Pregnancy
- Medical Abortion
- The Public Health importance of Sex Education in Schools

*More Statements are currently being developed on:*

- Diet and Exercise in Pregnancy
- Travel in Pregnancy
- Vaccination in Pregnancy
- Fertility Control
- FGM
- Caesarean Section in Europe
• Violence against Women

These are really important documents which all European specialists in ob/gyn should be aware of. They are intended to be used as authoritative statements on issues of public health in Europe and we hope that each national delegate on EBCOG’s Council will use them in their respective countries.

4. The Burden of Non Communicable Diseases and EBCOG

4.1 Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)

EBCOG took the initiative to work on this together with the European Diabetic Pregnancy Study Group (DPSG) in order to have a common approach on GDM screening in Europe.

A similar initiative was undertaken by FIGO and EBCOG collaborated in this project and with the DPSG.

This collaboration resulted in the mutual presence at scientific meetings of the both organisations. Furthermore, an EBCOG position paper was published in DIABETOLOGIA on the problems of GDM screening in Europe with proposals for further progress.

As a consequence an inventory was performed on the actual practice of GDM screening in Europe. The questionnaire was completed by more than 80 % of the EU countries, with the most important conclusions that the majority of the countries use the 2013 WHO criteria for GDM, but only one third of the countries provide universal screening.

A mini-symposium on “Obesity and Pregnancy” was commissioned by the European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (EJOG) and EBCOG team was able to deliver it within a very short time.

The first article in the mini-symposium is: “Survey by the European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology on “Screening for GDM in Europe”; by Katrien Benhalima, Chantal Mathieu, Andre Van Assche, Peter Damm, Roland Devlieger, Tahir Mahmood and Fidelma Dunne.

The second article in the mini-symposium is a review paper: “Screening for gestational diabetes in Europe. Where do we stand and how to move forward. A Scientific Paper commissioned by EBCOG”; by Katrien Benhalima, Peter Damm, Andre Van Assche, Chantal Mathieu, Roland Devlieger, Tahir Mahmood, Fidelma Dunne.

The third article in the mini-symposium is: “Maternal Obesity in Europe. Where do we stand and how to move forward? A Scientific Paper commissioned by EBCOG”; by Roland Devlieger, Katrien Benhalima, Peter Damm, Andre Van Assche, Chantal Mathieu, Tahir
Mahmood, Fidelma Dunne, Annick Bogaerts. These three articles will be published as a mini symposium in the EJOG.

The DPSG had a meeting at the EU in December 2015. EBCOG was invited and was represented by the President-Elect. In the informal discussion it was clear that EBCOG and the DPSG should organise a consensus meeting, involving both DPSG and EBCOG members, in order to achieve a common strategy on GDM screening in Europe.

4.2 Medicines in Pregnancy
Ms Hildrun Sundseth, President of The European Institute of Women’s Health (EIWH), asked EBCOG to investigate and make proposals on the use of Medicines in Pregnancy. Dr Ksenja Gersak (Slovenia) and Dr Van Calsteren (Belgium) led the project to produce a scientific paper which was approved by the EBCOG Council. It is now being published in the EJOG.

Dr Gersak has also developed a questionnaire to collect information about the attitude of different EU countries on the problem of the use of medicines in pregnancy.

5 Engagement with Other Organisations

5.1 European Union
In February 2015, we met with the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Dr Vytenis Andriukaitis. Commissioner Andriukaitis said that he and his Cabinet would be delighted to engage with EBCOG and to explore how the Commission and EBCOG could support each other to achieve our mutual vision of equitable, safe, efficient and sustainable healthcare systems in the EU.

The President subsequently met Ms Isabel de la Mata, Principal Adviser Principal Advisor with a Special Interest in Health and Food Safety at the European Commission’s DG Santé. It was a very productive meeting and avenues for further collaboration were explored.

With Commissioner Andriukaitis

The Commission also asked EBCOG to take a position on Violence against Women and Children and asked us to prepare a paper on FGM for the WHO discussion which took place in January 2016. Ms de la Mata also agreed to explore the possibility of having our Standards of Care documents on the Commission’s website as examples of “Good Practice”.

