

**Title**

UEG Young Talent Group: What do we do?

**Authors**

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## **Main text**

The Young Talent Group (YTG) is one of UEG's working groups and it consists of 7 ordinary members and a chair. Their mission is to represent the young physicians and researchers working in the field of gastroenterology. In this issue of the Journal we are collecting the experience of some past or current members of the YTG. They provide us with their personal overview on their tasks inside the group and also in the committees where they are participating as cross-representatives of the younger members of UEG.

## **Maciej Salaga**

I began to work for YTG in 2017 as one of the new members selected for this position by other colleagues from the group. I have two major tasks in the YTG: editing of the Young GI Angle (YGA), which is a section of the UEG Journal where we publish content directed towards young gastroenterologists and researchers and working as a cross-representative in the UEG Public Affairs Committee (PAC).

Being an editor of the YGA is a demanding and fun task. The key to success in this job is planning and acting ahead of schedule to ensure timely delivery of a new manuscript to every issue of the Journal. The main responsibilities are: coming up with new, interesting topics, corresponding with authors and UEG secretariat and also reviewing the manuscripts. It is a true mix of creative and operational tasks.

Work for PAC is a challenging and interesting job. Only a small group of people really know how lobbying at the level of EU Parliament is done. In PAC I learned a lot about this process and took part in it by designing lobbying strategy for UEG as well as meeting with politicians in Brussels, which was immensely educating. The main responsibilities of a young cross-representative are to become a liaison between PAC and YTG and creating written and oral reports. Moreover, there are 3-4 PAC meetings a year to attend in Brussels or in Vienna.

## **Pilar Acedo**

I am a Cell Biologist currently working as Research Associate at University College London. Our group is based at the Institute for Liver and Digestive Health, Royal Free Hospital (London, UK). I am really fascinated by the multidisciplinary field of

Gastroenterology. Last year, I heard about the possibility of joining the UEG's YTG. I was lucky enough to be selected to join the YTG group from 2019. This year, I attended the UEG Week and it was a great opportunity to do some networking and get involved in the scientific and educational sessions organised by the current YTG members. I learnt and enjoyed it a lot! I am looking forward to starting my position at the YTG, participate in some of the UEG projects and to engage more young scientists in our activities.

### **Ulrich Nitsche**

I am a visceral surgeon currently in training with my research focused on clinical and basic scientific colorectal cancer research. This makes me one of the few non-gastroenterologist UEG members. I used to take part and presenting my research data at the UEG Week since 2012. Since 2017, I am a council member of European Digestive Surgery (EDS), one of the UEG's Ordinary Member Societies. I heard about UEG's YTG and the possibility to apply there in order to get even more involved in the organizational structure of UEG. I personally enjoy medical teaching and voluntary take care of a surgical online learning course at our institution. I am very happy that the YTG has chosen me as a new member so that I can support UEG by spreading clinical education throughout Europe. I want to help making UEG even more attractive for the surgical society.

### **Radislav Nakov**

Within YTG I work as a cross representative in the Education Committee (EduCom) and as a member of Young GI Sections Taskforce (YGIST). In EduCom I represent the voice of young GIs and come up with new ideas in terms of continuous medical education, e-learning and classroom courses. Furthermore, I try to increase the popularity of European Board of Gastroenterology and Hepatology (EBGH) exam among young GIs.

I have been chosen as a Summer School 2019 co-director where I have the tasks to organize the programme and to invite speakers together with the other co-directors. I also try to ensure the presence of young speakers in the faculty based on their scientific background and presentation skills. Moreover, I am working on improving the other classroom courses (Basic Science Course, Young Investigator Meeting and Evidence Based Medicine Course) and making them more popular among young GIs.

A few months ago YTG launched a new project where I am taking the lead (GI Hive), which is a blog that combines the most up-to-date information about life, career development and education for young GIs in Europe. I make a schedule with all the interviews, videos, and infographics that are regularly published there. Once we have the articles I help in the editing process.

Based on my experience in setting up a young GI section in Bulgaria I am constantly in contact with GIs from other European countries and try to motivate them to organize their own young GI section within their national society. The Young GI Sections Taskforce aims to help all those young GIs who want to be actively represented in their own country.

### **Iago Rodríguez-Lago**

I am a clinical gastroenterologist specially focused in the field of IBD. In 2018 I was selected to become part of the Young Talent Group. Since then, this position is giving me a great opportunity to participate in two exciting activities: the Young GI Angle and the Visiting Fellowship Programme.

