

# A Research Agenda for the European Association for Endoscopic Surgeons (EAES)

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## For which topic were research priorities identified?

endoscopic surgery

## In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Europe

## Why was it conducted at all?

Research in laparoscopic and minimally access surgery (MAS) has had a massive diffusion in the last twenty-five years: the number of articles published per year doubled every 10 years and over 400,000 articles can be retrieved from "PubMed" using the key word "minimally invasive surgery/laparoscopic surgery." This impressive amount of research is funded by state-owned research agencies, universities, charity foundations, hospitals and industry. Despite this exponential growth of MAS-focused research, there are still many unanswered research questions and a gap between the ongoing research and advances in technology, education and clinical practice, as it is perceived by the surgical community. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that in Europe most research efforts in the field of MAS remain uncoordinated, without common goals and directions that may potentially lead to a better link between the research topics and the clinical needs. This is particularly relevant given the current economic constraints resulting in curtailed funding opportunities for certain areas in research such as training and education.

## What was the objective?

to identify the top research questions which are relevant to surgeons in minimal access surgery

## What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 10 research questions

## How long did the research prioritization take?

November 2014 - April 2015

## Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

Delphi

## How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: Delphi round 1: participants were asked to formulate up to three main research themes they feel most relevant, also asked to explain why they felt these topics were essential for research and what the impact on patient care could be, 437 statements submitted. Step 2: data processing: refining statements, removing duplicates, categorizing into broad areas, resulting in 14 research topics. Step 3: Delphi round 2: participants were asked to rate questions which were grouped to topics. Step 4: Delphi round 3: survey with research questions ranked above the 80th percentile, participants were asked to re-rate.

## Which stakeholders took part?

Members of the European Association of Endoscopic Surgeons. Delphi round 1: 149 participants, Delphi round 2: 321 participants. Delphi round 3: 324 participants.

## How were stakeholders recruited?

For the purposes of this study, experts were defined as all the members of the European Association of Endoscopic Surgery: They all were practicing surgeons in European (and in some non-Europeans country) with a particular expertise in minimally access surgery. All the members of the EAES had to submit two letters of recommendations to be accepted and physician members are practicing surgeons in hospitals and/or academic institutions and are board certified in surgery and/or in surgical subspecialties. In addition to the ordinary members of the EAES, the questionnaires were sent to the EAES leadership team which included 52 members of the EAES executive board and its committees.

## Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.