Activity Report of TAE 2015-2016

Aim
The Trainees Association of ESCMID (TAE) has the main aim to improve the training in clinical microbiology (CM) and infectious diseases (ID), and to create a large network of trainees to facilitate international collaboration.

We revised the TAE steering committee (SC) Operating Procedures and rephrased our objectives to better reflect the aims of the TAE:

- To recognize, interpret and overcome challenges faced by trainees of CM and ID throughout Europe;
- To implement harmonized content and quality of CM and ID training and European curricula across Europe via consultation with UEMS and national societies;
- To generate a broader and inter-related collaboration of CM and ID trainees across Europe by using a regional and worldwide network of CM and ID trainees;
- To stimulate observership, mentorship and other exchange programmes across Europe and beyond European borders;
- To encourage exchange programmes during the undergraduate study period;
- To acknowledge and reward distinguished young ESCMID members;
- To promote educational events in the context of and outside of ECCMID;
- To improve and assist in scientific education for European CM and ID trainees.

TAE SC organization
From 2009 until 2012 the TAE SC included 8 to 14 members. Since 2013 this number has been reduced to 6 members (with the presence of 8 members during short periods due to overlap). In 2015 Polona Maver and Davorka Dušek completed their terms. In 2016, we had a major turnover of steering committee members in 2016, in which four members completed their terms: Alejandro Martin Quiros, Kanita Dedić, Chrysanthi Skevaki and Joana Cortez, and two members stepped down early: Erlangga Yusuf and Ceren Atasoy. As of November 2016 the current TAE SC members are: Alberto Enrico Maraolo, David Ong, Thea-Christin Zapf, Cansu Cimen, Zaira Palacios Baena, and Caroline Rönnberg.

Correspondence between SC members took place on a daily/weekly basis via e-mail. If necessary, Skype call meetings were arranged. Furthermore, TAE SC meetings were held twice a year: during ECCMID (Copenhagen 2015, Amsterdam 2016) and in the winter (Madrid 2015, Amsterdam Schiphol Airport 2016).

Network and promotion of TAE activities
The TAE SC has been working on promoting our trainee association and its activities through contact with national representatives. We have tried to keep our list of contact persons (many from national trainee associations) in our TAE network up to date, but recognize the need for improvement in this area in the following years.
The TAE leaflet was renewed in 2016 to attract more trainees. This leaflet was distributed and promoted at ECCMID 2016, and afterwards further distributed by the steering committee members in their own countries. There has been a poster promoting the TAE in the European network corner at each ECCMID since 2010. In 2015 the TAE booth was included within ESCMID World during ECCMID, and the TAE Trainees Day was promoted with a special poster. During the Trainees Day session, the TAE president gave a short presentation promoting TAE activities.

TAE and ESCMID activities aimed at trainees and other young professionals were regularly promoted through our TAE Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/ESCMID.TAE). This platform was used to upload recent papers, promote events under the ESCMID umbrella and give more visibility of TAE. In late 2016, the TAE became active through a dedicated twitter account. In addition, the TAE website (as part of the ESCMID website) has now been running for a number of years. Regularly, a TAE newsletter was sent to all young ESCMID members and TAE announcements were made in the ESCMID newsletter.

*Collaboration and representation of TAE in committees and at ESCMID activities*

The TAE SC has a representative in both the CM and the ID sections of UEMS. TAE representatives attended meetings of both UEMS sections and used the opportunity to promote the TAE to the other section members.

Two members of the TAE SC have an ad-hoc membership in the Educational Subcommittee, in which they represent the trainees and give their comments and opinions at the yearly meeting and during teleconferences.

Several TAE SC members joined different ESCMID study groups, which also made collaboration on new proposals for ECCMID easier and increased TAE visibility. ESCMID Observerships have been promoted through the national trainee associations and Facebook page. TAE SC also wants to connect with undergraduate medical students. A first draft of a TAE-IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students’ Association) Memorandum of Collaboration has been written and the TAE SC is currently awaiting the input of IFMSA before this collaboration can be officially signed. Furthermore, in 2016 we had our first meeting with one of the European Medical Students’ Association (EMSA) steering committee members to explore possible joint activities.

In collaboration with the Parity commission a mentorship centre platform went online in February 2015 and the related programme was promoted via emails, the newsletter and the ESCMID website. ESCMID Collaborative Centres were invited to sign up as Mentorship Centres in March 2015 and additional promotion for both mentors and mentees was performed during ECCMID 2015.

In 2016 one of the TAE SC members joined the Education Work Group within the European Committee on Infection Control (EUCIC). This group focuses on the strategy and development of the EUCIC educational programme. Another member joined the ESCMID Study Group for Antibiotic Policies (ESGAP) as an ad-hoc member.