In each one of the UEG Journal issues we have a dedicated section where we publish articles specifically directed towards the young members of UEG. My mission here consists mainly of finding attractive topics and looking for authors that are willing to participate in each of them. I find this so interesting! You have to rigorously prepare each paper before the deadline expires and review each of them, in order to confirm that they fulfil the conditions of the Journal. In this position you can meet a lot of researchers from multiple areas and you always learn something new from them.

The second task in which I am involved is the Visiting Fellowship Programme. I am very enthusiastic to collaborate with this because this programme is of great importance during training. We are giving to a young member the opportunity to spend some time in a hospital where they can learn and improve their skills, and even start new collaborations across Europe during the early years of their career. We are currently offering 30 grants for clinicians in 2019 (more information here: <https://www.ueg.eu/awards-grants/ueg-awards/visiting-fellowship-for-clinicians/>) and hopefully we will increase this number in the near future.

### **Vita Skuja**

I am so excited to join YTG this year. I am sure that these are going to be two fantastic years with a lot of new things learned, great things accomplished and loads of fun. Above all, I am so happy to be able to work together with the most enthusiastic, bright and talented young GIs and get to know my favourite organization - UEG from inside out.

When writing my application for the YTG last year, I was greatly encouraged by my friends, colleagues, and mentors and till this day I value this support highly. The whole application process was quite easy because I already knew "what I am getting myself into". I had been with UEG and its activities for quite a while, I absolutely love the organization and strongly believe that great things can be accomplished if you bring the right people together for the right purpose.

As a new member who is just starting to get around, I really value the transition process within the group, the warm welcome from the team and UEG secretariat. Everything is very clear and everyone is so helpful. These definitely are perfect conditions for getting things done in the future.

### **Henriette Heinrich**

The scientific committee of UEG is a unique group of experts in the field dedicated to creating a cutting edge programme for each UEGW week. The committee usually meets three times a year in Vienna and each time a different aspect of the programme is created and planned. This is not only a chance to learn how abstracts and scientific content gets chosen for the biggest gastroenterology conference in Europe, but gives the cross-representative an interesting insight into the impressive logistics of conference planning.

The Young GI cross-representative plays an active part in designing the scientific programme of the postgraduate course and the UEG week with the members of the committee. This in itself is an amazing opportunity to learn from leaders in the field to assess abstracts and scientific contents. Furthermore you get a fascinating glimpse of what will move the field ahead and will be "tomorrows" science.

However the most important task is the representation of the needs and interests of young gastroenterologists working in clinical medicine and research. In the scientific committee this means the promotion to include young and new talents into the programme of the

week and the postgraduate course as speakers, case presenters and (young) co-chairs. To facilitate the process of finding new talent in every area of gastroenterology the UEG Talent Bank was conceived, where every young basic scientist or clinical researcher interested in the field of gastroenterology can apply for tasks within UEG and the UEG Week.

### **Yasmijn van Herwaarden**

As chair of the YTG my task is to lead the Group during their discussions about our new activities and plans. During our meetings twice a year I try to keep to our tight schedule because of our rapidly expanding activities. We are always short in time because of the new ideas and improvement ideas to our older activities. We are always happy to discuss your most creative idea for a new activity if you let us know!

One of my main goals as YTG chair is that I want to support trainees in all the National Societies to be represented at their national level. This is very important to have a say in decisions for example on your training program and education. We try to support the formation of young sections in each National Society and with the help of the National Societies Committee and the UEG Council we try to convince the National Societies that they have a lot to gain from involving the young section in their activities.

Next to these challenging tasks I am cross-representative from the YTG in the National Societies Committee where all the aim is to represent the National Societies within UEG. As the YTG falls directly under the National Societies I regularly update them on our activities. Besides supporting the YTG, the National Societies Committee promotes collaboration between National Societies and supports the National Societies Activities.

Since last year, the YTG Chair is invited to join all UEG Council meetings as a non-voting council member. "Non-voting" sounded much better than calling me an "observing member" like they did earlier because the Council encourages me to comment on everything and really values the YTG's opinion. I update the Council on the YTG activities and they often have very good suggestions. I also try to give suggestions to Council on how to make all UEG activities more accessible and interesting for young people.

Last but not least, together with the rest of the YTG, we have the very hard task to soon choose our next YTG members! I encourage everyone to apply and especially focus on

what you would like to achieve when chosen in the YTG. Your CV or level of training is less important than your most creative idea, so I'm looking forward to reading all your applications!

The Young Talent Group is looking for 4 new members this year! You can apply for this position until 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019. All the information can be accessed on UEG's website – Open calls.