

The International Board of Shoulder & Elbow Surgery (established 1992)

Shoulder surgery is a relatively young specialty. Surgeons have been treating shoulder problems from the time of Hippocrates. With the huge explosion of knowledge in the medical sciences, it became impossible to be an expert in all fields and hence the birth of the specialist. As knowledge expands the areas of expertise become smaller. Those interested in a particular field have always grouped together to form societies to discuss their area of interest and share experiences. Shoulder surgery is no different. The specialty of shoulder surgery is now of sufficient size, age, and definition to review the history of the administrative side of the specialty.

The first international conference on surgery of the shoulder was held in London in 1980, organized by Professor Lipman Kessel, aided by Ian Bayley. This was really a landmark in defining shoulder surgery as a separate clinical entity. Working with Professor Kessel at that time, there was the buzz and excitement of people from around the world realizing that a lot of what we do has a great deal in common. However, different problems are faced in different parts of the world. All the major names in shoulder surgery were part of that original conference, and there was a definite feeling that this was the start of something big. Because of the success of the conference, it was decided that there would be a second one held in Toronto, Canada in 1993 organized by Drs James Bateman and Peter Welch. From that time conferences have been held in Fukuoka, Japan 1986, New York City, USA 1989, Paris, France 1992, Helsinki, Finland 1995, Sydney, Australia 1998, Cape Town, South Africa 2001, and Washington, USA 2004.

At the 5th International Congress in Paris 1992, Dr Charles Neer convened a group to oversee the organization of the international meetings. These conferences were getting larger, and certainly a great deal of expertise had been gained; this knowledge needed to be propagated. It was proposed that this group of people would help facilitate the organization of these conferences every three years. The group, the International Board of Shoulder & Elbow Surgery, was elected by delegates at the 4th conference from a list of 24 candidates, all of whom had had experience in organizing one of the tri-annual

meetings. Those elected for the initial group, designated the International Board of Shoulder Surgery, included Robert Cofield from the USA, Stephen Copeland from Great Britain, Hiro Fukuda from Japan, Michel Mansat from France, Marti Vastamaki from Finland, and Peter Welsh from Canada. Charles Neer was unanimously voted chairman, Hiro Fukuda treasurer, and Peter Welsh the secretary. Drs Neer and Cofield were assigned the responsibility for further developing policy and formulating a statement of purpose. The overall principle was that the International Board of Shoulder Surgery would foster and facilitate the development of international congresses of shoulder surgery and provide continuity and activity between the times of the congresses. The board would supervise the appointment of delegates to a congress approximately one year before the meeting date. The presidents, or their representatives, of the continental shoulder societies would select the delegates. At the time of the congress, the International Board would conduct a meeting of the appointed delegates, the main purpose being to consider future meeting sites and to determine the site of the International Congress to be held six years from the time of the current meeting. Prior to that meeting, the international delegates would elect members of the international board from a roster of candidates who had served as significant contributors to the organization of earlier congresses. Hence the cascade of administration was National Societies under the umbrella of the Continental Societies and the Continental Societies sending delegates to the International Meeting. The International Board also considers policy matters, serves in an advisory capacity to the chair of the upcoming International Congress, provides seed money, administers proposals for future meeting sites, maintains records, and considers related activities for the advancement of shoulder surgery.

Part of the proceeds of the International Conference is passed on to the International Board as a means of funding and setting up the next conference. These congresses have been a great success in the facilitation of the global exchange of information on surgery of the shoulder and elbow. Initially it was purely an international shoulder congress, but at the

Washington meeting in 2004, the name was changed to the International Congress of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery at the instigation of the delegates. This was done in recognition of the papers presented at the conferences and also to reflect the activity of many of the international associated organizations. At the Washington meeting in 2004, for the first time, we also had the international congress of shoulder therapists under the chairmanship of John Basti.

In 1998, when Dr Neer stepped down, Robert Cofield was elected chairman for six years prior to the Washington meeting in 2004. The current board consists of Stephen Copeland, UK (Chairman), Louis Bigliani USA, Secretary, Eiji Itoi Japan, Treasurer; board members: Dr Checchia Brazil, Dr Cofield USA, Dr Fukuda Japan, Dr Sonnabend Australia, Dr Walensteen Sweden, Dr Walsh France, and Dr Welsh New Zealand. These were elected by the delegates from the international societies to serve on the International Board of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery, each serving for a period of six years. To have additional knowledge available for decision making, Drs Lambrechts (South Africa), Osvandre Lech (Brazil), and Prof. Wallace UK have been appointed as ex-officio members of the board.

There is no doubt these international congresses have been an enormous success, encouraging scientific exchange and fellowship among shoulder and elbow surgeons globally. As I take on the role of chairman of the Board of International Congress of Shoulder and Elbow surgeons, it is with pleasurable anticipation that I look forward to continuing these responsibilities. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the inaugural chairman, Dr Charles Neer for setting the board up and to Dr Robert Cofield for his guidance and expertise in progressing the aims and

development of the society. I hope that I can in some measure live up to the example they have already set. During my period of office, several areas need to be explored a little further. The constitution needs to be reviewed, and the election of board members, officers and sub-committees needs to be put on a more democratic footing; at the moment we are very much an English speaking international shoulder surgery society and with the help of simultaneous translation, I hope that at future meetings we can make the meetings truly international. We now have sufficient money to consider assistance in setting up multi-center international scientific trials. There has been great co-operation with the Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery under the editorship of Dr Robert Neviasser, and the journal publishes the proceedings of the international meetings. The journal has also kindly agreed to publish the best paper from the international meeting as a full paper in the Journal of Shoulder and Elbow Surgery.

The venue for the next two meetings has already been decided, Brazil 2007 and Edinburgh 2010. The organization for the meeting in La Bahia, September 16–20 2007 is already well advanced under the guidance of the local organizers, Drs Sergio Checchia and Osvandre Lech.

I really hope you will make a special note of this meeting in your diary and, on behalf of the IBSES, look forward to welcoming you all in Brazil.

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