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Early Career Professionals: the Mission of a Task Force

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The International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH) is the largest international thrombosis and hemostasis professional society with members in over 90 countries worldwide. ISTH has been instrumental in supporting and facilitating research and practice guidance for more than 40 years. Additionally, ISTH serves an important role in the development and education of early career researchers and clinicians. The challenges faced by early career researchers and clinicians are unique from those of established clinicians and researchers. For example, many early career researchers struggle to connect with leaders or mentors outside of their home institutions. These mentors often possess unique expertise that would aid the early career researcher's work and professional development. Similarly, early career clinicians may benefit from developing relationships with expert clinical mentors in clinical thrombosis and hemostasis programs at larger institutions, in order to assume leadership positions at their own centers. As the leading professional organization of thrombosis and hemostasis experts worldwide, ISTH could play a central facilitating role in solving these challenges.

Early career engagement with ISTH is exemplified by the high demand for travel grants awarded to the ISTH Congress meetings and for the Reach-the-World (RtW) fellowships. However, to better serve early career needs, the ISTH council formed an Early Career (formerly Young Professional) Task Force following the XXIV Congress in Amsterdam in 2013. The Early Career Task Force's mission is to provide support for and encourage engagement and collaboration between all early career thrombosis and hemostasis clinicians and researchers. Consisting of twelve ISTH members from four continents and 10 countries, the task force aims to engage all early career ISTH professionals in a variety of activities. The task force also

supports and encourages the development and dissemination of education activities related to all aspects of thrombosis and hemostasis.

Although it was initially challenging for the task force to establish its role, identify appropriate projects, and actively engage other early career professionals, a number of projects supported by ISTH council have now been established in order to achieve this mission.

First, the task force is focused on increasing engagement with the ISTH early career community. The task force has developed an “Early Career” forum on the ISTH website where early career professionals can connect, collaborate and learn about upcoming activities as well as funding and educational opportunities, both ISTH-sponsored and beyond. The task force is also developing an Early Career platform on social media to allow for easy connection with early career investigators worldwide. In addition, a new social media presence at the biannual ISTH Congresses and annual Scientific and Standardization Committee (SSC) meetings will be employed to actively engage early career investigators with the meetings, even if they are unable to attend. This social media endeavor will begin with the SSC meeting this May in Montpellier, France. Early career members will be highlighting important presentations and provide an early career perspective from the meetings. The task force hopes that these and future efforts, will generate a sense of community among the ISTH early career members that will lead to life-long collaborations and engagement with the society, with established professionals, and with each other.

Second, the task force aims to broaden ISTH’s reach with early career researchers and clinicians in the developing world. In addition to supporting and expanding the reach of ISTH’s Reach the World (RtW) fellowship program, the task force is also working to make ISTH content more accessible to an international audience, particularly non-English speaking countries. The task force embarked on this mission by translating the RtW Fellowship application and information webpage

from English into six different languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Armenian). The task force hopes to continue supporting a broader international impact for many ISTH activities and opportunities by expanding the translations, aiming to allow a greater audience to benefit from the educational and training activities.

Third, to facilitate early career member engagement with the clinical and research leaders of ISTH, the task force supports and leads a number of endeavors. First, the task force is providing a blueprint for early career professionals to develop new proposals for ISTH guidance and guideline documents. By highlighting the experience of prior early career members who have successfully published guidance or guideline documents, the task force believes that other early career professionals will be inspired to propose their own projects. Second, the task force works closely with the ISTH education committee to propose webinar activities that are targeted at a broad range of early career researchers and clinicians. Lastly, as mentioned above, the task force focuses on efforts to better engage early career professionals at the ISTH Congresses and SSC meetings. By partnering with the local meeting organizing committees to create and secure activities aimed specifically at early career investigators and by developing new social media efforts, the task force believes that early career and established professionals will develop meaningful relationships that strengthen careers of early career professionals.

Finally, the task force wants to promote the early career voice across the broader thrombosis and hemostasis community. To achieve that goal, the task force has initiated an “Early Career Forum” series with support of the Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis (JTH). This series, for which this serves as the inaugural contribution, will highlight the early career perspective on a wide range of issues. The task force hopes that the JTH readership will enjoy learning about the unique challenges faced by basic scientists in developing countries, the impact the RtW Fellowship has on the trajectory for an early career member, the perspectives of early career physician-scientists who have travelled abroad to gain clinical or

research training, and many more topics. Upcoming pieces may provide advice to fellow early career clinicians and researchers on (1) how best to engage with the ISTH, ISTH leadership, or our task force; (2) how to be successful in developing guidance documents, or (3) how to establish collaborations between basic scientists and clinical researchers to facilitate translational research projects. Lastly, as the “leaders of tomorrow”, this series will provide a platform for which early career members can describe their vision for the world of thrombosis and hemostasis, in a broad way over the coming decades. With that mission in mind, we invite all early career readers of JTH and ISTH members to consider contributing their unique perspectives on any issue related to ‘early careers’ in thrombosis and hemostasis to this ongoing series.

With the support of the ISTH Council, the Early Career Task Force aims to serve and support all early career ISTH members. The task force encourages your ideas, feedback and participation in all of our activities or to express new project ideas that would benefit early career professionals. Anyone is free to contact the task force via the online forum, by email, or by approaching one of the members at an ISTH meeting. As all early career clinicians and researchers grow in their careers, the ISTH and the Early Career Task Force hope to support their development whenever possible.

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