

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity: A History

An international obesity surgery meeting was held annually in various countries throughout the world under the leadership of Nicola Scopinaro. At the Stockholm meeting in 1995, the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity (IFSO) was formed. The first International Congress of IFSO was held in Prague in 1996, followed by Cancun in 1997, Bruges in 1998, Salzburg in 1999 and Genoa in 2000. The first President was Nicola Scopinaro of Italy, followed by George Cowan of U.S.A. and Emanuel Hell of Austria.

The Annual Congress includes the International Symposium on Laparoscopic Obesity Surgery and the allied health meeting, followed by 2¹/₂ days of papers, posters, scholarly presentations, commercial exhibits, and a spectacular social program. The upcoming International Congress of IFSO is in Chania, Crete, September 5 to 8, 2001. Annual meetings are being organized in Sao Paulo for 2002 and Madrid for 2003. Each meeting has been a comprehensive interchange of information on the current art and science of bariatric surgery.

IFSO consists of 26 adhering Societies in 30 nations, plus Affiliate Members in countries that do not have Societies, so that IFSO now has more than 1,000 members in 49 countries. The individual Societies are listed on the cover of the Journal. To become an Adhering Society, the Statutes and Bylaws of the applicant Society must be approved by the Executive Council of IFSO. Each Society of IFSO holds its own annual or biennial meeting.

The function of this organization is international communication, education, standards and surgical means to treat morbid obesity and its grave comorbidities. The official Journal of IFSO is *OBE-SITY SURGERY Including Laparoscopy and Allied Care*, which publishes the world literature on the field of massive obesity and helps to bind these Societies together. *OBE-SITY SURGERY* has attained the 26th highest impact-rating out of 131 surgical journals, according to the annual study of

the Institute of Medical Sciences in Philadelphia. The Journal, published 6 times per year, is indexed in the Index Medicus of the National Library of Medicine of U.S.A., going back to 1991.

IFSO is financed by dues from Members, 50% of the profit from the annual international meeting, and donations from industry. In particular, the American Society for Bariatric Surgery has been very supportive financially. The official language is English. Annual payment of dues and subscription to the IFSO Journal are requirements for Membership, as stated in the IFSO Bylaws.¹

The Executive Director's office administers the affairs of the organization with three part-time staff. IFSO has made a number of important Declarations through its Executive and the various Societies' Representatives. These Statements guide the performance of bariatric surgery, criteria, training and workshops throughout the world. The Statements and the Statutes and Bylaws of IFSO are published in *OBE-SITY SURGERY*.¹⁻⁷

The Society web-site under the direction of Karl Miller is www.obesity-online.com/IFSO/ and www.obesitysurgery.com

The current President of IFSO is Andrew Jamieson of Australia, President-Elect Martin Fried of the Czech Republic, Vice-President Aniceto Baltasar of Spain, Secretary-Treasurer Arthur Garrido of Brazil, Chair of Board of Trustees George Cowan of U.S.A. and Honorary President Nicola Scopinaro of Italy. Jan Greve of the Netherlands is Chair of the Standards Committee. John Melissas of Greece is the Program Chairman, who has been devoted to the gargantuan task of organizing the 2001 Meeting (melissas@med.uoc.gr).

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2. Cowan GSM Jr. The Cancun IFSO statement on bariatric surgeon qualifications. *Obes Surg* 1998; 8: 86-7.
3. IFSO statement on morbid obesity and its treatment. *Obes Surg* 1997; 7: 40-1.
4. IFSO statement on patient selection for bariatric surgery. *Obes Surg* 1997; 7: 41.
5. Cowan GSM Jr. The Bruges IFSO statement on innovation. *Obes Surg* 1999; 9: 289.
6. Greve JWM, Hell E. IFSO membership directives. *Obes Surg* 1999; 9: 290.
7. Alvarez-Cordero R. IFSO statement on bariatric surgery: course and workshop requirements. *Obes Surg* 1999; 9: 291.

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