

## EAPCI focus on the Online Coaching Programme

The EAPCI Online Coaching Programme was a specific initiative set up by the EAPCI Gender and Disparities Committee during the 2022 to 2024 EAPCI board's term. It was recognised that periods of absence from work, particularly in a field such as interventional cardiology, can be challenging because of a perceived or actual loss of confidence and the need to refresh a practical skill set. The programme aims to promote the professional development of the returning interventional cardiologist with support and mentoring covering practical, personal and research topics. Mentees will be given return-to-work guidance after a period of absence, be it due to an illness or maternity or paternity leave. It was important that this opportunity be made available to all EAPCI members from both ESC member countries and affiliated countries.

The online programme is a 12-month pilot programme which commenced in September 2024 and will run until September 2025. Applicants for the programme were matched with EAPCI members based on a number of criteria including background, research and professional development needs and interests, and skills of the mentor. Each mentor and mentee pair will work together to develop a unique research, educational or quality improvement project over the 12-month period of the online coaching programme. Each pair will have a monthly meeting to discuss progress as well as to provide ongoing professional and personal development support. Depending on the legal requirements of each country as well as the needs of the mentee, it may be possible for each pairing to agree to and arrange remote proctoring. The mentees will also benefit from the support of the wider EAPCI community and can participate in networking events organised by the EAPCI.

Following a very successful and competitive application process, three candidates were chosen for the initial pilot Online Coaching Programme. Dr Ana Rita Gaspar Lopes Francisco from Lisbon, Portugal, was paired with Dr Valeria Paradies, Past Chair of the EAPCI Gender and Disparities Committee, from Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Dr Francisco is described by her colleagues as a highly skilled and dedicated interventional cardiologist who strives to provide exceptional patient

care to all. Dr Francisco has had a two-year period of maternity leave and is keen to enhance her skills in complex coronary intervention as well as benefit from the networking and collaborative working approach of the EAPCI.

Dr Paul Coello is an interventional cardiologist from Cuenca, Ecuador, who is matched with Dr Fina Mauri from Barcelona, Spain. Dr Coello identified a personal development need due to the interruption of the provision of interventional cardiology services in his hospital as a result of the socioeconomic conditions of his country. Although Dr Coello's absence from interventional procedures was not due to an illness or paternity leave, the Selection Committee was impressed by his ability to identify the need for support on returning to interventional procedures. As a community, EAPCI plays an important role in advocating for equitable access to percutaneous cardiac interventions for patients throughout our member and affiliated countries.

Finally, Dr Daniela Boscarelli from Cagliari, Italy, was paired with EAPCI Past President Professor Emanuele Barbato. Dr Boscarelli previously completed an interventional cardiology fellowship and worked as an interventional cardiologist until 2015. Returning to work as an interventional cardiologist, Dr Boscarelli identified a need to refresh her interventional skills as well as a need to develop skills in utilising new technologies which have become commonplace in interventional cardiology in her absence.

The EAPCI Selection Committee was impressed by the number of high-quality candidates who applied for this pilot Online Coaching Programme. We believe that the mentor-mentee pairs are well matched and will hopefully achieve great success during this 12-month programme. During the 2024 to 2026 term, the EAPCI plans to run two parallel online mentoring programmes: a programme for those returning to the cath lab after a period of absence due to maternity, paternity or sickness leave and a mentoring and coaching programme for the young community of interventional cardiologists. We strongly encourage all EAPCI members who meet the criteria to consider applying for these programmes and to share information about these programmes with colleagues who may be returning to the workplace.