

The History of the European Renal Association - European Dialysis and Transplant Association



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ABSTRACT

The history of the ERA-EDTA started in London in 1963 where Prof. Stanley Shaldon, Prof. David Kerr and Prof. William Drukker discussed the advantages of having an annual meeting of European nephrologists. This discussion was conceived during the International Symposium on Acute Renal Failure organized by Prof. Shaldon at the Royal Free Hospital on September 2, 1963. A provisional name of the West European Dialysis Association (WEDA) was proposed. A year later, in 1964, EDTA (European Dialysis and Transplant Association – a new name introduced by Prof. Stanley Shaldon) had its first and founding Congress in Amsterdam. In 1981, to cover all aspects of nephrology, the name was enriched with European Renal Association and became EDTA-ERA, what was finally changed to ERA-EDTA in 1995 at the occasion of 30th anniversary.

The main activity of the Society, the annual congresses, developed from a short, one-day meeting to almost a week-long event with up to 9 simultaneous scientific sessions nowadays with many accompanying meetings. One of the most important ERA-EDTA's endeavors – the Registry was brought to life also in 1964. Located first in Amsterdam, then in London and again moved back in 2000 to Amsterdam. ERA-EDTA has also two well-known journals – Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation (NDT) and Clinical Kidney Journal (previously known as NDT Plus). In 2002 a new electronic educational platform, NDT-Educational, was installed in 2012 the ERA-EDTA Council decided to install a new body – Young Nephrologists' Platform. Through the years ERA-EDTA developed also a lot of additional activities: CME Courses, Fellowships, Working Groups, Research Programme (SAB), Guidelines (ERBP), ERA-EDTA Activation Committees, ComIA and collaboration with other National and International Societies.

KEYWORDS: European Renal Association, European Dialysis and Transplant Association, ERA-EDTA

Introduction

The idea of the Society, London 1963

The history of the ERA-EDTA started in London in 1963 where Prof. Stanley Shaldon (Figure 1), Prof. David Kerr (Figure 2) and Prof. William Drukker (Figure 3) discussed the advantages of having an annual meeting of European nephrologists (1).



Figure 1 - Prof. Stanley Shaldon (born on November 8th, 1931; died on December 20th, 2013)



Figure 2 - Prof. David Kerr (born on December 27th, 1927; died on April 20th, 2014)



Figure 3 - Prof. William Drukker (born on January 11th, 1910; died on August 26th, 1992)

The “Three” (Stanley Shaldon, David Kerr, William Drukker) started with small ideas. They planned to create a small society to complement the International Society of Nephrology (ISN), not to compete with it. Initially the idea was to establish an association with a limited number of members from a few European countries (2). The meetings would only be held in the years between ISN meetings with small number of delegates (up to 200). The main topics of the meetings were supposed to be renal replacement therapy with oral presentations of members. This discussion was conceived during the International Symposium on Acute Renal Failure organized by Prof. Shaldon at the Royal Free Hospital on September 2, 1963 (1). The final decision to establish an international organization of nephrologists William Drukker, Stanley Shaldon and David N. S. Kerr made during the meeting after symposium.

The Founding Meeting and The First Congress, Amsterdam 1964

On 24 September 1964 in Amsterdam had place the founding meeting of “The Gang of Three” (as explained above!) and 30 delegates (3). The delegates decided to create an association called “West European Dialysis Association” (WEDA). Initially WEDA was to be a small organization focused on renal replacement therapy in renal failure. It had a limited number of members from several countries neighbouring the Netherlands and England. Professor Richet from Paris suggested the need to extend association to all European countries and Mediterranean countries (3). Since then WEDA has become an international organization dealing with dialysis and transplantation open to researchers from many European countries. Next day (25 September 1964), in Lecture Theatre of the Department of Medicine at the Queen Wilhelmina Hospital in Amsterdam, was held the first meeting of Society, in which participated about 200 delegates and a number of guests from around 30 countries (2). Some 34 papers, a number of demonstrations and films were presented and a technical exhibition was arranged in an adjacent area. William Kolff presented a paper on ‘Life without Heart and Kidneys’ (4), Sergio Giovannetti from Pisa reported on his studies on the treatment of uraemia with a special low protein diet (5). Jean Louis Funck-Brentano and co-workers from Paris described the importance of nerve conduction velocities as an assay of the adequacy of regular dialysis treatment (6). Hippocrates Yatzidis from Athens gave his classical presentation on direct haemoperfusion (7).