18
European Reference Networks (ERNs)

A European Reference Network (ERN) of rare diseases is a networking system of knowledge and expertise between centres of expertise and healthcare providers organised across borders of European countries. The development of ERNs is supported by an EU Directive on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare (2011). An ERN is expected to facilitate the accessibility of medical doctors to knowledge and expertise regarding rare diseases and to provide added value to the existing health services at the national level. The ERNs should also serve as research centres. Details regarding the criteria and conditions that the ERNs and healthcare providers must fulfil as well as the criteria for the implementation and evaluation of ERNs are given in relevant EU decisions.

In 2015, two ERN Conferences took place, organised by EU and their aim was to provide information to the members on how to prepare their applications. The assessment of the proposals is expected to be completed during the second quarter of 2016 and the establishment of the approved ERNs during the third quarter of 2016.

The role of EBCOG in this initiative is to support the efforts for the establishment of an ERN relating to rare obstetrical and gynaecological diseases. Especially, EBCOG’s role is to identify national or regional centres of expertise and encourage their participation in ERNs, to encourage Member States to facilitate the development of ERNs and to support the application for the development of certain ERNs. In the context of this collaboration, EBCOG is expected to be involved in the Board of an ERN. A particular ERN with which EBCOG has already established collaboration is the ERN on rare and complex urogenital diseases, Gestational trophoblastic disease, and fetal surgery. I am grateful to Professor Ioannis Messinis and Professor André Van Assche to represent me at various meetings at very short notice.

5.2 Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS)

EBCOG is the Board of the Section of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of UEMS. The Officers of EBCOG are the Officers of the UEMS Section and we are represented on various UEMS Multi-Disciplinary Joint Committees such as those for Sexual Medicine and Breast Care. We assess applications to UEMS for CME accreditation in our specialty and are also represented on the Network of Accredited Clinical Skills Centres in Europe.

5.3 WHO

In August 2015, the Officers group met with representatives of WHO-Europe in Copenhagen. As a result of the meeting, FIGO kindly agreed that EBCOG should act as a representative for obstetrics and gynaecology in relation to the WHO Regional Office for Europe. As such, EBCOG took part in the Regional Consultation on the development of the European Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) 2017–2021, in Copenhagen, and was represented by the EBCOG Treasurer, Prof Peter Hornnes.
The action plan’s vision is that all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full potential for SRH and well-being; their sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR) are respected, protected and fulfilled; and which countries, individually and jointly, work towards reducing inequities in SRHR.

At WHO in Copenhagen

This is a challenging agenda because of diverging policies within member countries: few countries in WHO-Europe believed that the inclusion of sexual and reproductive rights in the action plan was inappropriate, although the issue of rights is a fundamental construct of WHO. Some countries suggested that the draft as it currently stands requires a better gender balance and needs to more explicitly include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and emphasise gender equality. A few countries even stated that efforts to increase access to abortion services threatened to break their constitutional laws.

EBCOG made the following points:

- EBCOG is supportive of the draft and we find the document very useful.
- EBCOG agrees that sexual health is vital for health in general.
- For obstetricians/gynaecologists, patients’ rights are essential. Therefore reproductive rights are natural and non-controversial.
- Access to termination of pregnancy is a key factor in SRH and rights.
- The role of men should be more prominent in the draft.
- The issue of gender equity is vital.
- EBCOG supports a life course approach which includes menopause and ageing.
- Infertility diagnosis and treatment should be prominent.
- Goals and indicators should be positively vectored whenever possible.
- LGBTI SRH and rights should be clearly stated.
- The role of health care professionals should be emphasised.
- Quality of care is vital and should be stressed in the paper.

One of the initiatives we also discussed at our meeting with WHO was that of producing joint WHO/EBCOG Position Papers and we explored the possibility of producing papers on: Tobacco and SRH; Drug Misuse during Pregnancy; Ageing and Sexual Health; Promoting Breastfeeding; Mental Health during Pregnancy and Adolescent Women’s Health.

