

## Editor's Page

# Meritocracy, Motivation and Centres of Excellence: What Greek Cardiology Needs

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In recent years Greek cardiology has appeared strong, if often a little bloated, and certainly costly. It has undoubtedly earned people's trust and the flow of patients abroad that existed two decades ago has dried up to barely a trickle. However, apart from the positives there is also a non-trivial number of negative, discouraging factors that unfortunately still predominate in this country and stand as a significant threat to our future prospects.

The main warning signs are a pervasive lack of meritocracy, a loss of motivation afflicting mainly our younger colleagues, the stagnation in the national health system and the universities, capped by the excessive number of new cardiologists. Everyone is aware of this.

Everyone knows that the national health system is falling into senility with little prospect of rejuvenation. Everyone knows that the universities, supposedly cradles of renewal, have developed a reflex reaction against the young, the new and the vigorous. And everyone knows that a Daedalian and delinquent system of healthcare financing benefits the mediocre at the expense of the ambitious and able who hope for a chance at a university post.

Many continue to hope that, sooner or later, a change will come. Even a small one. A change that will bring inspiration and anticipation. The pragmatists, of course, are aware that conditions do not leave much room for optimism concerning a major change of direction. On the other hand, it seems feasible to pursue a programme for the gradual renewal of staff and structures, within which value and excellence will have their proper place.

At the same time, we must organise a number, albeit a small one, of scientific centres of clinical practice and research whose management, funding and accountability will follow modern lines of development. Such centres will attract the capable, they will draw Greeks back from abroad and they will exert a positive influence on the overall productivity of our healthcare system.

It is likely that, at first sight, centres of excellence will seem out of place in a country where nobody seems to care how prosaic is the public sector or how prodigal the private. However, I believe there to be an immediate need for a new, well-organised beacon of hope. Our nation must rise to the challenge of a new, international potential with laws that will give the public sector flexibility and answerability.