

SURVEY ENMC EARLY-CAREER PROGRAMME

Post-survey note: the name “Young Scientist Programme” was changed to “Early-Career Programme” to be aligned with the new “Mid-Career Mentoring Programme”.

The survey covered five topics:

- The quality of the workshop itself (question 1)
- The impact the workshop had on the career of the young scientists in this Programme (questions 2 to 4).
- The role of the workshop in bridging the gap between junior and senior scientists (question 5)
- The ENMC Early-Career Programme: suggestions for improvements by Early-Career Researchers who were selected and participated in an ENMC workshop of their choice (questions 6-9)
- Any other suggestions (question 10)

The following scores between 1 and 5 could be chosen, open comments were encouraged. The survey was treated anonymously.

1	Poor
2	Fair
3	Neutral
4	Good
5	Excellent
N/A	Not applicable/not able to complete

RESPONSE RATE:

Of the n=39 persons we wrote, n=20 responded which is a response rate of 53%.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

TOPIC 1: THE QUALITY OF THE WORKSHOP

Q1: How do you score the ENMC workshop you attended?

-the average scores for all sub-questions were between 4.11 and 4.95. The scores were lower in the specific questions about the fulfilment of Workshop outcomes and the follow-up work after the workshops.

-participants liked the fact that unpublished data were shared; interactions with senior and junior investigators were happening, one person replied that it was difficult to come to conclusions on Sunday; one felt that in the follow-up process the integration of the Early-Career Researchers could have been better and another one that not all commitments were followed up.

TOPIC 2: THE IMPACT THE WORKSHOP HAD ON THE CAREER OF THE CANDIDATES

Q2: Are you still working in the NMD field?

18/20 (90%) still works in the NMD field, because of: own interest in the field, the collaborative atmosphere, the availability of good role models (i.e. good examples of senior researchers, who are at leading positions in the NMD field, and use their charismatic and diplomatic skills to be successful), the availability of funding, the possibility to combine clinical and research work. Six participants answered that the probability to stay in the NMD field depends on available funding/positions.

Q3: What is your current position?

PhD-student: 5

Post-doc: 4

Consulting neurologist: 3

Assistant professor: 3

Genetic counsellor: 2

Instructor: 1

Medical director pharma: 2

Q4: Did the ENMC workshop contribute to your career within the NMD field?

19/20 (95%) responded with YES. One responded NO, because her work is indirectly related to the NMD field.

If yes, what did it bring you?

- Position elsewhere: 0
- Collaborative research: 14/20 (70%)
- Collaborative publication: 10/20 (50%)
- Invited to present research on other occasions: 4/20 (20%)
- Research proposal together with other participants: 10/20 (50%)
- Broadening network: 19/20 (95%)
- Sharing materials: 5/20 (25%)
- Increased reputation in the own institute: 12/20 (60%)
- Other: 2/20 (10%) such as:
 - Contact with patients at the workshop
 - Improved knowledge in NMD
 - Research started to be funded after the ENMC workshop, because the possibility to meet with senior scientists broadened the network and facilitated grants acceptance

TOPIC 3: THE ROLE OF THE WORKSHOP IN BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR SCIENTISTS

Q5: To what extent did the ENMC workshop and the ENMC Early-Career Programme help to bridge the gap between the junior and senior participants?

Workshop was successful in overcoming the (possible) gap: Score = 4,5

What ENMC should keep doing:

- Keep the meeting small and personal, and let it last for a couple of days, so everybody can interact with each other and start building up network relationships
- Keep the friendly, open and non-intimidating atmosphere
- Keep offering the informal opportunities (dinner, breaks) for interactions between senior and junior scientists (6 persons mentioned this!)
- Keep inviting Early-Career Researchers to ENMC workshops and provide them a presentation timeslot
- Continue the Early-Career Programme as it is

Ideas for improvement and implementation:

