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The Belgian Society of Cardiology in Perspective



The Belgian Society of Cardiology (BSC) is the scientific society of Belgian cardiologists, promoting research and education in the field of cardiology. The

BSC was created in the 1940s under the input of Professor Jean Lequime and was considered the early stages of the International Society of Cardiology.

History

To understand the rationale behind the foundation of the BSC, one should go back to the middle of the 20th century. Cardiology was well known from a clinical point of view, but all the superb techniques routinely used today did not even exist then. Surprisingly, congenital heart disease was rather well documented clinically, but surgical repair of these, was either not possible or at a very early stage in this part of Europe.

At that time, it appeared that a member of a well-known Belgian family presented with a surgically curable cardiovascular disease. After elaborate consultation in which Professor Lequime, Head of the cardiology Service at Hôpital St. Pierre in Brussels, played an important role, contact was made with a very experienced cardiac surgeon in the USA. In order to bring about the maximum chance for success, it was decided to have the operation in the USA. It all went well, the patient did fine and later could enjoy a perfectly normal life. This experience became well known to all persons responsible for cardiology in Belgium and inspired them to collaborate and meet in a new structure, which became the growing stimulus leading to the foundation of the BSC. Professor Lequime was its first President. At the same time and certainly linked to the needs illustrated by this case, both clinical and financial entities became involved. Among these, the Princess Liliane Foundation provided the cardiovascular world and the BSC with much help for meetings, grants for projects, and possibilities of bringing highly regarded experts together.

Aims

The main aims of the BSC are to stimulate the study of questions relating to the cardiovascular system, by furthering basic and clinical research; to ensure a wide dissemination of the results of such research; to encourage scientific exchanges and cooperation between cardiologists; to promote continuous education in cardiology; and to promote international cooperation.

To achieve the mission of the BSC, there are various Working Groups, Councils, and other affiliations, that work in specific areas of cardiovascular medicine, health and patient care. The organization supports the activities of the following working groups and councils:

Belgian Working Groups of Interventional Cardiology (BWGIC), Non-Invasive Cardiac Imaging (BWGNICI), Heart Failure (BWGHF), Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BWGCPR), Belgian Interdisciplinary Working Group on Acute Cardiology (BIWAC), Adult Congenital Heart Disease (BWGACHD), Belgian heart Rhythm Association (BeHRA), Young Cardiologist Club (YCC), Basic Research in Cardiology (BWGBR), Cardio Vascular Nursing (BWGCVN) and the Councils on Hypertension and Vascular Biology, Cardio Oncology, and Angiology.

The BSC College of Cardiology is responsible for increasing the quality of cardiovascular care (creation of quality handbooks, national registries, etc.). The chairs of each of these groups sit on the BSC Board and meet six times per year.

Belgian Heart Foundation



The Belgian Heart Foundation was created in 2018 under the umbrella of the BSC. The mission of the BHF is to promote cardiovascular research and education

in order to improve the care and outcome of the patients with cardiovascular diseases. To achieve this goal, prizes, research, and educational grants are awarded. In Belgium we have much potential, but we still need more effort to promote cardiovascular research while funding remains difficult. Similar to the marked attention that cancer research now has, we want to bring cardiovascular disease more to the attention of the health authorities and to the general public. That is why this foundation will be very relevant for the society. The President of the BHF is also a member of the BSC Board.

BSC annual meeting

The BSC provides valuable information/resources to the cardiology community and organizes an annual scientific meeting in February, in which the BSC Working Groups play an active part. In turn the Working Groups also organize meetings and courses throughout the year, in each of their specialities. The BSC annual congress takes place in February each year. It attracts some 1000 participants. It is conducted entirely in English and hosts many excellent speakers from abroad.

Membership

There are approximately 1100 cardiologists in Belgium. The BSC has around 700 members and is experiencing a steady growth, with the aim to reach each cardiologist in Belgium. There are also interests

from some paramedics and other specialists, with a special membership status.

Acta Cardiologica



Published since 1946, *Acta Cardiologica* is the official journal of the BSC. It is a bi-monthly peer-

reviewed medical journal. It covers research on all aspects of cardiovascular disease including observational studies, clinical trials, experimental investigations with clear clinical relevance, and tutorials. Print and online versions are available, and the journal is indexed in PubMed, Current Contents, EMBASE, Index Medicus, and Medline.

Conflict of interest: none declared.

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2020 Presidents, Belgian Society of Cardiology. (L) to (R) : 2020 President-Elect Michel De Pauw, President Patrizio Lancellotti, Past-President Marc Claeys

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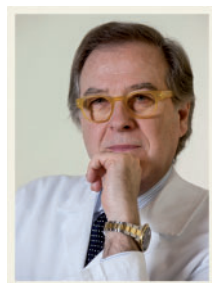
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Father and son series: Paolo and Giovanni Camici

Keeping it in the family

Father and son, Paolo and Giovanni Camici talk to CardioPulse about what brings them together and what sets them apart



Paolo Camici MD is Professor of Cardiology at the Vita-Salute University San Raffaele in Milan, Italy. He previously held several senior roles in a long association with Hammersmith Hospital and Imperial College, London, UK.

'I was born in Genoa, a port in the north west of Italy and perhaps because of this I have always been attached to the sea and enjoyed water sports. My father was an ophthalmologist, my uncle was an internist, and my grandfather was a general practitioner. Whenever the family got together around the table for Sunday lunch, they would always be talking about medicine, so its in my blood.

When I was around four or five, my father was keen to go back to his native Tuscany, so we moved to Pisa and I completed my education in a *liceo classico*. When it came to university, it seemed as natural as breathing to go into medicine and I enrolled at medical school in Pisa.

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After gaining my medical degree I was not sure what I wanted to do. Psychiatry was popular at that time, but after a 6-month internship, I decided I did not want to be a psychiatrist. I was quite interested in research and physiology and I got an interview with Luigi Donato, a well-known professor for a position at the new Institute of Clinical Physiology at the University of Pisa. I was offered a job and assigned to Attilio Maseri who suggested I work with cardiologist Antonio L'Abbate. It was here that I spent several years while doing my internship in cardiology and internal medicine.

In the late 1960s, I first visited London as a tourist which was a big thing for me as the city was the centre of everything at that time and I was a huge fan of rock music and sang in a band. I later returned to the city in 1977 to train in clinical pharmacology, then in 1980 Maseri announced that he was leaving Pisa for London and a professorship at Hammersmith Hospital. This was a big blow to me as he was a big influence, so the following year, I began to commute between London and Pisa to carry out research. I got to know physicist Terry Jones who oversaw the cyclotron unit at Hammersmith Hospital and in 1990 he