The President was also invited to join the Editorial Board of ‘Entre Nous’, the WHO publication on SRH. A joint UNFPA and EBCOG paper on “Improving Standards of Care in
5.4 FIGO

As mentioned earlier, FIGO kindly agreed that EBCOG should act as a representative for obstetrics and gynaecology in relation to the WHO Regional Office for Europe. EBCOG also had a session at the FIGO World Congress in Vancouver in 2015. The session focused on “New Developments in European Obstetrical and Gynaecological Practice”. It was Chaired by Dr Mahmood and Prof Homnes who also spoke respectively on “Standards of care to improve Outcomes in Clinical Practice” and “Non invasive Prenatal Testing”, whilst Dr Kirschner spoke on “Twenty years of Long Acting Contraception in Europe”, Prof Nizard spoke on “Ultra-sound scanning during Labour” and Prof Benedetto spoke on “Reducing Risk in Laparoscopic Surgery”.

EBCOG was invited to contribute on the FIGO Working Party to develop unified GDM Screening strategies. This WP was ably chaired by Professor Moshe Hod and EBCOG was represented by me and Professor André Van Assche. We are very supportive of this initiative. I also contributed to the FIGO Pre-congress symposium on “Hyperglycaemia in Pregnancy”.

The President of EBCOG will now serve on the “FIGO Working Group of Hyperglycaemia in Pregnancy” as a representative of EBCOG.

There will be a Presidential session during the European Congress in Torino in 2016 and the current FIGO President, Prof CN Purandare, has kindly agreed to join us for this important discussion on the “Global Challenges of Women’s Health and our Response”.

The Session will involve EBCOG, FIGO, WHO, and UNFPA and will be Chaired by Prof Lord Naren Patel, Prof Chiara Benedetto and the President of EBCOG.

At the FIGO World Congress in Vancouver

The purpose of the session will be to discuss how our different organisations can work together to achieve MDG 4 and 5 to improve the health of women and the newborn. The intention is to draft a communiqué from all the contributing partners, describing an action plan, to be officially released at the conclusion of the Congress.

Council also agreed that the two immediate Past-Presidents of FIGO, Prof Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran and Prof Gamal Serour should be admitted as Honorary Fellows of EBCOG,
which is the highest honour EBCOG can bestow.

5.5 UNFPA
Our collaboration with UNFPA is flourishing and recently the first successful EBCOG UNFPA Scholar completed her placement in Edinburgh. Dr Lela Shengelia is from Georgia and her scholarship has already proved fruitful as she has been asked by the Georgian Government to act as a Policy Adviser on her return to Georgia. The second scholarship was awarded to Prof Andrii Tkachenko, from Ukraine, and he will undertake his placement in London during 2016.

This award is the result of collaboration between UNFPA-Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO) and EBCOG and through it we are offering two annual Awards, each of € 4,000, as a contribution towards the expenses of the successful candidate visiting a specialised centre which offers knowledge and skills to advance quality improvement in sexual and reproductive health.

EBCOG and UNFPA East Europe and Central Asian Region have also signed an MOU to develop an educational package in sexual and reproductive service provision in that region to reduce the burden of untimed pregnancies and of maternal morbidity and mortality. At the request of UNFPA–EECA Region, Prof Johannes Bitzer and I have begun work on a programme for Bachelor and Master Class on SRH. These training programmes will be delivered on a regional basis to not only train health care providers but also to educate healthcare policy makers on best models of care.

5.5 EBCOG and EuroPeristat
EBCOG has been invited to join the Board of the Euro-Peristat Scientific Committee (A European Union initiative). The objective of the Euro-Peristat Network is to establish a high quality, innovative, internationally recognised and sustainable European perinatal health information system. The goal is to produce robust data and analysis on a regular basis for use by national, European and international stakeholders to inform decisions about the health care of pregnant women and newborns. The President has been invited to address the Euro-Peristat board meeting on 4th-5th April 2016 in Paris to ensure that that the quality standards developed by EBCOG are absorbed into the main menu of Euro-Peristat.

7. ENTOG (European Network of Trainees in Ob/Gyn)
EBCOG and ENTOG collaborate closely and EBCOG supports ENTOG’s work and development. After all, the future of our specialty lies in ENTOG’s hands.

