



WSSFN WINTER NEWSLETTER 2024

WORLD SOCIETY FOR STEREOTACTIC AND FUNCTIONAL NEUROSURGERY

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



DR. HARITH AKRAM, MBChB
PhD FRCS (NEURO. SURG)

Dear colleagues and friends, dear members of the WSSFN,

As we embark on 2024, I would like to wish all of you a tremendous year ahead. Believe it or not, we are nearly one-quarter of the way through the 21st century! 2023 was eventful, to say the least. We witnessed political unrest, war conflicts, a cost-of-living crisis, earthquakes, a climate crisis (2023 was the hottest year on record!), floods, droughts, etc. The year kicked off with the funeral of

Pope Benedict XVI. Soon after, the Doomsday Clock advanced, indicating an unprecedented level of world troubles (the time now stands at 90 seconds to midnight). However, not all was bad; the largest-ever Vermeer exhibition with 28 paintings took place in Amsterdam in February, and a Taylor Swift tour in March. India became the most populous country in the world in the same month, and we Brits had a new king in May. Tina Turner died (you [were] simply the best!). The tragedy of the Titan Submersible unfolded in June. July brought us Barbie and Oppenheimer on the same day (I have seen one of those but am yet to watch the other). Twitter became X. In August, the Spanish Women's Football Team snatched the World Cup from the Lionesses (I am, as you can see, still seething).

October 7th saw horrendous atrocities committed by Hamas and the ensuing and still ongoing war in Gaza, which has led to unspeakable levels of death and destruction. All of this, along with the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. In November, Australia defeated India in the Cricket World Cup, but the real winner was the Afghanistan Cricket Team, which captured the hearts of cricket lovers everywhere. Love him or loathe him, Henry Kissinger kicked the mortal coil and went to meet his maker in November, and Beyonce released a film in December!

During all this upheaval, we, as a society, kept calm and carried on. We taught, ran studies, published papers, organized meetings, made friendships, and exchanged ideas. Our Interim Meeting in Dubai saw 523 participants from all over the world! Not bad for a regional meeting. I was fortunate to give a lecture there, and to witness, and take photographic evidence of senior WSSFN board members showing off their skills on the dance floor, naturally, such photographs are not appropriate for our respectable publication.

2024 started on the wrong foot with a terrible earthquake in Japan. Armed conflicts are alas still ongoing with no end in sight. And it is very likely that this year will see more bad things happening and a lot of heartache. We, as a society, will continue to do what we do best: look after our loved ones, our patients, and each other.

I hope to see you all at the XX WSSFN meeting in Chicago.

TRAVEL GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR XX WSSFN CONGRESS

See page 14 for more information.



Letter from the President

Dear colleagues,

As we start New 2024 year, the last calendar year of my WSSFN presidency, I want to summarize the memorable events our Society had in 2023 and introduce the upcoming events of 2024.

Early in 2023, we were celebrating the successful completion of our Biennial Congress that took place few months earlier in Incheon, South Korea, under leadership of WSSFN then-President Prof. **Jin Woo Chang**. That congress became a benchmark in the Society's progress demonstrating our resilience despite COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical challenges, airline strikes and weather-related disasters. The meeting in Korea set the tone for educational and other activities for the entire upcoming year. Subsequent to this, we continued the remarkable WSSFN agenda in multiple directions: through dedicated – and remarkably popular – webinars; the regional, national and international conferences; practical professional courses; joint activities with sister societies; and our ongoing educational and research initiatives.

WSSFN webinars were indeed a highlight of the year, and in 2023, we had three of them: in March, professors **Takaomi Taira** and **Shiro Horisawa** shared their views on neurosurgical treatment of task-specific focal dystonias; in June, our colleagues **Ido Strauss** of Israel and **Harith Akram** of UK discussed the use of neurosurgical ablative procedures for refractory cancer pain; and in November, professor **Mojgan Hodaie**, the current WSSFN Secretary, enlightened us on the imaging advances in facial pain (see detailed coverage of this webinar in the current Newsletter). With expert moderation of Dr. **Nico Enslin** of South Africa, each of these webinars has become a remarkable educational experience!

The 2023 year started with a joint virtual meeting of WSSFN and the High Field Systems and Applications Study Group of the International Society for Magnetic

Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) that we successfully held in January; this may become a recurring event that is expected to raise interest in use of high-field MR imaging among functional and stereotactic neurosurgeons, and full credit for the meeting organization and WSSFN involvement goes to prof. **Jean Regis**, the WSSFN Vice-President.

