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CardioPulse

Events and Meetings

Highlights from the 2025 annual meeting of the ESC Working Group on Myocardial & Pericardial Diseases

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The Annual Meeting of the ESC Working Group (WG) on Myocardial & Pericardial Diseases (M&PD), held in Trieste, Italy, on 28–29 November 2025, was an international scientific event reflecting the increasing engagement of the WG within the ESC community.[1]

This meeting was organized by Carsten Tschöpe (Berlin, Germany), Chairperson of the WG; Marco Merlo and Gianfranco Sinagra (Trieste, Italy), local hosts and Programme Directors; Massimo Imazio (Udine, Italy), Past Chairperson of the WG and Andrea Frustaci (Rome, Italy), Chairperson Elect of the WG. The conference took place in Trieste, increasingly recognized as a European referral centre for the management of myocardial and pericardial diseases, and attracted more than 400 participants from 34 countries, including a substantial representation from non-European Union countries, reflecting the broad progressively increasing international appeal of the M&PD ESC WG. The scientific programme was delivered across two in-presence lecture halls plus two on-line actively connected parallel rooms, all of which were consistently well attended throughout the meeting (*Table 1*).

The spirit of the event was bringing together pathology, genetic background, imaging, electrophysiology, immunology, and clinical trials throughout integrated sessions. Scientific research, international networking and brainstorming represented the central pillars of the programme, based on the more than 190 abstracts submitted across a broad spectrum of basic, translational, and clinical topics in myocardial and pericardial diseases. Within this context, the highest-rated abstracts were selected for the Young Investigator Award session, one of the scientific highlights of the meeting. The Young Investigator and poster sessions were not only well received but also served as a highly effective mechanism to actively integrate the next generation of clinicians and scientists into the Working Group community and its ongoing projects.

Scientific content

The timing of the Trieste meeting was particularly relevant given the release of the first ESC Clinical Practice Guidelines dedicated to myocarditis and pericarditis,[2] providing a comprehensive framework across inflammatory myocardial and pericardial syndromes and pragmatic algorithms for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up. In parallel, the 2024 ACC Expert Consensus Decision Pathway[3] offers a pragmatic US perspective. Taken together, these documents highlight both convergence and complementarity: advanced imaging and risk stratification are central in both settings, while endomyocardial biopsy (EMB) remains an important diagnostic tool in carefully selected patients, particularly in experienced centres. In this perspective, a dedicated session, chaired by the Guideline Chairpersons Jeanette Schulz-Menger (Germany) and Massimo Imazio (Italy), offered a structured and comprehensive overview of this evolving field. Particular emphasis was placed on the paradigm shift introduced by the concept of inflammatory myocardial and pericardial syndromes, which places myocarditis and pericarditis along a unified disease spectrum.[2] This approach moves beyond a compartmentalized view of these conditions, supporting the development of dedicated multidisciplinary teams and personalized management strategies.

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Table 1 The summary of the 2025 ESC M&PD WG annual meeting in Trieste

2025 ESC M&PD WG annual meeting in Trieste	
Participants	426 (from 34 countries)
Submitted abstracts	196
Abstracts awards	3 (+ 4 Travel grants)
Rooms	2 (+2 on-line actively connected parallel rooms)
Scientific sessions	26

The integrated roles of cardiac magnetic resonance imaging, genetic testing and EMB in the diagnostic work-up of myocarditis and cardiomyopathies were extensively discussed. Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of early risk stratification to guide therapeutic decisions. A focused update on specific forms of myocarditis was provided by internationally recognized experts.

Recent advances in the understanding and management of pericardial diseases have led to substantial updates in clinical practice. Key messages from the latest ESC Guidelines included new therapeutic strategies, refined diagnostic pathways, and a deeper understanding of underlying genetic and inflammatory mechanisms.[2] Topics of relevance were the role of IL-1 antagonists, the indication for genetic testing in selected patients, and updated concepts in constrictive pericarditis.

In his lecture, Leslie Cooper (USA) offered valuable insights by comparing the European[2] and American[3] guidelines on myocarditis.

A particular highlight of the Trieste meeting was the Hot Line session, during which the primary results of the ARCHER trial were presented in parallel with a simultaneous publication.[4] ARCHER is the largest randomized, placebo-controlled international study conducted to date in acute, CMR-guided myocarditis, enrolling patients across a clinically relevant spectrum from mild to moderate disease. The trial investigated cannabidiol, a non-psychoactive cannabinoid distinct from tetrahydrocannabinol, selected for its anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties, in a rigorously phenotyped population. Although the primary endpoint was not met, secondary and exploratory analyses indicated treatment-associated differences in selected CMR-derived markers of myocardial inflammation and remodelling, which may inform endpoint selection and the design of future interventional studies in acute myocarditis. Leslie Cooper led the presentation and discussion, which were characterized by a balanced and high-level interpretation.

Furthermore, the most innovative and challenging aspects across all subtypes of cardiomyopathies were addressed throughout numerous sessions. The clinical implications of non-dilated left ventricular cardiomyopathy (NDLVC)—a recent entity introduced in the 2023 ESC Guidelines on the management of cardiomyopathies[5]—were discussed in a dedicated session, with particular attention to its overlap with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy. An overview of Dilated Cardiomyopathy (DCM)/NDLVC related to specific gene variants, as well as the challenges posed by gene-elusive forms, was also presented. Risk stratification in DCM/NDLVC remains a major clinical challenge. A critical and insightful lecture by Perry Mark Elliott (UK) highlighted the need for a multiparametric approach that goes beyond the simple assessment of left ventricular ejection fraction.

Outflow tract obstruction and its clinical management were key topics in an educational session on hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Iacopo Olivotto (Italy) reviewed the evidence supporting the use of myosin inhibitors, underlining their current clinical applications and future perspectives, including their potential role in mid-cavitary obstruction and in non-obstructive phenotypes. The session concluded with an enlightening lecture by Carsten Tschöpe (Germany) on heart failure in the often-overlooked setting of supernormal ejection fraction, emphasizing the clinical and physiological relevance of extremes in systolic function.

Cardiac amyloidosis represented another major focus of the meeting, with discussions covering heart failure management, disease-specific therapies, treatment selection, arrhythmic risk, comorbidities, and the challenges faced in low-resource settings.

Several additional sessions attracted considerable interest, particularly those dedicated to cardio-immunology and the identification of novel biomarkers of immune activation. The management of cardiomyopathies in pregnant women, both affected by or at risk of disease, was also extensively discussed. Current evidence on the management of paediatric cardiomyopathies, a particularly challenging yet critically important field, was also presented. Furthermore, the latest developments in digital health and artificial intelligence prompted in-depth discussions on their integration into clinical practice. Finally, highly appreciated sessions focused on the most innovative aspects of translational cardiovascular research applied to cardiomyopathies. The final lecture by Mauro Giacca adequately highlighted those important aspects

Planning for the future

The Trieste meeting illustrated how the WG M&PD is progressing from consolidation towards closer alignment between guidelines, registries, and interventional research in myocardial disease (*Figure 1*). The next Annual Meeting of the ESC Working Group on Myocardial & Pericardial Diseases is planned for October 2026 in Berlin, Germany, with the perspective of increasing international networks and promoting young researchers, the real 'heart' of a patient-

Figure 1 Upper panel: the Nucleus members of the ESC Working Group on Myocardial & Pericardial Diseases in Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia (Trieste). Bottom panel: the Young Investigator award ceremony

tailored and precise management of myocardial and pericardial diseases.

Declarations

Disclosure of Interest

All authors declare no disclosure of interest for this contribution.

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