



# ESGCD

ESCMID STUDY GROUP  
FOR CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE

European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases



## Newsletter Autumn 2025

### Message from the Study group Executive Committee

Dear colleagues, friends and ESGCD study group members,

As the leaves begin to change colour, we recognise the changing of another season, with a time to reflect on the good work done so far this year, and the accomplishments still to come. This is a great time to think with renewed vigour about collaborations, and how you can work with others in the study group, either in research or some new educational delivery.

Please remember, that we are keen to support research projects, and that the membership can be leveraged to answer some pertinent questions. If you have a project/research question that you think the membership can help with, please get in touch.

As always, if you have any items for inclusion in our next newsletter or ideas for future study group activities, please email Dr Wiep Klaas Smits, Educational Officer; [W.K.Smits@lumc.nl](mailto:W.K.Smits@lumc.nl). This really is your study group! We really do want to hear your suggestions and ideas please don't be shy!

Please make sure you keep us up to date of any upcoming projects that you think the committee can help advise on, and please check out our ESCMID SG webpage [ESCMID: ESGCD](#), and our LinkedIn page <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13099388/> for updates and networking. We've also added some new guidance on our webpage on how to apply for sponsorship for meetings relevant to the study group.

With our very best wishes,

Kerrie Davies – (UK) – Chair,  
Erik Dubberke (US) – Secretary,  
John Coia- (DK) – Treasurer,  
Benoit Guery – (Switzerland) - Science officer,  
Wiep Klaas Smits– (NL) - Education officer,  
John Heritage – (UK) – Patient Representative,  
Andrea Marino- (Italy) – TAE Young Science Rep.



## Recent publications

We are always interested in publications and research activities of our members, so please let us know when your *C. difficile*-related articles are published. When publishing your research, we would ask that you **add your ESGCD affiliation** to relevant papers that you submit. This helps highlight the impact of our study group to a wider audience. Unfortunately, although the two papers below do include ESGCD members, they cannot be counted in our end of year report, as papers must have three members from two different countries, so its always good to think about those collaborations early!

1. [Current practices to reduce the risk of transmission of Clostridioides difficile in France: results of a national survey.](#) Khanafer N, Venier AG, Nasso R, Baroux R, Vanhems P. *Anaerobe*. 2025 Oct 7:103004. doi: 10.1016/j.anaerobe.2025.103004. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41067311
2. [Clostridioides difficile pathogenesis and control.](#) Chilton CH, Viprey V, Normington C, Moura IB, Buckley AM, Freeman J, Davies K, Wilcox MH. **Nat Rev Microbiol**. 2025 Oct 2. doi: 10.1038/s41579-025-01242-2. Online ahead of print. PMID: 41039149

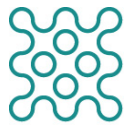
## Educational events

We have been involved in organising and supporting some educational events, see below. If you have an event for which you would like sponsorship, please see our new guidelines on our webpage.

### Webinars

On Sept 30, 2025, the ESGCD organised its first webinar of the 2025-2026 academic season, on the topic of “**Antimicrobial resistance**”. Over 80 attendees heard wonderful talks by Dr Jane Freeman (metronidazole resistance), Dr Taryn Eubank (vancomycin resistance), Dr Curtis Donskey (fidaxomicin resistance) and Dr Andrea Brenciani (oxazolidinone resistance). We all went away with an increased appreciation of all the insights into the matter that have come to light in recent years, but also with a renewed sense of urgency to monitor the emergence of resistance in *C. difficile*. If you have missed the webinar, please go [here](#) to the ESCMID Library via the ESGCD website to see the recording.

The next webinar will be a staple of ESGCD activities: the **Xmas webinar** with selected talks by early career researchers. This will take place on **December 16, 2025**. If you are an early career researcher with an interesting story, send your abstract to the Education Officer (w.k.smits@lumc.nl) for a chance to be selected. If you know of somebody in your or somebody else’s team, do encourage them to apply. The deadline for sending abstracts is **November 5th, 2025**, so the speakers selected by the ESGCD executive committee can be informed by the middle of November. In the spirit of Xmas, prizes will be awarded (a contribution towards attending ESCMID Global 2026)!



## November is *C. difficile* awareness month!

As November is *C. difficile* awareness month, we wanted to take the time to highlight the patient storey from our patient representative on our executive committee.

### **C diff – a patient’s (and carer’s) perspective – John Heritage Exec Committee Patient Rep**

In the dim and distant past, when our microbiota was still called our normal flora, I was a brand-new lecturer. One of my colleagues was testing what effect a single antibiotic dose would have on the faecal microbiota. I was eager to become part of the team and was assigned a single dose of clindamycin. I duly submitted my stool sample and thought no more about it, until a couple of weeks later, I developed a very high fever, and rigors. My wife accused me of frightening our children. I rapidly came to believe that the end of my world had come. It seemed to be falling out of me. The smell of my stools was unforgettable – a mixture of old leather dubbin and horse dung. An endoscopic examination with what felt like an electric anaconda, confirmed that I had pseudomembranous colitis. I was given metronidazole and made a slow recovery, which was interrupted by a relapse. Vancomycin therapy was very new, and the IV preparation was all that was available. It was the bitterest substance I have ever tasted, but it worked, although for months after, I lived in dread of another relapse.

Jump forward to the pandemic, when my wife developed acute pancreatitis because of a blocked bile duct. Surgery was not feasible at that time. She was treated with a cocktail of antibiotics. A little while later, she developed diarrhoea, with a very familiar smell. She was hospitalised with an initial diagnosis was urosepsis. I knew differently. That smell is truly unforgettable. She came home and made a full recovery, although her surgery was delayed because of her history of *C. diff*. I had to use all the carer resources I had to nurse her during her recovery. Despite my training as a microbiologist, I still managed to succumb to *C. diff* for a second time. Not all cases of *C. diff*. infection result from a course of an antibiotic. This time, I spent the new year of 2021 in an isolation ward, remembering the quote of the Population Geneticist JBS Haldane, who said of his cancer treatment “So now I am like the two-faced Janus, the only god to see his own anus”. In my case, it only felt like mine was lying in my commode. This time, I had two relapses, associated with a growing fear of another relapse. While *C. diff* causes an acute physical illness, albeit with a possible relapsing course, its tentacles are far-reaching and it has a profound psychological effect. I dread having to take any antibiotic and this is much worse when my wife, who suffers recurrent infections, needs treatment. I still plan routes with “comfort breaks” as a priority and am hypervigilant when it comes to smells. While this fear is slowly retreating these days, it is something that, I believe, deserves wider recognition.



We thank John for sharing his story with us, and hope it helps us to centre the patient in all of our work.

## C. diff awareness month - educational refresh

This November, why not refresh your knowledge and revisit some of the past webinars that the study group has held, which can be found [here](#).

You can find our full 'back to basics' series, plus all the previous Xmas case studies awards.

## ESGCD elections

The Exec Committee will be undergoing elections again for next year, and for the process to take place we need two study group members (who are not currently part of the Exec or who will not be standing in the election) to help oversee the process. If you would like to volunteer, please email the study group secretary at [edubberk@wustl.edu](mailto:edubberk@wustl.edu) to register your interest.

If you are interested in standing for the Exec, then please look out for further information in the coming months on how to put yourself forward.

*Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower*

*Albert Camus*