

*Editorial***THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY OF DIABETES, NUTRITION
AND METABOLIC DISEASES – FUTURE PERSPECTIVES***Romulus Timar*✉

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During its General Assembly held in May 2017, the Romanian Society of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases granted me the position of President for a three-year term, beginning in May 2018. This designation is both a great honor and an immense responsibility due to the particularities of the present time regarding diabetes management: the staggering increase in the incidence of diabetes mellitus (DM), the change in the paradigm of DM treatment brought by the cardiovascular risk profile of new DM therapies, and, finally, by the unmet needs present worldwide in the disease management.

This future term begins in the spring of 2018. The course of action I envisioned targets three main domains: increasing the quality of patient care and prevention of complications, developing scientific research in the field that benefits from the support of the Romanian Society of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, as well as implementing medical education activities aimed to deliver information to DM patients.

In order to deliver high-quality care to DM patients, the Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases branch needs to remain an independent one, as is our country's distinctive trait in this regard. DM patients require extensive medical

assistance due to the particularities of the disease, as compared to other medical specialties.

The present organization has a lot of strong points regarding the Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases specialty, in relation to other specialties in the country, on one hand, and in organizing DM patients' treatment abroad, on the other. All of the above considered, however, two aspects of critical importance must be underlined:

- the existence of a network that links all Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases specialists that have eminent professional qualifications, that ensure medical assistance to DM and other metabolic diseases patients in Romania;
- the established network of medical assistance and the existence of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases specialists, separate from other medical specialties, which constitute an example to be followed by the rest of Europe.

In our country, through the National Diabetes Program, patients have unlimited, unconditional and completely free of charge access to all the drugs for the treatment of DM, a type of access that does not exist in all Central- and South-Eastern European countries (new

generation insulins, including insulin analogues, biguanides, sulphonylureas, dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitors, glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists, sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors). Moreover, with the elimination of essays and special approvals that were needed to provide DM medication through the National Health Insurance System in 2017, access to the most modern medication is immediate, in accordance to the prescription protocols, having a positive impact on the patient's global prognosis. This facility is extremely rare and places Romania on a privileged position compared to its neighboring countries.

With regards to the problems, of course they exist, as they do in any health system, but we are optimistic and willing to work towards setting them right. The first components that I consider can benefit from improvement are easing access to continuous insulin infusion (by insulin pumps) and to continuous glycemic monitoring – aspects which mainly target the treatment and management of type 1 diabetes. At the same time, I believe that the implementation of a structured medical education process (regarding diet, self-care activities, self-monitoring and self-adjustment of insulin dosage) must be put in place, in the benefit of all DM patients.

Regarding the scientific facet of our specialty, we intend to launch a series of competitions for research programs that will be funded through the Romanian Society of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, targeting the therapeutic area of our specialty. This will, of course, take place alongside the development of already existent activities within the society: the annual congress, periodic courses (to which we also invite colleagues from connecting specialties, such as family medicine, cardiology, nephrology, ophthalmology, neurology – and the list could go on), and the

Romanian Journal of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases.

For young diabetologists, I consider that the society should be involved in their education by periodically organizing thematic courses across the country, so as to make them as accessible as possible, and I also believe that their appetite for research should be stimulated by initiating an extensive grant program to finance scientific endeavors. Another research-related priority is that of promoting and increasing the prestige of the Romanian Journal of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, a pillar in the regional scientific community.

As respects the entire medical body in this specialty, I consider that there is a pressing need for the Society to elaborate guidelines for the management of diabetes, dyslipidemia, and other metabolic diseases, adapted to our country's economic and socio-populational particularities, but at the same time in line with the international recommendations. It is imperative that within the society we further improve the existing working groups, as well as establish new collaborative relationships with other medical specialties that are related or connected (e.g., cardiology, nephrology, ophthalmology, neurology, vascular surgery, pneumology and, not least, family medicine).

Another area that we wish to develop during this term is that of a therapeutic education campaign that is specific to the DM patient. We are all well-aware of the fact that in DM, as in most chronic diseases, self-care plays an extremely important role within the global management of the condition. During the consult, the healthcare professional conveys his medical knowledge and draws the therapeutic lines to be regarded, leaving the daily enforcement of those to the patient. It becomes clear that, in the absence of a proper therapeutic education, the results of implementing such

management measures could be endangered. To serve this purpose, I propose that we start a series of national information and education campaigns for the DM patient.

Last but not least, through the actions and campaigns launched, I intend that we succeed in

strengthening the position and the recognition that the Romanian Society of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases has within the international scientific forums, as well as within the decisional bodies at a national and European level.