

WORLD FEDERATION OF SOCIETIES OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

The World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) was established at the first World Congress of Anaesthesiologists in The Netherlands in 1955. At that time, there were 28 member societies. Currently there are 116 from nations across the globe. All national societies' members are encouraged to visit the WFSA Website at www.anaesthesiologists.org, where they will find information about the Federation, its member societies, WFSA committees and the WFSA newsletter. Anaesthesiologists throughout the world convene every four years at the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists. It is anticipated that more than 10,000 anesthesiologists from more than 135 nations will attend the next Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, in March 2008 www.wca2008.com.

Worldwide Education

The WFSA Education Committee has, as usual, been very active throughout the year under the direction of its Chair, Angela Enright, M.B. (Canada). The committee endeavors to work cooperatively with other organizations in support of education for anesthesiologists from more than 40 countries in the developing world. Highlights are included below:

Rwanda has been the scene of much anesthetic activity over the past two years. Through Phillip O. Bridenbaugh, M.D., chair of the ASA Overseas Teaching Program, and Dr. Angela Enright, representative of the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) International Education Fund, ASA and CAS are cooperating in assisting the Rwandans to develop a training program in anesthesia for their physicians. This effort is now just under way and will be a long-term project for both societies.

First Pediatric Fellow

In September 2005, the first Fellow in Pediatric Anesthesia arrived in Cape Town from Nairobi, Kenya. This was the culmination of many years of effort, particularly by program director Adrian Bosenberg, Ph.D. The Fellows have the opportunity to take part in all aspects of anesthesia for children, including regional anesthesia and pain management. One Fellow, Zipporah Gathuay, M.D., has even had her first publication, a case report in the South African Journal of Anaesthesia and Analgesia, and was scheduled to present a poster at the South African Society of Anaesthesiologists (SASA) Conference in March 2006. She writes: "I am very honored to be the pioneer of this program. It is very useful training, especially for Africa, as the pathologies encountered and patient populations are very similar to what I will be practicing in Kenya." Charles J. Coté, M.D., ASA member on the WFSA Executive Committee, has been instrumental in the development of this and similar pediatric anesthesia training programs in Santiago, Chile and Vellore, India.

Success in Ghana

A real success story of "teaching the teachers," the program in Accra, Ghana, has been a cooperative venture of ASA and WFSA. All regional hospitals in Ghana have now been supplied with those trained in anesthesia. There is now also a Fellowship Program of the Ghana College, and more trainees are applying for those positions. Since its inception in 2000, the training program has 15 graduates from Ghana, one from Sierra Leone and two from Nigeria.

Flagship Bangkok Program

The Bangkok Anaesthesia Regional Training Centre (BARTC) continues to be the flagship training program, very ably led by Professor Thara Tritrakarn. The ninth class included physicians from Bhutan, Myanmar, Mongolia and Cambodia. All the trainees spend seven months in a university hospital and then rotate to a provincial hospital for three months to prepare them better for work in their home countries. They spend their final month back at the university and then sit for their exit examination. All of the trainees were successful this year.

Education Materials for All

During the past year, the WFSA Publications Committee, chaired by Iain Wilson, M.B., (United Kingdom), has worked together to improve access to educational material for anesthetists worldwide. Update in Anaesthesia is published in English and translated into French, Spanish, Chinese and Russian. Apart from the Spanish edition, the others were published in a paper format due to the lack of Internet access in the distribution areas. The English, Russian, French and Spanish editions also are available on the Internet. Over the past year, the Publications Committee has continued its work on journal and book exchanges, which has been led by Berend Mets, M.B., Ch.B., Ph.D., (United States). Those willing to donate literature are asked to register on the World Anaesthesia Web site, where their information is collated along with those requesting books or literature. The system is run electronically and is starting to gather momentum. For more information, see <www.world-anaesthesia.org>.

An Editorial Board has been established to run the "Tutorial of the Week." This is a Web-based tutorial that changes on a regular basis to provide straightforward education for its participants. Because many anesthesiologists cannot access the Internet but can receive e-mail, an electronic version of the tutorial in simple text files will be developed. This will provide a powerful educational tool and, in time, will allow the committee to develop a curriculum for many anesthetists working in isolation, but who at least have the ability to access e-mail.

A Well-Run Organization

Dr. Bridenbaugh is chair of the WFSA Foundation. WFSA has a record of minimizing administrative costs and placing funds into publications and educational activities, especially in the developing world. There is more to be done, though. Dr. Bridenbaugh is doing an outstanding job in structuring the WFSA Foundation to get information about all the wonderful WFSA publications and educational activities into the hands of potential donors. In accomplishing this, the WFSA Foundation also is sensitive to the need to avoid competition with the various foundations within each of the member national societies.

In a continuously violent and dehumanizing world, the scientific and cultural diplomacy aspects of WFSA are our hope for sanity and our path to safe anesthesia care for our fellow human beings.

We hope to see you all at the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists in Cape Town, 2-7 March 2008, www.wca2008.com.

John R. Moyers, M.D.,
WFSA Honorary Secretary