WEDA to EDTA, London 1964

WEDA changed name to “European Dialysis and Transplant Association” (EDTA). The new name was proposed by Stanley Shaldon in 1964 at the Regent Palace Hotel in London (1). During that meeting the constitution of the association was also developed. The first constitution of the EDTA opened full membership of the association to medically and non-medically qualified scientific workers in the field of interest of the association working in Europe and countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Associate membership was opened to interested workers in the field of interest of the association who were not eligible for full membership (3). All ERA-EDTA Presidents and the year of starting their Presidencies are listed on Table 1.

B. Forminje 1964	L. Migone 1972	J. Bernheim 1993
J. Swinney 1965	A.C. Kennedy 1972	F. Berthoux 1996
J. Traeger 1966	J.H. Thaysen 1975	A.M. Davison 1999
J.H. Thaysen 1967	M. Legrain 1978	F. Locatelli 2002
A. Walsh 1968	V.E. Andreucci 1981	J. Cannata-Andia 2005
H. Dutz 1969	J.S. Cameron 1984	G. London 2008
E. Rotellar 1970	H. Klinkmann 1987	R. Vanholder 2011
N. Alwall 1971	J. Botella 1990	A. Więcek 2014
		C. Zoccali 2017

Table 1 - ERA-EDTA Presidents and the year of starting their Presidencies.

EDTA logo, EDTA to ERA-EDTA

A few weeks later the EDTA logo was created (Figure 4). It features the letters E, D, T and A in the circle with the antique cryptographic symbols of water, salt, acid and alkali. In the middle of the circle placed a graphic depicting the kidney. In 1981 to cover all aspects of Nephrology the name was enriched with European Renal Association and became “European Dialysis and Transplant Association – European Renal Association” (EDTA-ERA) (1, 3). The logo of the association was graphically refreshed and the kidney in the middle of the circle

was replaced by an ERA acronym. The name of association was finally changed to ERA-EDTA in 1995 at the occasion of 30th anniversary.



Figure 4 - ERA-EDTA Logo

ERA-EDTA members

The number of members of the society had been systematically growing since the founding meeting and reached 490 people on its 5th anniversary on Congress held in Dublin in 1968. In the early 90s of the last century, the number of members exceeded 2000 and still was growing up. At this time, since three years, the number of ERA-EDTA members is over 7000 participants. During almost 50 years of organizing by ERA-EDTA congresses, the number of participants also has increased. The first one thousand of participants has been reached at the annual congress, held in Barcelona in 1970. In subsequent years, attendances records were reached on the congresses, and on the last few meetings the number of participants stabilized at the level of 8.000, what makes ERA-EDTA Congress one of the biggest science events in Europe.

ERA-EDTA Registry

One of the most important ERA-EDTA’s endeavors – the Registry was brought to life also in 1964. The first report on dialysis was presented in 1965 at the second Congress in Newcastle, with data on 271 patients on chronic haemodialysis from 41 European centers. Of these 271 patients, 160 were alive (8). In addition, Frank Parsons reported that 258 renal transplant operations had been performed in Europe and details regarding 187 patients were presented (9). The registry provided the most comprehensive statistical record on the care of terminal renal failure by the complementary methods of dialysis and transplantation. The first localization of the Registry office was Amsterdam, then London and again since 2000 in Amsterdam located in the Department of Medical Informatics in the Academic Medical Center. The ERA-EDTA Registry collects data on renal replacement therapy obtained from the national and regional renal registries in Europe. It analyses these data and distributes the resulting information through registry reports presented at the yearly ERA-EDTA Congresses, publications in nephrology journals and through ERA-EDTA website. The Registry is funded by the ERA-EDTA.