The series of large professional conferences and in-depth courses that took place in 2023 filled the year with multiple opportunities for networking and learning. Among many highlights, there were the Asian-Australasian (AASSFN) scientific meeting in Osaka in April, the Middle Eastern (MSSFN) conference in Cairo in May, and the European (ESSFN) congress in Stockholm in September. Two dedicated international courses were held in Zagreb in early May (under leadership of Dr. **Almahariq** of Croatia) and in Istanbul in the end of May, focusing on DBS and pain interventions (under Dr. **Atila Yilmaz**), with the latter one combining an amazing cadaver laboratory and stellar lineup of worldwide experts as the course faculty. A special highlight (featured in this newsletter) was the WSSFN Interim Meeting that took place in Dubai in November; it created new standard for all future interim meetings by bringing the entire world of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery into the region where the field is only starting to grow. Dr. **Faisal Al-Otaibi** and the members of organizing committee led by professors **Krauss** and **Hodaie** did an amazing job putting it all together!

And the last major neurosurgical event of the year was indeed the 18th World Congress of Neurosurgery in Cape Town, South Africa, in December. In addition to very impressive parallel sessions and seminars on stereotactic and functional neurosurgery, spasticity, surgery for psychiatric disorders, movement disorders, pain and neuromodulation, I had an honor to represent our subspecialty at the World Congress' plenary session where I spoke on "Building and Sustaining

a Career in Functional Neurosurgery" – perhaps shocking our colleagues from other neurosurgical subspecialties by detailed explanation of why stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in not only the most fascinating neurosurgical area, but also the most needed and most promising. The credit for the expert program to showcase WSSFN at the congress goes to Drs. **Ahmed Alkhani** (the head of SFN committee of WFNS), **Nico Enslin** (the local host) and **Graham Fieggen** (the Congress President).

In addition to all this, WSSFN continues to pursue its educational and research endeavors – with many initiatives, including an amazing Stereotactic Academy (led by prof. **Patric Blomstedt**, WSSFN Treasurer), our ever-growing in its impact journal **Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery**, and ongoing work of WSSFN committees (with three landmark publications highlighted in this Newsletter by the committee chairs, profs. **Joachim Krauss** and **Andres Lozano**, WSSFN Past Presidents).

All of this sets the stage for upcoming 2024, the year when we will see even more WSSFN growth and relevance. For those who are still putting together their travel and conference schedule, I want to make sure the main gatherings are included: these are the Brazilian (SBENF) congress in Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brasil, on May 1–4; the International Neuromodulation Congress in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on May 11–16; the American (ASSFN) congress in Nashville, Tennessee, on June 1–4; and the MAIN HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR – the **XX World Congress of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery in Chicago** on September 3–6, 2024.

I look forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones at these and many other professional gatherings and wish you all health and happiness in 2024!

Konstantin Slavin, MD
WSSFN President

THIS ISSUE NOW HAS CLICKABLE HYPERLINKS

XX World Congress of Stereotactic & Functional Neurosurgery

3-6 September 2024 | Chicago, USA

WSSFN XX WORLD CONGRESS GENERAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT DEADLINE IS **February 27, 2024**

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AND EXCELLENT TOPICS! | Travel Grants Available

Visit the meeting website at <http://www.wssfn2024.org>

[Register Here](#)



Why Attend WSSFN 2024?

Since 1961, the WSSFN has been regularly held and continues to be a leading neurosurgery conference. At the biennial meetings, the top leaders in the field present the most recent innovations in clinical and basic research, as well as new and effective ways to provide material support.

[About WSSFN](#)



We thank all the invited speakers for supporting us to make this meeting a fantastic success.



Faisal Al-Otaibi



Mojgan Hodaie



Konstantin Slavin



Andres Lozano



Joachim Krauss

Letter from the WSSFN Interim Meeting...

We were pleased to host the WSSFN interim meeting in beautiful Dubai on November 16-18, 2023. It is the first time in history that such a WSSFN meeting was conducted in the Middle East region. There were 523 participants, which exceeded the expectations for such an interim meeting. The participants mainly came from countries close to the region (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and India) but many also came from all over the world. The registration was sold out one week before the meeting. Two hundred and seventeen abstracts were received from different countries around the globe. The WSSFN awarded 27 travel grants.