In 2016 TAE co-organized with the ESCMID Study Group for Viral Hepatitis (ESGVH) a Postgraduate Education Course in Croatia about “Challenges in management of viral hepatitis”. One of the TAE SC members was actively involved in the preparation of this event, and another member was present during the course and gave a lecture.

For 2017 TAE will co-organize with the ESCMID Study Group for Antibiotic Policies (ESGAP) a postgraduate technical workshop in Madrid about antibiotic therapy in practice. One of the TAE SC members is actively involved in the preparation of this event and will be present during the course and give a lecture.
ECCMID 2015 and 2016

During ECCMID 2015 and 2016 TAE organized the Trainees Day with over 80 participants each year. At ECCMID 2015 in Copenhagen, three out of five TAE proposals for Educational Workshops, which were prepared in collaboration with different ESCMID Study Groups, were accepted by the Programme Committee in addition to the Trainees Day session. TAE was a co-organizer of the following workshops “Vaccination of immunocompromised and allergic patients - are we missing the obvious?” (together with EVASG and ESGICH), “Forensic microbiology - current and future challenges” (together with EFPMSG), and “Giving the best in science: from us/to us”.

Since 2015 TAE SC has implemented a new concept of Trainees Day Sessions. In the past, Trainees Days were prepared in a form of lectures, similar to other sessions at ECCMID. However, since trainees in CM and ID are in a process of choosing their future career path, the TAE SC offered them something that could be helpful and inspiring for their own career. TAE SC organized a session, which included two consecutive round table sessions with 10 tables apiece and invited recognized experts with different profiles to chair these round tables. We used an online tool that helped TAE members to register for the round tables sessions. During the Trainees Day the Young Investigator Awardees gave a short presentation on their achievements that have led to these awards.

For ECCMID 2016 TAE had made 6 proposals, two of which were approved: symposium “Affordable healthcare” (together with Parity Commission, ESGVH, ESGAP), and educational workshop “Undergraduate and postgraduate training and assessments in the infection field - a European discussion” (together with UEMS, ESGAP, ESGNI).

Because of positive feedback, the round tables sessions were retained as the main format of Trainees Day at ECCMID 2016 in Amsterdam. We adapted the format slightly: e.g. participants were required to submit questions when registering for the session. Experts were chosen from the list of confirmed ECCMID speakers / confirmed faculty to reduce costs. Geographic and gender balance were taken as much into account as possible.

TAE survey 2015

The TAE SC developed a survey to assess the European CM and ID trainees’ training satisfaction and the balance between personal and professional life. This survey was launched on 25 April 2015 during the European Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (ECCMID) congress in Copenhagen, Denmark. During ECCMID 2015, the survey was advertised on the screens in the congress venue and announced during the trainees’ day session. Trainees were also actively approached in person to fill out the survey. To increase the response rate hostesses with iPads were at the door offering participation in our Training Conditions Survey. After the ECCMID, the survey ran online on the open source software Lime Survey (LimeSurvey GmbH, Hamburg, Germany) until 13 July 2015, during which time trainees were approached by social media, the ESCMID website, and by local TAE representatives in almost all countries in Europe.

In September 2016 the TAE published the first part of this large survey among European trainees focusing on training systems and training adequacy in the European Journal of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. This survey showed high heterogeneity in training conditions in European countries, identified perceived gaps in training, and suggested areas for improvements. The results can be accessed via the following link (Open Access Article): http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10096-016-2791-9. Within only one month, this article has been downloaded/viewed more than 1500 times.

The TAE steering committee is also finishing a second paper on the results of the second part of the survey, focusing on the balance between personal and professional life (work-life balance) among CM and ID trainees and young specialists in Europe, including parenthood, working conditions, quality of life, alcohol consumption and burnout.
**TAE awards**
Based on previous experience the TAE SC has updated the assessment criteria of TAE awards in 2015. Also to make the awards more distinguishable from the Young Investigator Awards, the TAE SC has put a larger focus on training achievements instead of research achievements in their assessment criteria. In 2015 only two instead of four members were awarded due to the appropriateness of candidates for these awards. For 2016 it was decided to have only two TAE awards: one for CM and one for ID. All awardees received their awards on the Trainees Day.

**Future activities**
The TAE SC aims to continue with conducting surveys among trainees to get an adequate overview of the current situation of CM and ID trainees across Europe and beyond. Besides the compulsory activities the TAE has to perform according to the TAE standard operating procedures, the TAE SC also wants to focus on the following goals in the next two years (2017 and 2018):
- Enlarge our network among trainees in all countries;
- Be more visible to trainees through all kinds of social media;
- More and larger representation of trainees in several committees;
- Publish our own research results;
- Active participation in ESCMID Summer School (e.g. giving a presentation on TAE);
- Reaching out to undergraduate medical students and promoting attractiveness of our CM/ID specialties.

David Ong, President of the TAE Steering Committee
On behalf of the Trainees Association of ESCMID

*Last updated: 8 December 2016*