ENTOG is represented on every EBCOG Standing Committee and Working Party and an ENTOG representative is always a member of the Visiting Team for specialist visits. ENTOG organises an annual Trainees’ Meeting and Exchange Programme. ENTOG’s meeting in 2015 took place in Utrecht and the next ENTOG annual exchange programme and meeting
will be held in Torino in May 2016. In Utrecht, ENTOG held elections and Dr Anna Aabakke was elected as the new ENTOG president. Three EBCOG/ENTOG Trainee Fellowships were awarded in 2015 and we will continue with this tradition and award three trainee fellowships, each of €3000, for successful applicants to spend a three-month period in a training centre recognised by EBCOG.

The ENTOG Executive elected in Utrecht

8. The 24th European Congress of Ob/Gyn, Torino 2016

The 24th European Congress of Ob/Gyn was due to take place in Istanbul in 2016. Unfortunately, an unexpected UN summit at the time of the Congress means that the area around the Congress Centre will have to be closed and we therefore had to take the difficult decision to move the Congress out of Istanbul.

Prof Chiara Benedetto

The Past President of EBCOG very kindly stepped in and agreed to host the Congress in Torino, with the kind support of the prestigious University of Torino. EBCOG is indebted to Prof Chiara Benedetto and the University of Torino for their help and support. We would also like to thank the Mayor of Torino for hosting a Welcome Cocktail and actively supporting the Congress. I would also like to give my sincere thanks to the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Dr Rudi Campo, the Scientific Committee, the Local Organising Committee and the PCO, MAF Servizi GL Events in Torino.

At the European Congress in Torino, five outstanding people will be awarded Honorary Fellowships of EBCOG, which is the highest honour EBCOG can bestow:

Prof Chiara Benedetto as Past-President of EBCOG.

Dr Rolf Kirschner and Prof Ziva Novak Antolic as Individuals who have made a significant contribution to the work of EBCOG.

Prof Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumuran and Prof Gamal Serour as the two immediate Past-Presidents of FIGO and Individuals of international repute in the field.
9. **EBCOG TSOG Congress, Antalya 2017**
We all shared the disappointment of the Turkish Society of Ob/Gyn at the circumstances which compelled us to move the Congress and I thank them for their ongoing support for the Congress in Torino. As a gesture of thanks, the TSOG and EBCOG will instead be running a joint regional Congress in Antalya on 18-21st May, 2017. The event will be organised and managed by the TSOG with the full support of EBCOG.

10. **European Congress, Paris, 2018**
In 2018 the European Congress will take place in the beautiful city of Paris at the Paris Palais des Congrès on 7-10 March. The incoming President, Prof Jacky Nizard will chair the Congress Management Committee for Paris and the Scientific Committee will be Chaired by Dr Nuno Martins. I wish them every success in their planning.

11. **EBCOG Website**
Our Webmaster Dr Nuno Martins continues to do a fantastic job which has seen his workload increase substantially, due to the examination in particular. Information about all of our activities is easily accessible there, including a list of accredited departments to act as an incentive for departments which have not so far been accredited to apply, and for those whose accreditation has expired to re-apply. [www.ebcog.eu](http://www.ebcog.eu)
Glossary of Acronyms in alphabetical order

- **CME** - Continuing Medical Education
- **CPD** – Continuing Professional Development
- **DME** – Domus Medica Europea
- **DPDG** – Diabetic Pregnancy Study Group
- **EACCME** - European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education
- **EAGS** – European Academy of Gynaecological Surgery
- **EAPM** – European Association of Perinatal Medicine
- **EFC** – European Federation for Colposcopy
- **ENTOG** – European Network of Trainees in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- **ESC** – European Society of Contraception
- **ESGE** – European Society of Gynaecological Endoscopy
- **ESGO** – European Society of Gynaecological Oncology
- **ESSM** – European Society of Sexual Medicine
- **ESHRE** – European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology
- **EUGA** – European Urogynaecology Association
- **EURAPAG** – European Association of Paediatric and Adolescent Gynaecology
- **FIGO** – International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics
- **HOTs** – Hands on Training Courses
- **KBA** - Knowledge Based Assessment
- **ISPOG** – International Society of Psychosomatics in Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- **MEPs** – Members of the European Parliament
- **MoU** – Memorandum of Understanding
- **OSCE**- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations
- **RCOG** – Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- **SCTA** – Standing Committee on Training and Assessment
- **SCTR** – Standing Committee on Training Recognition
- **SRH** – Sexual and reproductive Health
- **TTT** – Training the Trainers
- **TTV** – Training the Visitors
- **UEMS** – Union Européenne des Médécins Spécialistes/European Union of Medical Specialists
- **UNFPA** – United Nations Population Fund
- **WHO** – World Health Organisation
Appendix

