

Continuous Medical Education in Ultrasonography

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In most countries, including Romania, ultrasonography (US) is considered to be a very useful diagnostic tool for the practitioner, easy available, not expensive, allowing him or her to perform an imaging evaluation of the abdomen or of the heart, immediately after the clinical examination. It is a cost-efficient procedure, allowing a rapid diagnosis, so that in many cases, more expensive imaging methods, such as computer tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance (MRI), are no longer required for an accurate diagnosis.

In Romania, the current training curricula include an US course for fellow doctors in internal medicine, gastroenterology, nephrology etc, thus facilitating the daily practice use of US for the specialist. Moreover, due to efforts of the Teaching Centers of Ultrasonography, many family doctors have been trained to use US for their clinical examination.

However, there is problem linked to the Continuous Medical Education (CME) in US. Most often, CME credits are obtained by medical doctors for their main specialization, leaving behind their US training. Still, new discoveries are made all the time in this domain (contrast enhanced ultrasound – CEUS, real time elastography etc). What should be done? I believe that it should be mandatory to obtain CME credits for each medical competence, besides the basic specialization.

A continuous debate topic for the SRUMB board is the fact that, all those who use US in Romania, should become members of the Romanian Society of Ultrasound. I, personally, am one of the most fervent sustainers of the „German model”, in which, no one can perform US

outside the „umbrella” of the professional society, which provides a professional standard, continuous medical training and develops specific guidelines for each specialty.

Fortunately, in Romania there is a great number of trained ultrasonographers (approximately 3,000-4,000) who are not in clear evidence, meaning that they are not included in the CME program. Some of them have participated in US courses, maybe 15-20 years ago, and, since then, they have not updated their knowledge. SRUMB is making sustained efforts to include all those who practice US in Romania, but, so far, only 550-570 have become members, while the rest of them are not registered in any structured evidence.

What is the format of US CME in Romania? First of all, there is the Society’s Annual National Conference, in which, during the 2-3 days, a large number of US topics are debated. Then, related to the first one, there is the Euroson School, during which, prestigious international speakers present important new topics (Contrast Enhanced Ultrasound in 2009, Musculoskeletal US in 2010).

For more than 10 years, the Romanian Journal of Ultrasonography the title changed to Medical Ultrasound (published only in English) in 2009 – offers scientific information in US, also giving the opportunity, to those who want it, to present their personal experience in this domain. The review is included in the SRUMB annual fee and confers CME credits, for each member of the society. Starting from 2008, all SRUMB members also may benefit from a „bulk subscription” at the European Journal of Ultrasound, a journal with a high impact factor and 6 annual issues.

All SRUMB members, who are automatically members of the European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (EFSUMB) and of the World Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medi-

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cine and Biology (WFUMB), may also benefit from discounts of the registration fee at international US meetings, thus facilitating their participation in European (this year in Copenhagen), as well as in World Meetings of US (last year in Sydney, in 2011 in Vienna), where all new discoveries in US are being debated.

Through its website (www.efsumb.org), EFSUMB also publishes practical guidelines for every day practice (such as the Guidelines for the use of CEUS) or interesting cases („case of the month”), which help to improve the US practice.

In conclusion, CME in US is mandatory, for a good and high level medical practice, and SRUMB, as the specific professional society, can contribute much to this activity in many ways. By gathering all those who use US under the SRUMB „umbrella”, CME can be systematized in order to reach an adequate professional level. The Medical Board („Colegiul Medicilor”) in Romania, through the Ultrasonography Committee, can stand as the ideal partner of this professional structure, together with SRUMB.