ERA-EDTA Additional Activities

ERA-EDTA is honouring its formidable members awarding them with titles of Honorary Member or ERA-EDTA Distinguished Fellow (FERA). By now 21 persons were recognized as Honorary Members (Table 2) and more 200 persons as Distinguished Fellows. Since 2010 the ERA-EDTA Council started to give Awards in clinical, research and contribution categories. There is also an Award for Young Investigators – In 2012 ERA-EDTA decided to grant a prize that is given annually to young investigators which is named the “Stanley Shaldon Award for Young Investigators”.

In the first decade of XXI Century many new initiatives were started: The Fellowship Programme, the Research Programme, CME Programme, the official ERA-EDTA Newsletter Follow us,

William Drukker 1982	Jules Traeger 1988	Vincenzo Cambi 2002
Arthur Colville Kennedy 1982	Fred S.T. Boen 1988	Eberhard Ritz 2005
Luigi Migone 1984	Mary Graham McGeown 1989	Franciszek Kokot 2010
Willem Johan Kolff 1985	Bruno Watschinger 1991	Vittorio Emanuele Andreucci 2013
Belding Hibbard Scribner 1985	Stanley Shaldon 1994	Jacques Bernheim 2014
David Nicol Sharp Kerr 1986	John Stewart Cameron 1998	James Douglas Briggs 2015
Marcel Legrain 1987	Alexander Meikle Davison 2002	Francois Berthoux 2016

Table 2 - ERA-EDTA Honorary Members and the year of nomination by the General Assembly.

several Working Groups and the Guidelines. In the second decade the Society is still developing and growing. New bodies like the Young Nephrologists' Platform or the Activation Committees are helping to answer the needs of the future.

On June 1, 2016 three major nephrology societies — the American Society of Nephrology (ASN), ERA-EDTA and the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) — signed a declaration of collaboration. The organizations agreed that kidney disease is a global challenge that respects no boundaries or borders. Therefore, all available synergies should be used to fight kidney disease and improve the standard of care for kidney patients worldwide (Figure 5).



Figure 5 - From right to the left: Professor Raymond C. Harris (ASN President), Professor Adeera Levin (ISN President), Professor Andrzej Więcek (ERA-EDTA President), 53rd ERA-EDTA Congress in Vienna 2016, first announcement of the "Declaration of collaboration" between these three Societies.

ERA-EDTA Journal and Website Platform

The papers presented at the first annual congresses were published in the EDTA Proceedings. David N.S. Kerr was its first Editor (1964). The first presentations and publications in EDTA Proceedings were in two languages — English and French. In 1973 it was decided that English would remain the only language for the congresses and proceedings. The EDTA Proceedings grew in parallel with the participation to the EDTA Congresses, including papers, presented both as oral communications and as posters and the discussion after each oral communication. In 1986 the Annual Congress Proceeding were changed to Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation (NDT) the first official Journal of ERA-EDTA. The number was publishing once for 2 months. Many years later, Nephrology, Dialysis, Transplantation has gained worldwide recognition. Twenty-two years later in 2008 the second journal was introduced with the name NDT Plus, changed in 2011 to Clinical Kidney Journal (CKJ). In 2002 an electronic educational platform, NDT-Educational, was installed.

ERA-EDTA Congresses

The main activity of the Society, the annual congresses, developed from a short, one-day meeting to almost a week-long event with up to 9 simultaneous scientific sessions and with many accompanying meetings and CME sessions. As previously mentioned the number of participants at the first meeting in 1964 was about 200. In recent years, the number of delegates has increased systematically, eventually exceeding 8000 delegates (more than 11 000 when all participants are counted). Most important facts and dates from the ERA-EDTA history are listed in Table 3. The recent ERA-EDTA Presidents are presented on Figure 6 and Figure 7.



Figure 6 - ERA-EDTA Past-Presidents, from right to the left: Prof. Gerard London (France), Prof. Andrzej Więcek (Poland) - current President when the picture taken in 2016 during the 53rd ERA-EDTA Congress in Vienna, Prof. Jorge Cannata-Andia (Spain), Prof. Francesco Locatelli (Italy), Prof. Stuart Cameron (UK), Prof. Horst Klinkmann (Germany), Prof. Raymond Vanholder (Belgium), Prof. Alexander M. Davison (UK), Prof. Jacques Bernheim (Israel), Prof. Francois Berthoux (France).