The meeting included extensive educational activities with plenary sessions and three SMART rooms that allowed the delivery of focused hands-on reviews and sessions. The exhibition area was state-of-the-art, providing interaction between participants and the exhibitors to explore novel technologies and therapies in the field. The participants presented their scientific work in a digital easy to show E-Poster platform and discussed it with the faculty during the meeting.

The networking dinner brought all faculty members and participants together in one place. All enjoyed the traditional UAE dance performance and the lovely, heart-warming atmosphere.





The Unmet Needs WSSFN Trilogy Manuscripts

In 2015, we had a conversation about how we could increase the awareness and the visibility of both practical and scientific issues of our speciality stereotactic and functional neurosurgery. We thought that publishing manuscripts in widely read journals on defined subjects addressing the manifold of unmet needs would be a good option. We defined three projects concentrating on the following subjects: 1. challenges and future directions of deep brain stimulation, 2. technology of deep brain stimulation, and 3. technical aspects of deep brain stimulation.

We decided to gather a group of 10 to 14 experts in the field for each project consisting both of WSSFN key leaders and specialists from neurology, psychiatry, and neuroscience to work on defined topics and questions producing preliminary drafts which were then assembled. The respective authors would then meet to discuss the contributions and to finalize the manuscript.

The idea to produce a trilogy of manuscripts was approved by the officers and the board of directors of the WSSFN upon the occasion of the WSSFN Interim meeting in Mumbai in 2015. The meetings for the first two manuscripts took place in Barcelona in 2017 (see photo) and in 2019 and were supported by grants of

the WSSFN. The third in-person meeting could not take place because of the COVID-19 pandemic but was substituted by several zoom conferences.

The first manuscript - Deep brain stimulation: current challenges and future directions was published in 2019 in Nature Reviews Neurology, the second manuscript - Technology of deep brain stimulation: current status and future directions was published in 2021 in Nature Reviews Neurology, and the third one - Advances in technical aspects of deep brain stimulation surgery was just recently published in 2023 in our journal Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery. The role of the WSSFN was made generously visible in the acknowledgments.

We are glad to say that we reached our goals in making our topics, the unmet needs, and the role of the WSSFN more visible. The first two manuscripts are already on the way to become citation classics. According to Google Scholar, the first manuscript received 789 citations, and the second 335 citations thus far. On the website of Nature Reviews Neurology from October 8, 2023. It is stated that the first article - Deep brain stimulation: current challenges and future directions was in the 99th percentile (ranked 4,172nd) of the 446,306 tracked articles of a similar age in all journals,



WSSFN working dinner 2017 in Barcelona. From left to right: Jin Woo Chang, Andres Lozano, Cameron McIntyre, Hagai Bergman, Yasin Temel, Joachim K. Krauss, Claudia Schubert, Michael Schulder, Thomas Schläpfer.

and the 96th percentile (ranked 3rd) of the 53 tracked articles of a similar age in Nature Reviews Neurology. The second article – Technology of deep brain stimulation: current status and future directions was in the 98th percentile (ranked 6,421st) of the 519,127 tracked articles of a similar age in all journals, and the 93rd percentile (ranked 3rd) of the 29 tracked articles of a similar age in Nature Reviews Neurology.



JOACHIM K. KRAUSS
PAST PRESIDENT WSSFN CHAIR,
EDUCATION COMMITTEE



ANDRES M. LOZANO
PAST PRESIDENT WSSFN CHAIR,
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

We now plan to coordinate a new WSSFN trilogy series on hot topics providing cutting edge information for the community but also for a wider audience.

Lozano AM, Lipsman N, Bergman H, Brown P, Chabardes S, Chang JW, Matthews K, McIntyre CC, Schlaepfer TE, Schulder M, Temel Y, Volkmann J, Krauss JK: Deep brain stimulation: current challenges and future directions. Nature Reviews Neurology 15:148-160, 2019

Krauss JK, Lipsman N, Aziz T, Boutet A, Brown P, Chang JW, Davidson B, Grill WM, Hariz MI, Horn A, Schulder M, Mammis A, Tass PA, Volkmann J, Lozano AM: Technology of deep brain stimulation: current state and future directions. Nature Reviews Neurology 17:75-87, 2021.

Schulder M, Mishra A, Mammis A, Horn A, Boutet A, Blomstedt P, Chabardes S, Flouty O, Lozano AM, Neimat JS, Ponce F, Starr PA, Krauss JK, Hariz M, Chang JW: Advances in technical aspects of deep brain stimulation surgery. Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery 101:112-134, 2023.

