



ESPCG Constitution June 2023

Introduction

The European Society for Primary Care Gastroenterology (ESPCG) was established in 1996 by a group of academic general practitioners with an interest in gastroenterology, who believed that there was a need for a European forum for discussion, exchange of ideas and research. They invited National Societies in Europe to help them form a steering committee and opened the ESPCG to individual membership.

Since its foundation, the society has made considerable progress in the development of primary care gastroenterology through its involvement in the development of European guidelines, its own guidance on the management of conditions in primary care, the support of education of European general practitioners, the conduct and support of research projects on a range of topics across Europe, and representation on key committees in organisations such as the United European Gastroenterology (UEG) and Wonca-Europe.

The ESPCG is ideally placed to provide advice and support through consultation with its committee members drawn from over 20 European countries, its growing membership of general practitioners with special interest and expertise in gastroenterology and also through its close links with specialist gastroenterology organisations such as the UEG.

Constitution

Name:

The society is called the European Society for Primary Care Gastroenterology. The abbreviation of the society's name is ESPCG.

Aims:

To promote high standards in the management of gastrointestinal problems in primary care in Europe, through research, education and the exchange and dissemination of ideas.

To promote dialogue and collaboration across the interface between primary and secondary care in Europe.

To contribute to the development of health policy in Europe by providing information and evidence on the role of primary health care

The European Society of Primary Care Gastroenterology Secretariat
c/o Satellite PR,
154-158 Shoreditch High Street, London E1 6HU
Tel: 020 3872 4902
Email: jerry@satellitepr.com
www.espcg.eu



Membership

ESPCG is open to individuals and national groups or societies who are or represent primary health care professionals or other public health professionals with interest in joining ESPCG for its different aims.

Applications for membership must be submitted via the website and is subject to approval by the ESPCG Secretariat.

Committee

1. The committee shall consist of of at least 10 elected members. Each member should serve at least 3 years with the option of further terms depending on election. Three members of the committee should retire/stand for re-election every 3 years.
2. The quorum for each committee meeting shall not be less than one half of the members of the committee. The committee will meet no less than twice each year with due notice of at least 2 weeks, posted to all committee members.
3. The committee shall elect from its members a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer. In order to allow stability, not more than one of the three officers (Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary) should normally leave the committee at the same time. The Chairperson and the Treasurer should not stand for re-election or retirement in the same year. The committee may choose to elect a deputy Chairperson.
4. The Chairperson shall normally serve one term of 3 years but in any case should not exceed two 3-year terms. All the officers of the committee shall normally serve a term of 3 years but may continue for longer pending on election. Service as a specific officer on the committee should not normally exceed two 3-year terms.
5. The committee shall hold an annual general meeting (AGM) each year, when the results of the elections will be announced. Notices for such meetings, accompanied by the agenda and nomination documents, must be sent at least 28 days before the event to the members of the ESPCG. Minutes shall be circulated no more than 28 days after the date of the AGM.
6. Those seeking election to the committee must be of good standing and members of the ESPCG. In order for the committee to be truly representative of its membership, all committee members should have regular employment within a European healthcare organisation or be within three years of retirement from all healthcare work. To seek election, they must be nominated by two other members of the ESPCG.

This nomination process must be completed at least 10 working days before the AGM. Voting will be on a one-member-one-vote basis. In the event that there are the same number of candidates as positions open on the committee, the election process will be termed an “uncontested election.”

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7. The committee shall have the right to co-opt up to four associate members subject to agreement by a majority of current committee members. Associate members will normally be co-opted because of their relevant experience, irrespective of their current healthcare role and will be eligible to continue on the committee for up to 3 years. Associate membership of the committee can be renewed subject to majority agreement by committee members.
8. The members of the committee should, at all times, promote the workings and name of the ESPCG foremost and not use their position for personal gain.
If conflicts of interest arise, this should be declared and discussed with the other members of the committee, and the decision clearly documented and shared with the committee.
9. If concern is raised by one or more committee members regarding a conflict of interest, the member in question should withdraw from the proceedings. If there is a disagreement whether a conflict of interest is arising, advice should be sought from the wider committee before continuance.
10. The committee will support the workings of the ESPCG with regard to the promotion of good, high-quality care within the primary care environment

Changes and dissolution

Changes to the constitution must be proposed and seconded and included in the agenda of the AGM; such changes shall require two thirds majority of the attending members at an AGM.

The ESPCG may at any time by a resolution passed at the AGM or by an email ballot of its members be wound up and dissolved. The same regulations apply as for amendments to the constitution. In the event that the Society is dissolved the books and records of the Society shall be disposed of in accordance with the directions of the Council and all other property of the Society transferred to such body or bodies as shall be specified by the resolution for winding up, provided that those bodies have aims analogous to the aims of the Society.