

European Board of Intensive Care Medicine (EBICM)

October 6, 2024 (09:00-10:00)
Minutes

Present at LIVES 2024, Barcelona (Hilton Diagonal Mar, Room 10+11): E. Azoulay, J De Waele, M. Cecconi, SM Maggiore, L Derde, A Artigas, P Pova, M. Theodorakopoulou, L Galarza, E Rodriguez Ruiz, J Alexandre
Connected from Zoom: M. Sander, W Buhre, O Sabelnikovs

E Azoulay (EA) welcomed all participants. All participants introduced themselves.
EA thanked everyone for their participation.

The minutes of the EBICM meeting held in Munich on 26 May 2024 were approved as true copies.

1. The Role of the psychologist in the intensive care units

The integration of psychologists into Intensive Care Units (ICUs) is becoming increasingly vital in addressing the growing mental health challenges faced by healthcare professionals. Burnout syndrome, chronic stress, and psychological strain—exacerbated by staff shortages—are particularly prevalent among younger generations entering the field. These issues not only affect individual well-being but also compromise the cohesion, performance, and resilience of ICU teams.

ICU environments are inherently high-pressure, exposing staff to frequent traumatic experiences. Without structured psychological support, this can lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced quality of care. Additionally, gender imbalances and role-related expectations further complicate team dynamics and contribute to mental health disparities.

In Germany, initiatives are underway to strengthen the role of psychologists in ICUs, though implementation remains uneven. Other countries have developed national models that offer structured psychological support, underscoring the need for adaptable, evidence-based strategies across Europe.

Embedding psychologists within ICU teams has demonstrated positive organisational impacts: enhancing communication, reducing interpersonal conflict, and fostering a healthier, more supportive work environment. Ultimately, psychological support contributes to improved patient outcomes and staff retention.

Survey: Launch a survey to assess ICU professionals' needs, perceptions, and expectations regarding psychological support.

Awareness Campaign: Develop engaging materials, such as cartoons, to promote mental health awareness and reduce stigma within ICU settings.

2. The HELLO Trial

The HELLO Trial is a cluster-randomised controlled study designed to promote a positive and collegial atmosphere among ICU staff. It evaluates the effectiveness of the “Hello Bundle” intervention in reducing burnout by encouraging simple, kind interactions that foster teamwork and emotional support.

By cultivating a culture of kindness and mutual respect, the HELLO Trial aims to enhance the well-being of ICU professionals globally. The trial results are expected in April, with a publication anticipated during the summer.

3. The Environmental Sustainability Policy in Intensive Care Medicine

The European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) has commissioned a working group, led by President-Elect Professor Jan De Waele, to develop guidelines promoting environmental sustainability in ICUs. This initiative encourages ICU professionals to contribute to climate action through research, education, and bedside practices.

The resulting Green Paper (DOI: 10.1007/s00134-024-07662-7) outlines practical strategies for reducing the ecological footprint of ICUs while maintaining high standards of care. Key focus areas include:

- Energy efficiency
- Sustainable procurement
- Formation of Green ICU Teams

This document serves as a comprehensive roadmap for integrating sustainability into ICU operations without compromising patient care.

4. The End-of-Life Guidelines

ESICM has released its long-awaited recommendations and expert opinions on end-of-life (EoL) and palliative care for critically ill adults. Developed by an international, multidisciplinary panel—including clinicians, a methodologist, and representatives of patients and families—these guidelines are now publicly available (DOI: 10.1007/s00134-024-07579-1).

These evidence-based recommendations aim to:

- Enhance patient-centred care
- Support the emotional well-being of relatives
- Empower ICU staff to deliver compassionate, high-quality EoL and palliative care

5. Other Business

- Collaboration with WHO: Updates on ongoing partnerships and shared initiatives.
- ICU Accreditation in Europe: Discussion on quality control measures and harmonisation of standards.
- Large-Scale ICU Network: Plans to establish a collaborative network of ICUs to foster innovation, research, and shared best practices.

There was no other business brought forward, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00.

Details on the next EBICM meeting will be communicated at a later stage.