Figure 7 - Professor Andrzej Więcek hands over the Presidential Chain to the new ERA-EDTA President – Prof. Carmine Zoccali (Madrid, 2017).

Years	Facts
1964	First EDTA congress in Amsterdam with one-day program.
1966	EDTA congress in Lyon - duration increased to one day and a half.
1968	5 th anniversary of EDTA celebrated during congress in Dublin. Congress duration has extended to two days and association has already 490 members.
1969	EDTA congress in Stockholm with common session with the congress of the ISN. EDTA creates a Registry Committee for collection of data on kidney failure and treatment in Europe headed by W. Drukker as a Chairman.
1970	EDTA congress in Barcelona - the number of participants exceeded 1000 people.
1971	First EDTA congress held in the part of Europe belonging to the Socialist Block - in East Berlin.
1973	From this year the position of President of EDTA lasts for three years.
1981	From this year the association is named EDTA-ERA (European Renal Association).
1982	Status of Honorary Members for most contributed members to the society was created. The first Honorary Members are Arthur Kennedy and W. Drukker.
1986	Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation journal was created. The first Editor-in-Chief was Alexander M. Davison.
1987	Digitalization of the file of EDTA-ERA members and the account.
1990	EDTA-ERA congress becoming more and more popular - congress in Vienna has over 3000 participants.
1991	From this year on the votes to elect Council members are collected during the annual congress, by means of a voting station.
1992	Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation is published by Oxford University Press.
1995	The name of the association is modified from EDTA-ERA to ERA-EDTA.
1996	ERA-EDTA launched its first website. In congress held in Amsterdam is attended over 4000 participants.
2000	Transferred the ERA-EDTA Registry from London to Amsterdam.
2002	ERA-EDTA creates its free, online educational journal NDT-Educational. From this year on the abstracts of the congress are submitted also online. Congress in Copenhagen has over 5000 participants.
2003	Scientific research was added to the statutory aims of the association. In Berlin ERA-EDTA and ISN have their congresses together as one joint congress.
2004	ERA-EDTA starts holding courses on epidemiology, due to their success they will be repeated twice a year. ERA-EDTA starts publishing a newsletter, Follow Us, to inform all members about the current news concerning the society. ERA-EDTA starts its CME support program.
2006	ERA-EDTA starts its Fellowships program.
2007	Within NDT-Educational a new option has been launched: Literature Review. ERA-EDTA becomes part of EKHA (European Kidney Health Alliance).
2008	ERA-EDTA has a second journal: NDT Plus. From this year on the votes to elect Council members are collected online in the period before the General Assembly too.
2009	ERA-EDTA establishes its first Working Groups and starts Research Program.
2010	The ERA-EDTA Ethics Committee was created.
2011	The first ERA-EDTA awards were awarded. Stanley Shaldon, Ebehard Ritz and Norbert Lameire are the first awardees. ERA-EDTA introduces a new logo. ERA-EDTA stops publishing NDT Plus and creates a new Journal: Clinical Kidney Journal.
2012	In congress in Paris, ERA-EDTA honors the pioneers of Nephrology. For the first time the annual congress has an app. Young Nephrologists' Platform was created – first chairman – Dr Miklos Molnar. All members of ERA-EDTA committees/bodies must fill in their DoI (Declaration of Interest).
2013	The electronic ERA-EDTA Newsletter, is created and sent out to all the ERA-EDTA contacts every two weeks. The abstracts to the annual congresses are only submitted online.
2014	For the first time ERA-EDTA organized a half day meeting with the National Societies of Nephrology. The strapline "Leading European Nephrology", is added to the ERA-EDTA logo.
2015	CKJ becomes Open Access.
2016	Joint collaboration with ASN, ERA-EDTA and ISN.
2017	ERA-EDTA has its motto: Innovation and Education in Kidney Science and Care.

Table 3. Important facts and dates (adapted from ERA-EDTA website with own modification)

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