1. Standing Committee on Training and Assessment (SCTA)
Chair: Dr Angelique Goverde

Members:
Dr Anna Aabakke
Prof Anis Feki
Dr Frederic Goffin
Prof Jan Hořejší
Prof Carlos Damonte Khoury
Mr Joe Jordan
Mr Simon Leeson
Dr Tahir Mahmood
Prof Pekka Neimenen
Prof Ziva Novak Antolic
Prof Jacky Nizard
Prof Stefano Salvatore
Prof Fedde Scheele
Prof Milko Sirakov
Prof Basil Tarlatzis
Prof André Van Assche
Dr Yves Van Belle
Prof Gerard Visser
Dr Paul Wood

PACT Project Board

Dr Angelique J. Goverde, Chair EBCOG Project Advisory Board
Dr Tahir Mahmood CBE, President of EBCOG
Prof Fedde Scheele, Project Leader
Drs Jessica van der Aa, Executive Project Manager
Professor Peter Hornnes
Professor Jacky Nizard

2. Standing Committee on Training Recognition (SCTR)
Chair: Prof Jurij Wladimiroff

Members:
Dr Anna Aabakke
Prof Jaroslav Feyereisl
Prof Pantaleo Greco
3. Training the Trainers (TTT)
Coordinator: Prof Ziva Novak Antolic

Members:
Dr Tahir Mahmood
Prof Chiara Benedetto
Dr Angelique Goverde
Dr Nuno Martins
Prof Jacky Nizard
Dr Karen Rose
Prof Fedde Scheele

4. Examination Standing Committee and Subcommittees
Chair Examination Standing Committee: Dr Rolf Kirschner
Director of Examinations: Prof Ioannis E. Messinis

Members:
Prof Johannes Bitzer
Dr Rudi Campo
Prof Diogo Ayres de Campos
Prof Peter Hornnes
Dr Nuno Martins
Dr Tahir Mahmood
Dr Sambit Mukhopadhyay
Prof Jacky Nizard
Prof Charles Savona-Ventura
Dr Karen Rose
Dr Maud Van de Venne

5. Sub-Committees

Chair Extended Matching Questions (EMQ) Sub-Committee: Prof Ioannis E. Messinis
Chair Knowledge Based Assessment (KBA) Committee and Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) Sub-Committee: Prof Johannes Bitzer
Chair Single Best Answer (SBA) Sub-Committee: Prof Charles Savona Ventura
Chair Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE) Committee: Prof Diogo Ayres de Campos

OSCE Examination Co-ordinators In Norwich:
Dr Sambit Mukhopadhyay
Dr Medha Sule

Pre-Examination Course KBA Leads:
Dr Karen Rose and Professor Jacky Nizard

Pre-Examination OSCE Course Leads:
Prof Diogo Ayres de Campos
Dr Sambit Mukhopadhyay
Dr Karen Rose

6. Torino Scientific/Local Committee

Congress President: Dr Tahir Mahmood
Local Congress President: Prof Chiara Benedetto
Chair of the Scientific Committee: Dr Rudi Campo

Members:
Dr Ali Baloglu
Prof Alan Cameron
Prof Linda Cardozo
Prof Anis Feki
Prof Reynir Kimmig
Prof Jacky Nizard
Prof Willem Ombelet
Prof Stefano Salvatore
Prof Gerard Visser

7. ENTOG Executive
President: Dr Anna Aabakke
Secretary General: Dr Alexandra Kristufkova
Treasurer: Dr Laurids Bune
Executive Member: Dr Agnieszka Lemańska
Executive Member: Dr Žiga Jan