- Perhaps a 1 on 1 session (10-15 minutes) – speed date type of discussion between the Early-Career Researcher and each member of the organisers committee
- Increase the number of Early-Career Researchers per workshop to two, to avoid that they may feel lost and that they can work as a duo together with the organisers on the preparation, the execution, and the reporting of the meeting
- Perhaps one more timeslot for young investigators was suggested to increase their visibility
- Create the opportunity to collaborate with senior experts through research or training after the workshop
- Organise hands-on, practical exchange workshops with junior and senior researchers in the NMD field
- Set up a confidential list of future plans at the end of the ENMC workshop, that could be used in grant applications to strengthen the value of the grant
- Intensify the collaborations between junior and senior scientists in the follow-up work after the workshop

TOPIC 4: THE ENMC EARLY-CAREER PROGRAMME: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Q6: How did the Early-Career Programme come to your attention?

1. Via the ENMC website (spontaneous application by the Early-Career Researcher him/herself): 1
2. I work in lab/clinic of one of the organisers: 12
3. ENMC had an extra seat available: 11

Here there was some overlap in answers 2 and 3, because they sometimes lead to the other and vice versa. They can be collected together as invitation of Early-Career Researchers *driven by the*

organisers. With regards to the low score on answer 1, apparently the candidates are not looking explicitly *spontaneously themselves* at the ENMC website for workshops to attend but are dependent on proactive organisers (answer 2) and signalling by ENMC (answer 3).

Q7: Would you have attended the workshop also without the Early-Career Programme?

YES: 7/20 (35%), comment by a USA-based Early-Career: “yes, but funding is a prerequisite”

Many times the Early-Career Researchers are already listed as regular participants in the programme. When we start to bring the Early-Career Programme to the attention of the organisers, the idea comes up to make these participants Early-Career Researcher candidates to arrange the funding.

NO: 13/20 (65%)

13/20 respondents would not have attended the workshop without the ENMC Early-Career Programme despite being in the network. This is showing that they were invited only because ENMC had the funding and asked specifically for an additional junior participant.

Q8: What do you see as a potential new follow up of the Early-Career Programme?

Keep is as it is: 13/20, suggested improvements:

- Connect all Early-Career researchers who participated in the ENMC programme in a registry or platform to foster networking and mutual collaboration
- Allow for a minimum of 2 Early-Career Researchers per workshop that work as a duo
- Early-Career Researchers as co-author of the full NMD report (they need the publication)
- Involve Early-Career Researchers in the follow-up work after the workshop.

Suggestions for new programme: 4/20 with the following suggestions:

- Workshop with only Early-Career Researchers to support exchange of research data, career paths, an exchanging event (n=4 respondents)
- Create possibility of internships/ exchange visits (said 2 respondents)
- Create a fellowship programme for trainees (said 1 respondent)
- Mentorship in the field outside of someone’s own lab/program (said 2 respondents)
- Number of persons not responding to this question: 4/20

Q9: How do you score the old name “Young Scientist Programme”?

Score=4,8

Comments: Name fits well (6 respondents), it describes exactly what it is with the aim to be exposed to leaders in the NMD field. The name was appreciated because both MD and PhD are seen as scientists. The name reflects well the great opportunity to broaden the own network and start collaborations. Post-survey note: the name Young Scientist Programme was changed to Early-Career Programme to be aligned with the new Mid-Career Mentoring Programme.

TOPIC 5: ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Q10: Any other remarks/suggestions?

- Venue, shared meals, discussions and socialising slots were very much appreciated.
- A mentor-mentee programme was proposed with the question if ENMC could be supportive on this. *Post-survey note: this was one of the reasons for the ENMC to develop the Mid-Career Mentoring Programme.*
- Interactive subgroup activities during the workshop to increase the interaction between the senior and junior investigators.
- Follow-up is important (one respondent had a very bad experience in taking notes during the workshop, waited 4 years without hearing anything, to find out that the paper was written by the other Early-Career Researcher and the organisers).
- Involve the Early-Career Researchers in writing the full NMD paper and let them be acknowledged by being one of the co-authors.