... **SAVE THE DATE** ...

APFLIS  **2024**

Asian Pacific Society for Transcranial Focused
Ultrasound Surgery 2024



February 23(Fri.) - 24(Sat.), 2024

Severance Hospital, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea

Letter from the Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery Section at the WFNS 2023 meeting in Cape Town



DR. NICO ENSLIN
CONSULTANT NEUROSURGEON,
RED CROSS WAR MEMORIAL
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND
CONSTANTIABERG,
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN,
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

The 18th World Federation of Neurosurgery congress was held in Cape Town, South Africa this year, from 3-8 December. Cape Town brought her best attire for the world to see and enjoy, and the warm African summer offered a welcome relief from the cold and snow that the Northern Hemisphere is experiencing currently. We saw 1800 neurosurgeon delegates from all over the world join us for this first visit of the WFNS to sub-Saharan Africa.

When I was given half a chance to look after a part of the scientific program, I grabbed it with both hands, and together with the wonderful help and guidance from Moji Hodaie (secretary in the ExCo of WSSFN), and Ahmed Alkani (Chairman for the SFN committee in WFNS), we put together a mammoth program of functional neurosurgery at this year's WFNS congress.

Starting with a pre-congress workshop on pain surgery, where we focused on an overview of the armamentarium required to have a successful, well-rounded approach to managing refractory pain, with neuromodulation, lesioning procedures, as well as multi-disciplinary teams at hand. The world leaders in the field attended and made this an amazing opportunity for African delegates, and indeed delegates from all over the world to learn from Prof Kim Burchiel, Prof Marc Sindou, Prof Moji Hodaie, Prof Ahmed Alkani, Prof Ido Strauss, and Prof Harith Akram. Unfortunately, some of our invited speakers could not attend, but these experts certainly left no one wanting or opinions. In the hands-on segment Ido Strauss, Harith Akram and Nico Enslin showed the delegates some further techniques of stereotactic planning and navigation, stereotactic frame use and model-based technique of cordotomy with Ido and the team from Boston Scientific, Europe.

"We saw 1,800 neurosurgeon delegates from all over the world join us"





On the first day of the congress, we held a spasticity management and surgery seminar, where Prof Marc Sindou, Prof Ahmed Alkani, and Prof Nico Enslin provided talks on diagnosing, selecting, and treating patients with refractory spasticity with a wide range of techniques: Selective dorsal rhizotomy, selective peripheral neurotomy and intrathecal Baclofen therapy, and guidance on how to integrate this all in a practice in your hospital. In a developing country such as South Africa, and in fact the whole continent of Africa, there needs to be focus on helping the many patients with function-impairing spasticity.



The third day at the congress focused on movement disorders and psychiatric surgery, with the eloquent Prof Michael Schulder, and Prof Shiro Horisawa leading the discussion and inspiring all the attendees with the work that Shiro and Prof Taira has been doing for so many years in deep brain lesioning for movement disorders. It was clear from the rest of the topics at this congress that the world is excited about lesioning in the brain – largely brought on, I think, by the wider acceptance of high frequency ultrasound. I think one risk is that many, who has never made a lesion in the brain for functional neurosurgery, now see the opportunity to do so, and our society may need to play a larger role in assisting and mentoring here.

Plenary session talks were given by our president of the WSSFN Prof Konstantin Slavin on neuromodulation techniques for pain, and by Prof Moji Hodaie on advances in neuro-imaging and artificial intelligence in the diagnosis and management of pain. Prof Jocelyn Bloch and Prof Gregoire Courtin also made an impactful plenary talk on their work on re-animation surgery and brain-spinal – computer interfaces in the rehabilitation of patients after spinal cord injury. These spectacular talks were very well received in the greater congress, and we are very proud of our leaders who represented our super specialty in such an amazing way.

It was a very full schedule and the WSSFN members were kept busy with these daily sessions, but most also took the opportunity to enjoy the mountain, winelands, coastline and incredible hospitality and weather that South Africa has to offer.

In the welcoming ceremony my colleague Prof Tony Figaji, the scientific chair for this meeting, welcomed all to the “cradle of humankind”, a sort of return to the place where it all began for all of Homo Sapiens. “We all have some primal link with this country and indeed the continent in Africa”, he said. We certainly hope that all who attended this WFNS congress experienced a little bit of this African hospitality and will soon be back to South Africa for longer visits with their respective families.

