

# The Young Community of the European Association of Preventive Cardiology: The future in motion

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## Background

The mission of the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC) is to promote excellence in research, practice, education and policy in cardiovascular health, primary and secondary prevention. To accomplish that, collaboration with a representative group of professionals working in the field of preventive cardiology is pivotal. Therefore, young professionals (i.e. physicians, researchers and allied professionals interested in cardiovascular prevention, basic science, cardiac rehabilitation and sports cardiology aged less than 40 years) are essential to drive the future agenda of the association and they need to find a common home within its structure, hence the development of a young community.

Young professionals play a pivotal role within the association. They are fresh from school loaded with the most recent knowledge. They have the drive to change the world. They are open for interaction, regardless of the specific scientific background, and to collaborate in common scientific projects and research. They are familiar with the latest gizmos and are used to communicate through social media. In addition, a survey among young cardiologists of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) identified a need for strong young communities within the ESC. Since 2009, 10 young communities have been created, representing and accommodating young professionals from different fields in cardiology (e.g. general cardiology, interventional cardiology).

In 2015, the EAPC Young Community (YC) was created to increase interaction among young professionals interested in prevention, rehabilitation and sports cardiology, to share experiences and ideas for new research projects. The first YC meeting was held during the EuroPrevent 2015 in Lisbon where young EAPC members under 40 years of age were invited and had a first exchange of research interests and discussion for future plans.

The first dedicated EAPC YC scientific session during EuroPrevent 2017, in Malaga, created a

stimulating platform for the interaction between junior and senior researchers in the field of preventive cardiology.

## Current state

The EAPC YC was created in order to provide dedicated space to young EAPC members. This space allows young professionals to be actively involved and participate in the activities of the association. The primary objectives of the EAPC YC are:

- To involve more young physicians, researchers and allied professionals who are interested in preventive cardiology;
- To involve and engage young researchers in the activities organised by the EAPC;
- To share ideas and research projects and promote collaboration irrespective of disciplines, culture or region;
- To facilitate the dissemination of educational contents;
- To utilise social networks in spreading the activities of the association and of the EAPC YC;

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- To be part of a family that takes into account the young people's opinion and potential contribution to ESC and EAPC strategic objectives.

All young professionals interested in preventive cardiology, such as prevention through cardiac rehabilitation, sports cardiology, exercise and population science can join our YC. To do so please subscribe to the 'EAPC Young Community' LinkedIn group (link: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8335832>), free of charge. Members can post on the LinkedIn homepage interesting articles, ideas, proposals, meetings and initiatives of interest for the other young members.

### **EAPC membership and benefits**

There are four levels of membership in the EAPC. Higher membership levels have greater advantages. These include, for example, free access to the journal, access to online congress resources and many discounts. Younger members are eligible for a special discount to register for the silver membership, gaining all advantages. One of the objectives of the EAPC YC is to facilitate early career development of young members. For this reason, a mentoring session is organised during EuroPrevent, with priority given to members of the YC. During this session, experienced senior members meet with young members to discuss career progression and provide guidance. To strengthen the opportunities for collaboration and mentoring, a series of informal events (e.g. cocktail meetings) are organised every year during the EuroPrevent and ESC congresses. These have the objective of providing a friendly setting for senior and young members to meet fostering the internal network, sharing ideas and creating new cooperation. Younger members, through the association, may also benefit from the support of their peers and seniors.

The community aims at generating discussion and disseminating knowledge, not only through the internet but also during meetings. Joint sessions with the YC are organised during EuroPrevent conferences. In these sessions, young members are involved as moderators or speakers, and are sometimes also given the opportunity to challenge their seniors. The common characteristic of these sessions is that they are interactive and aim at engaging the audience directly (e.g. a quiz might be organised to test the knowledge of the audience). Moreover, the annual congress Young Investigator Award sessions provide the opportunity to present research achievements as well as to enhance the experience and careers of the young members.

### **Future directions**

The EAPC YC commitment towards the EAPC is constantly increasing. The community's endeavour is continuous throughout the year and reaches its yearly objectives at each EuroPrevent congress. The 2018 EuroPrevent will showcase a series of relevant topics that were identified by the YC at the end of the 2017 edition and shaped together with the conference programme committee. All EAPC sections will be involved in the YC sessions' programme, ensuring ample representation of the entire EAPC scientific community.

The EAPC YC members will have an active role both in presenting and moderating during the conference and all sessions will be highlighted and easily identifiable in the programme. The aim of all EAPC YC's sessions will be to engage the entire EAPC community in an active discussion, seeking a concrete sharing of knowledge, skills and abilities between its most and least experienced members.

Among the objectives identified by the EAPC YC there is, of course, the increase of its members, safeguarding a wide representation of all EAPC sections, countries and genders. Along those lines goes a proper dissemination of all EAPC's and EAPC YC's initiatives and activities, making sure that these reach a national diffusion, all the way to the grassroots level. A strategy to reach such wide dissemination is the creation of a network of ambassadors that would promote the initiatives by the YC and by the association all around the European and non-European countries.

### **Conclusions**

The EAPC YC is a new group within the EAPC created to strengthen the position of young professionals in the field of preventive cardiology. Several initiatives have been developed and implemented in the last few years and others will be developed in the future together with the association and with new members of the YC. The doors of the community are wide open and all ideas from all around the world are welcome. We hope to see you at EuroPrevent 2018 in Ljubljana.

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