FROM EUROPEAN BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES (EBPG) TO EUROPEAN RENAL BEST PRACTICE (ERBP)
A FRESH START FOR THE EUROPEAN NEPHROLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

End of 2007, the Council of the European Renal Association / European Dialysis and Transplantation Association (ERA-EDTA), decided to install a commission to discuss and define the future of European nephrology guidelines. This decision was taken against the background of a changing worldwide nephrology guideline landscape, with the Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) initiative as a body developing global nephrology guidelines having been established in 2003. The original perception that KDIGO with time would become responsible for all nephrology guidelines was to be reconsidered when the KDIGO Board of Directors from 2006 on decided to develop guidelines along selected topics and to offer global advice leaving space for local, regional, continental or country-wise fine-tuning of the guidelines developed by KDIGO as well as opportunities to develop / update guidelines on topics not covered by KDIGO.

This ERA-EDTA commission on the future of European nephrology guidelines, at that time composed of 20 members, convened a first time in January 2008, in Paris. Along with a substantial number of decisions regarding details in guideline/recommendation development, about which will be reported elsewhere, perhaps the main conclusion of the Paris meeting was to make a strict distinction between “guidelines” which should be based on absolute evidence, and expert advice which is opinion based but not or hardly evidenced, which should be reported in a way to be not perceived by the medical community as the absolute truth. Consequently, it was decided that “guidelines” should be published separately and applying a different format than “recommendations” or “position statements”. All activities developed should take into account the specific European situation and conditions.

Because these decisions were considered to emanate in a substantial change in philosophy, it was also decided to change the name of the European responsible body from European Best Practice Guidelines (EBPG) to European Renal Best Practice (ERBP).

In the nearby future several specific initiatives will emanate from this commission, which in the meanwhile at the latest ERA-EDTA Council in February 2008 in London was installed as one of the three ERA-EDTA Advisory Boards: 1) a paper announcing and explaining the change in name and philosophy described above, which has been coordinated by C Zoccali, has recently been submitted for publication; 2) a position statement regarding the latest evolutions in anemia guidelines, coordinated by F Locatelli, is currently under development and will be submitted for publication in the nearby future; 3) the writing of a position statement about the soon to be published KDIGO guidelines on hepatitis C, to be coordinated by A Covic, will be started as soon as the draft of these guidelines is available.

Later on, further initiatives will be developed, with special emphasis on updating previous EBPG guidelines such as those on kidney transplantation and peritoneal dialysis. The Advisory Board is currently being expanded to contain also members who are not nephrologists, such as nurses, patients etc. We are convinced that these changes in scope and organization will help to increase the visibility and implementation of European nephrology guidelines and to enhance the quality of European and worldwide nephrology practice.

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