

The World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists making available the highest standards of anesthesia to all people of the world

John R. Moyers

Secretary World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists

The World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) was established at the first World Congress of Anaesthesia in the Netherlands in 1955. At that time, there were 28 member societies. Currently, there are 118 from nations across the globe. As the largest member society, the ASA has made significant contributions over the years. For instance, Francis Foldes, M.D. and John J. Bonica, M.D. were both past WFSA Presidents.

Currently, John R. Moyers, M.D. is Secretary, H. Jerrel Fontenot, is Deputy Treasurer and Charles J. Coté, M.D. is a member of the Executive Committee, as is Philip Bridenbaugh, M.D. who serves as chair of the WFSA Foundation.

ASA members are encouraged to visit the WFSA website at www.anaesthesiologist.org where they will find information about the Federation, its member societies, WFSA committees and the WFSA Newsletter.

World Congress of Anaesthesiologists

Anesthesiologists throughout the world convene every four years at the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists. The next World Congress will be held in Capetown, South Africa in March of 2008. It is anticipated that over 10,000 anesthesiologists from more than 135 nations will attend. The 14th World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (www.wca2008.com) boasts the world's foremost educational program for anesthesiologists. The World Congress Faculty will present over 320 lectures and discussion sessions covering a wide range of topics in anesthesia and related medical fields, as well as workshops in areas of technical expertise. Through the scientific sessions, social program, exhibits and satellite meetings the congress will bring anesthesiologists from all over of the world together in the Rainbow Nation the perfect setting for the global anesthesia family.

WFSA Committee Activities

The work of the WFSA is carried out through its committees and working parties. A few of the highlights from committee reports are presented below:

The Chair of the Education Committee, Dr. Angela Enright (Canada), reports that the major focus of the education committee is on developing training programs where young physicians from the developing world can acquire either basic or advanced training in anesthesia. It is a strongly held belief that this training should be offered as close to home as possible so as to be relevant to the environment in which the trainee will eventually practice.

This WFSA committee works in coordination with the ASA's Overseas Training Program chaired by Phillip O. Bridenbaugh, M.D. A wide range of educational activities are supported including visiting teachers, refresher course lecturers, assistance with regional and national meetings, sponsorship of young anesthesiologists for extra training, assistance with external examiners, equipment repair and maintenance courses and examination preparation. Since 2000 these efforts have taken place in over 60 countries worldwide.

Basic anesthesia training programs are currently being conducted for international anesthesia residents in Bangkok, Thailand and in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Pediatric subspecialty training programs are held in Santiago, Chile; Vellore, India; and in Tunis, Tunisia. Subspecialty training in obstetrics occurs in Medellin, Colombia and training in intensive care takes place in Vellore, India. A new initiative was undertaken in 2006 in an effort to improve the teaching of anesthesia. The WFSA supported two "Teach the Teachers" courses, one for Eastern

Europe and the other for the Philippines. These were focused on the younger faculty members who will be the future of the specialty.

Chair, Dr. Iain Wilson (UK), reports that the role of the Publications Committee is to supply effective educational materials to those working in areas of the world where anesthesia publications are in short supply.

Update in Anaesthesia is a journal that was started in 1992 to provide an effective educational resource for anesthetists in the developing world who did not have access to literature. The journal is now produced twice a year in paper format in English, French, Chinese and Russian. Around 12,000 paper copies are printed and distributed free of charge. Update in Anaesthesia is available electronically in those languages, as well as in Spanish, and has been presented both in CDROM format and also on the web at www.worldanaesthesia.org, and www.nda.ox.ac.uk/wfsa. Downloading is free of charge and there are no copyright concerns, preferring to ensure maximum availability.

With increasing accessibility to email and the Internet, the concept of the “Anesthesia Tutorial of the Week” (ATOTW) was developed in 2006. It takes the form of an electronic tutorial, which sent by electronic mail, free of charge around the world. The peer-reviewed tutorials appear both on www.worldanaesthesia.org, and www.anaesthesiauk.com. The archive contains many useful topics and is slowly building into an excellent on-line resource useful for both teachers and students.

For some years the WFSA has encouraged Book and Journal Exchange between those with and those without. This is coordinated by Carol Wilson (worldanaesthesia@mac.com) who matches offers of donations of books and journals with a database of recipients, which may be individuals or department libraries.

The Global Oximetry Project

The Global Oximetry Project (GO) arose from a resolution of the Safety and Quality of Practice Committee of WFSA at the 2004 World Congress Anaesthesiologists. It is collaboration between the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, the Association of Anesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, and GE Healthcare (the Founder Organizations).

The spirit of this partnership is informal, with a focus on improving patient safety by facilitating the provision and effective use of pulse oximetry during anesthesia throughout the world, in particular in low and middle-income regions where the technology is often not available. The development of low cost, robust technology is a crucial part of this initiative. In 2007, 4 Phase I sub-projects will take place, one each in India, the Philippines, Uganda and Vietnam, introducing pulse oximetry into clinical areas of several hospitals.

WFSA Constitution

A proposed revision of the WFSA Statutes and Bylaws, now termed the WFSA Constitution, primarily constructed by William D. Owens, M.D. (USA) of the WFSA Committee on Statutes and Bylaws has been distributed to all National Societies. It is an attempt to simplify the old document and to reflect current WFSA policy and procedure. A final draft will be distributed to the National Societies later this year in time for placement on the agenda for a vote during the General Assembly in Cape Town in March 2008.

The ASA can be proud of its past and continuing support of our colleagues throughout the world through the WFSA. While many areas of the world are plagued by hatred and violence, the scientific and cultural diplomacy aspects of the WFSA are our way to safe anesthesia care for patients everywhere.

Correspondence address:
john-moyers@uiowa.edu