

March-April 2019

'EP Working Group of the Moment': A joint initiative between the EHRA National Cardiac Societies Committee and the EHRA E-Communications Committee

Presentation of the Romanian Working Group of Arrhythmias (RWGA) of the Romanian Society of Cardiology (RSC)



Romanian Working Group of Arrhythmias (RWGA) is a Working Group within the Romanian Cardiac Society (RSC) which was founded in September 2002.

- Link to RWGA: www.cardioportal.ro/grupuri-de-lucru/aritmii/
- Link to RSC: www.cardioportal.ro
- Link to Annual Congress of RSC: www.mediamed.ro/portfolio/congresul-national-de-cardiologie-editia-57
- Link to Journal of the RSC: www.romanianjournalcardiology.ro

RWGA consists of:

- President - the actual president is Mihaela Grecu, 2017-2020
- Secretary - the actual secretary is Dragos Cozma, 2017-2020
- Nucleus - 6 representatives from university EP centers (Bucharest, Iasi, Tg. Mures, Timisoara, Cluj), each committee member having specific tasks
- Members - 120 physicians with special interest for arrhythmias, about 5.5% of total members of cardiac society.

The main goals of the RWGA are:

- To promote new concepts into arrhythmias field among general cardiologists
- To promote research in the field of arrhythmia
- To assist RSC to implement national programs and strategies
- To encourage young cardiologist to pursue a career in electrophysiology (Young EP)
- To promote collaboration between RWGA members and international similar working groups, societies or EP centers

Education of general cardiologist is a priority of the group. In this regard, RWGA has been organizing specific educational/academic activities held regularly, like the national courses of cardiac arrhythmias (ARCA course), twice a year, in different centers since 2006. RWGA is deeply involved in organizing the scientific programs of national events organized by the RSC as the National Conference of Working Groups (every two years), and the annual National Congress of Cardiology. Next edition will be held in Sibiu on 16-18th of May 2019 and it will comprise a joint session with EHRA.

There are also other national symposiums with international participation, organized by experienced centers in arrhythmias field, such as Bucharest Arrhythmia Conference (3rd Edition), Workshop “Ablation of Complex Arrhythmias” (4rd Edition), Heart Rhythm Update (5th edition).

Certification and accreditation

Another priority of RWGA was to assist the Romanian Health Ministry to define and endorse the legal requirements for EP centers, to organize and implement the **physicians' national accreditation on electrophysiology and cardiac pacing**. Starting from 2018, specific national exams for invasive electrophysiology (EP) and for cardiac pacing (CP) were organized by the Romanian Health Ministry. A physician can be accredited as a heart rhythm specialist for one or both of them, after a minimum of one-year training in a national accredited center, a minimum of 50 procedures as first operator, after passing a theoretical and practical exam. EHRA accreditation is not compulsory.

Moreover, the legal requirements for national accreditation of the training **Heart Rhythm Centres** to implant devices or perform ablations were defined in collaboration with

National Health Insurance House. Specific organizational criteria have to be met, requiring a Center with a Cardiology Department with 24/7 on-call service, an Intensive Care Unit and Cardiovascular Surgery Department and electrophysiology laboratory endowed with specific equipment: angiograph, electrophysiology and electroanatomic mapping system.

Concerning the criteria for medical personnel, at least 1 **national accredited physician** on electrophysiology and/or cardiac pacing, and 2 nurses with at least 6 months of experience in the field are required in the lab. The staff has to be authorised by National Commission for the Control of Nuclear Activities (<http://www.cncan.ro/>).

Allied professionals are usually trained in the lab by physicians in charge with the EP/CP activity, participating in setting up the EP procedure and handling the EP equipment. Even if there isn't a specific national education program for allied professionals, special courses are organised for them during the national cardiology meetings.

Despite the fact there isn't any specific governing body for allied professionals, they are affiliated members of the Romanian Cardiology Society, but no certification is required

Reimbursement programmes

In the last 10 years RWGA has been assisting the National Health Insurance House to create **special reimbursement programs for simple and complex EP/CP procedure**. The National Health Ministry launched in 2009 the first program of special reimbursement on electrophysiology and cardiac pacing, followed by other programs launched in 2016 (the National Program on Sudden Cardiac Death and the National Program on Complex Ablation). The reimbursed procedures are reported in the national database on The National Health Insurance House website (www.cnas.ro) and in the national file survey centralised by RWGA Nucleus (www.cardioportal.ro).

Young EP Romanian community

There is a special and dedicated **Young EP** committee, chaired by Stefan Bogdan, nominated for a 3 years period: 2017-2020. In order to promote the activity and involvement

of Young EPs, the Young Cardiologists Working Group has been organizing special breakfast sessions for the young fellows, special young EP Session during Romanian Congress of Cardiology since 2017. There is a dedicated publication, the Journal of Young Cardiologist, to stimulate them to publish. In addition, there is a proctoring programme on complex ablation, with financial support of Biosense Webster, to help Young EP to initiate the complex EP activity.

Main recent achievements

In summary, to highlight the most important achievements of RWGA it is worthy to mention that in the past 10 years, the Romanian electrophysiology activity has noticed a great improvement through the excellent collaboration between RWGA and EHRA. In this regard, so far, we have benefited from 19 ESC/EHRA scholarships. This contributed to the development of the existing centres, growing the activity and complexity of the performed procedures and opening new ones. The number of EHRA members has almost doubled in the last year from 40 members in 2017 to 76 members in 2018. At the moment, 11 EHRA EP accredited physicians and 21 physicians EHRA accredited in cardiac devices are currently working in Romania. Two Romanian referral centers (Cardiovascular Diseases Institute Iasi, Emergency Hospital Bucharest) have been recognised as European centers for training both in electrophysiology and cardiac pacing, being awarded with ERTC diploma.

The RWGA is actively participating in ESC-EHRA EORP Registries (Atrial Fibrillation General Long-term Registry: 11 centers, Atrial Fibrillation ablation Long-term Registry: 2 centers, Atrial Fibrillation III Registry: 12 centers).

Lastly, members of RWGA are actively involved in EHRA activities and its committees, supporting the good collaboration between both associations.

For further info, visit the [RWGA's website](#)