

Report of EMEUNET representative involvement in the EULAR recommendations/points to consider for the generic core competencies of health professionals in rheumatology

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Both of us, Dr George Fragoulis and Dr Valentin Schäfer, we are thrilled to participate in one of the EULAR Task Forces. We are very honoured to be the EMEUNET representatives in the “EULAR recommendations/points to consider for the generic competencies of health professionals in rheumatology”. So far, we have had the first of the two-day meetings, which took place during October 2017 in Zurich. The second two-day meeting is planned to take place in May 2018.

There are many reasons for which we have applied to participate. Firstly, the subject of this project is very interesting, as we recognise that the core competencies that Rheumatology health professionals have, vary a lot amongst different countries, largely reflecting the different health economic systems and different approaches in daily clinical practice. It is of uppermost importance if EULAR (and EMEUNET as part of it) could provide some overarching principles about the basic competencies that Rheumatology health professionals should have, and define the framework in which they can co-operate with the clinicians in order to provide the best care for patients.

Secondly, for us, as young rheumatologists, it is a great experience to interact with other colleagues from all over the world, to be exposed in different thought patterns, to discuss our concerns, to share our ideas and to take part in a such important procedure as is the conformation of recommendations/points to consider. We think that all these are very helpful in the development of our medical and academic training.

As EMEUNET representatives, we did not only participate in the Task Force, but we also had the pleasure to be the chairpersons of the two different working groups that were formulated in that first meeting. This was one step ahead of what we expected, as we had the opportunity to learn how to co-ordinate and guide a discussion in small working groups and present the key points. Also, we participated in the round table discussions, co-formulating the framework for the recommendations.

As expected, some preparation was required in order to be able to actively participate. The Research Fellow responsible for the project, Dr Lisa Edelaar, very kindly had provided us, ahead of the meeting, with some basic literature around the subject. Also, we had discussed, ahead of the meeting, with health professionals from our countries about the problems and their challenges in their everyday clinical practice.

The format of the meeting was excellent, as far as we can tell from our limited experience, and there was also some time to informally discuss with other colleagues, during lunch and dinner time.



In conclusion, we would totally recommend to young rheumatologists and researchers to apply to participate as EMEUNET members in EULAR Task Forces, as this will help them to gain a lot of experiences and skills (for example, organisational skills, how to chair a session, how to present results of discussion and so on), that will be helpful in their future careers. They will have also the pleasure to share their ideas and contribute to important decisions.