

Editor's Page

National Cardiology Journals: Their Role in a Unified European Cardiology

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The cardiology journals of the various European countries have contributed consistently and effectively in a number of ways to the development of European cardiology. Heralding the latest scientific concepts in the national languages of each country, they have been embraced with appreciation and respect by their respective cardiological communities and have made an important contribution to continuing medical education, often under tenuous and difficult circumstances.

Nowadays, however, times have changed. The widespread use of the English language and the giddy proliferation of electronic information have made access to the journals of the major European and American scientific associations much easier, thus drastically limiting the role of the small national cardiology journals.

Some members of national cardiological societies consider that the decline and depreciation of small local journals is an inevitable consequence of the evolution and globalisation of scientific information. Maybe they are the pragmatists. There are, however, many others who believe that national journals, published in national as well as international languages, have a future, and can further many goals provided that they recognise the need to adapt to new requirements. I count myself in this latter group.

Undoubtedly, no one can overlook the power and the importance of large, international publications in our field. They are the main portals through which new and topical scientific findings reach publication. Here, acknowledged experts in the field will be invited to express their views. Most European cardiologists, however, find it easier to assimilate scientific information in

their own language and can author medical texts more eloquently in their mother tongue, especially when the writing requires mature consideration and may possess a philosophical dimension.

This reality is certainly likely to change in the next generation. However, under the prevailing European conditions in almost fifty different states, where there is a great diversity in economies, health care and medical training, the national cardiology journals could prove an effective tool in the implementation of a large, unified European programme, one that could be given the name "Unified European Cardiology."

This programme for the harmonisation of cardiology in Europe should include a uniform educational system for trainees in cardiology, common European examinations, universal application of the Guidelines of the European Society of Cardiology, and of course, a common standard for the working conditions of European cardiologists. Within this programme the national cardiological societies and national journals could play a material role.

This prospect for the national journals would logically need to be the subject of substantial discussion, coordinated by the European Society of Cardiology, in order to highlight the questions and quandaries that will arise and to set out the role of the journals in this new age. The publishers of the journals, who are by tradition individuals of acknowledged prominence in their countries, will also need to get acquainted and talk to each other.

I am optimistic that from such a discussion it will become apparent that these journals, which have been our companions since youth, will continue to play an invaluable role.