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ESC establishes Council for practicing cardiologists
European Society of Cardiology XXIII Congress

The creation of a new Council for Practicing Cardiology should help to bridge the gap between recommendations and actual practice, the European Society of Cardiology said yesterday.

Commenting on the approval of the new Council at the *ESC's General Assembly* yesterday, president Maarten Simoons said he hoped the move would give practicing cardiologists greater influence on the recommendations issued by their representative bodies.

Under the terms of the agreement, members of local cardiology societies in five European countries will automatically become members of the ESC. 'This makes it harder for members to say that new recommendations are not practical to implement,' commented Sigmund Silber, a member of the ESC's Committee for Practice Guidelines and Policy.

The creation of the Council reflects trends in the US, with bodies such as the American College of Cardiology moving away from academia towards a practice-led approach. This is driven largely by the threat of litigation if guidelines are not adhered to, making practical aspects of recommendations – particularly cost considerations – crucial.

The new Council comprises more than 6,000 practicing cardiologists from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Alain Sebaoun, secretary and driving force behind the initiative, commented: 'The Council assists the ESC to adapt guidelines, protocols, and educational activities to take the constraints of practicing cardiologists into consideration. An important objective will be to assist the ESC in developing educational and communication tools in other European languages.'

Professor Silber added that the ESC is committed to improving clinical practice and patient care through a major clinical guidelines program. In 2002, the society expects to publish recommendations on AMI management, bacterial endocarditis, antithrombotic agents, coronary angioplasty, and supraventricular arrhythmia, as well as revised joint European guidelines on prevention of cardiovascular disease.

It will also issue 'expert consensus' documents on hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy (in association with the AHA and ACC), neonatal electrocardiography, use of beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors, cardiac disease during pregnancy, and pericardial disease.