

Editor's Page

An Easter Egg from the Editor

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In Greece Easter weekend this year is April 22-23, Easter Sunday coinciding with St. George's Day. St. George, of course, slew the dragon, but by the time Greeks get around to slaying their Paschal lambs most Christians in the western world will have finished celebrating their Easter holiday, which is one week earlier. Why is this so? Well, the Orthodox Church uses a different algorithm to calculate the date of Easter each year than do the Catholic and other western churches. Both algorithms are based on the phases of the moon, but differences in the method of calculation mean that although the holidays sometimes coincide, more often they differ by a week, or two, or sometimes even as many as four weeks.

Now it is not that one algorithm is right and the other wrong. (Although if one ponders the meanings of the adjectives "orthodox" and "catholic" it becomes clear that each institution is convinced of its own universal rectitude.) It is probably quite unimportant that this Christian festival is observed on different days in different countries. However, in the realm of science in general, and that of medicine in particular, allowing too much latitude, in theory or in practice, can have disastrous consequences. Consistency, after all, is one of the cornerstones of science.

It is for this reason that the European Society of Cardiology is placing increasing emphasis on harmonising and homogenising the practice of cardiology in Europe, and even beyond. Anyone who spends time talking to representatives of National Cardiological Societies in other European nations will very quickly come to realise

that there are enormous disparities between one country and another, due partly to economic and partly to political, social or historical differences. A central coordinating body like the ESC, with strong connections to its member states, is in a unique position to formulate a strategic policy for ironing out rough patches, repairing frayed edges, and drawing together the varied strands of European cardiology into a piece of whole cloth.

The warp and the weft of this fabric will be the standardisation of medical education throughout the European region, and the preparation and dissemination of guidelines focusing on specific areas of clinical practice. In both those dimensions the role of the national cardiology journals, including our own, will be a pivotal one. Part of the mission of the Hellenic Journal of Cardiology is to publish Greek language translations of ESC guidelines in a timely fashion, so as to make them easily accessible to all Greek cardiologists. We are also committed to promoting the educational programmes organised by the ESC.

Working together is better than working alone. Earlier this year, for the first time, the editors of the national European cardiology journals met at the European Heart House, as a first step towards formulating plans for regular future contacts and collaboration. The task will not be an easy one, but with persistence, cooperation and tolerance I believe it can be accomplished. And if we can achieve our goal, if we can slay the dragons of diversity and dissent, then we will truly have something new to celebrate.

Happy Easter to all our readers.