The Second European Conference on Weaning and Rehabilitation in Critically Ill Patients took place in Athens on November 7th and 8th, 2014. Nearly 80 participants from 21 different countries (including Europe, USA, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Japan) attended the meeting. The conference was held in the “Demokritos” National Center for Scientific Research in Athens.

The conference was organized by a highly motivated and engaged team from Professor Nanas’s group, including V. Gerovasili, I. Patsaki and L. Karatzanos.

November 7th, 2014
Morning Session
The conference started at 9.00 am and was introduced by V. Gerovasili (Greece) and P. Nydahl (Germany). The first session started with two lectures about ICU-acquired weakness by N. Hart (United Kingdom), and assessing and managing delirium by D. Needham (USA).

After a short coffee break, participants attended two workshops which introduced different aspects of early rehabilitation. The first workshop was about electrical muscle stimulation in the ICU, and was facilitated by R Gosselink (Belgium), J Segers (Belgium), L Karatzanos (Greece), and I Patsaki (Greece). It included hands-on demonstration of electrical muscle stimulation. The second workshop discussed delirium in the ICU and covered the following topics: non-sedation (T Strom, Denmark), delirium assessments (P Spronk, Netherlands) and re-designing the ICU environment to reduce delirium (A Luetz, Germany).
Workshop on NMES

Twitter
D. Needham (USA – photo below) live tweeted the conference (using #icurehab). This was an amazing experience, especially during the parallel workshops. More than 1000 clinicians followed his twitter account and “participated” in the conference, worldwide.

Afternoon Session
The afternoon sessions began after the lunch break with S. Nanas (Greece) speaking about Post-Intensive-Care Syndrome and emphasizing an interdisciplinary approach to the management of this syndrome. Afterwards, D. Needham (USA) discussed a quality improvement approach to the implementation of early rehabilitation programs in regular practice.

The first afternoon workshop covered topics including psychological and cognitive problems, PTSD, ICU diaries and dysphagia. This workshop was facilitated by S Nanas (Greece), C Jones (United Kingdom), P Magoula (Greece) and V Markaki (Greece). The second afternoon workshop (photo below) focused on implementation, barriers and strategies and was facilitated by D Needham (USA), P Nydahl (Germany), R Gosselink (Belgium) and M Van der Schaaf (Netherlands).
Participants during the workshop

**Evening Dinner**
The evening dinner was hosted at Orizontes Lycabetous in Athens overlooking the Acropolis. The dinner was excellent with great conversation throughout the entire evening.
Evening dinner at Orizontes Lycabetous

**November 8th, 2014**

**Morning Session**

On Saturday morning, conference participants presented their own work in 10 minute oral presentations, with lively discussion after each presentation. The presentations covered a lot of different and interesting topics, including preliminary results of ongoing projects and research proposals:

- New roles in early mobilization: The cost effectiveness of employing therapy technicians in intensive care to reduce lengths of stay (Z van Willigen, L Gallagher, S Wynne, D Richardson, R Cusack, United Kingdom)
- Improving weaning from mechanical ventilation process – by using evidenced based (EB) tool (D Firas, O Bunchouk, A Samokhvalov, N Machoul, SD Lylah, L Jakobson, Israel)
- Rehabilitation in a surgical ICU of a university medical center Ljubljana, Slovenia (U Kidric-Sivec, H Petrovic, N Bezica, Slovenia)
- The Patient Mobilization Framework- A multidisciplinary communication algorithm that improves early mobilization in critical ill patients (CW Casteleijn, Netherlands)
- Implementation of the mobilization frame: 2.0 (PJ Vaes, MAF Verhagen, Netherlands)
- International standardization of measurements and data collection in all ICU patients with acquired weakness (P Spronk, J Sommer, C Hodgson, E Skinner, M Baldwin, D Needham, M van der Schaaf, The Netherlands/USA)
- Psychometric properties of the de Morton Mobility Index (DEMMI), in critically ill patients (J Sommers, T Vredeveeld, RHH Engelbert, R Lindeboom, M van der Schaaf, The Netherlands)
- I-PADs on the ICU: current extension of early mobilization, communication, speech and swallow therapy, information and Entertainment (M van der Steen, E Klop, The Netherlands)
- Energy expenditure in the critically ill performing early physical therapy (CE Hickmann, JR Roeseler, D Castanares-Zapatero, EL Herrera, A Mongodin, PF Laterre, Belgium)
- Neuromuscular electrical stimulation might induce endothelial progenitor cells mobilization in critical ill patients: A pilot study (S Dimopoulos, Ch Stefanou, G Mitsiou, E Karatzanos, V Gerovasili, I Patsaki, E Angelopoulos, A Psarra, S Nanas, Greece)
- NONSEDA-trial - An investigator-initiated, randomized, clinical, parallel-group, multinational, superiority trial (P Toft, T. Strom, H Korvenius Jørgense, Denmark)
- Effects of early and physical therapy in ICU patients in an early mobilization, non-sedation setting (M K Holten, Th Strøm, P Tøft, Denmark)
- E-Health as a tool in ICU Rehabilitation and aftercare (E Klop, F Govers, B Strookappe, M van der Stehen, MD, The Netherlands)
- Anxiety and Depression Screening by ICU Follow Teams following critical illness. A 5 year Review (DH Conway, D Egan, S Hendry, S O’Loghlen, United Kingdom)
- Development of a rehabilitation prescription for the post critical care population (D Egan, DH Conway, S O’Loghlen, N McGil, United Kingdom)
- Impact of ICU-acquired weakness on functional outcomes - a prospective observational study (DS Dettling-Ihnenfeldt, L Wieske, C Verhamme, F Nollet, IN van Schaik, MJ Schultz, J Horn, M van der Schaaf, The Netherlands)
- Long term effects of ICU Acquired Weakness (G Sidiras, V Gerovasili, I Patsaki, G Mitsiou, A Kouvarakos, A Kardara, G Strantzalis, S Nanas, Greece)

Additionally, each oral presentation was also accompanied by a poster available for viewing and discussion during the conference. The discussions were short, but constructive and covered several methodological issues, consequences and scientific impact, and hence everyone could benefit by this discussion.

**Conference Conclusion**

A team from Denmark (H. Tjalk-Soerensen, V. Oliel, K. Astrup, L. Wiben Gundersen, S. Hvid) invited everyone to the Third European Conference on November 6th-7th 2015 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Please, note this conference in your calendars: a program will be distributed and uploaded here on this website. At the next conference, once again, participants will be able to present their own work and ongoing studies.

V. Gerovasili (Greece) and P Nydahl (Germany) closed the conference (photo below of some of the conference organizers). This conference enhanced interdisciplinary and international collaborations. In the spirit of this conference, new contacts were formed, bridges were built, ideas were shared, and new and innovative study designs were developed.
As a note: during the conference, a questionnaire was distributed to all participants to gain more knowledge about the training and competencies of physiotherapists in the ICU. For the next conference, another research project is planned by P.J. Vaes and M.A.F. Verhagen, Netherlands.

As a second note: conference participants plan to establish similar conferences in the Middle East and Japan in the near future, which will be a welcomed international and cultural development!

V. Gerovasili & P. Nydahl