In the days after the meeting my department hosted Jocelyn and Gregoire and held a seminar on spinal cord injury and rehabilitation, in which the two of them and some local faculty discussed the future of caring for spinal cord injured patients in Africa. We were very fortunate to include patients, orthopaedic surgeons, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and rehabilitation care teams in this seminar.

Thank you to each of the members of the WSSFN and WSSFN board who blessed us with their presence.



OCD Cures Depression



PROFESSOR PARESH DOSHI, MD
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
NEUROSCIENCES, JASLOK HOSPITAL,
MUMBAI, INDIA

In May 2018, the Mental Health Act which passed the year before, became effective in India. Due to some inadvertent oversight, this pushed the country back in the dark ages of surgery for psychiatric disorders.

Prior to the Act, neurosurgery for psychiatric disorders could be performed following approval from a panel of psychiatrists with or without approval from an institutional review board. The new Act,

introduced, through clause no. 96 (see below), new severe restrictions:

Clause 96: Restriction on psychosurgery for persons with mental illness

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, psychosurgery shall not be performed as a treatment for mental illness unless—

(a) the informed consent of the person on whom the surgery is being performed; and

(b) approval from the concerned Board to perform the surgery, has been obtained.

(2) The Central Authority may make regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this section.

We had to stop performing neurosurgery for psychiatric disorders as there was no “concerned Board” (ref. point (1) b above). The concerned board was to be the State Board to authorize the surgery. This is when the real ordeal started. I initiated the process of “educating” the Mental Health Department of the State regarding the importance of neurosurgery in psychiatric disorders. The first question I was asked was, how many cases are performed per year and how many cases will be performed subsequently after such a Board is formed? Unfortunately, these were a few single digits. From 2019 until 2022, I pursued the matter with the State for

the formation of the Board so that appropriate review and approvals can be obtained. I must have ended up writing dozens of letters and meeting all the officials concerned. By the middle of 2022, we had two patients with refractory depression and one patient with refractory OCD awaiting surgery. Despite submitting their entire case files several times, no decision was taken by the Mental Health Board (MHB) of the State. Ultimately, the MHB agreed to form a committee to review the cases. I was made a part of this committee; however, in the first meeting, the chairperson of the committee objected to my presence, despite bringing it to his notice that I am the best expert in the country on this matter. The committee could not form any guidelines and again, the delay process started.



Fig. 2: Happy patient after surgery (yellow scarf)

By this time I had lost my patience and I convinced one of the patient to file a legal case in the Mumbai High Court against the State for unnecessarily delaying his daughter's treatment. The case was filed on 19th December 2022, looking at its urgency, the judge approved a hearing before the Christmas break and passed an order against the Maharashtra State to urgently convene a Board to review the patient's case (Fig. 1). The MHA, once again called me to offer them guidance to write the guidelines to determine the patient's appropriateness for surgery. They were asked to refer to the guidelines which were already published (in 2019) in the Indian journal of psychiatry, co-authored and co-signed by more than 20 of the country's leading psychiatrists. I was the first author^[1]. The committee adopted these guidelines (temporarily) and granted the permission for surgery.

Subsequently, the Mental Health Authority of the state, formalized this adaptation of guidelines, by an expert committee formed along with me, to guide the State Board to adopt the guidelines for future cases.

Based on this, an Australian citizen underwent surgery for Depression. She obtained a rewarding result (Fig. 2) (<https://www.theweek.in/health/cover/2023/09/23/deep-brain-stimulation-surgery-sarah-reeves-defeating-depression.html>) This was the first case performed after the passage of the retrogressive Act. However, Maharashtra became the first Indian State to form this Board and grant permission. Karnataka, where our premier centre of Neurosciences and Mental Health is located, is likely to be the next State to form such Board.

This is how the OCD of one person helped to cure the depression of another!

[1] Doshi PK, Arumugham SS, Bhide A, Vaishya S, Desai A, Singh OP, Math SB, Gautam S, Satyanarayana Rao TS, Mohandas E, Srinivas D, Avasthi A, Grover S, Reddy YCJ. Indian guidelines on neurosurgical interventions in psychiatric disorders. Indian J Psychiatry. 2019 Jan-Feb;61(1):13-21.

doi: 10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_536_18. Erratum in: Indian J Psychiatry. 2019 MarApr;61(2):224. PMID: 30745649; PMCID: PMC6341921.

Health worsening due to OCD: Plea

Rosy.Squeira@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Seeking Thane Mental Health Review Board's "expeditious decision" on his application to allow deep brain stimulation (DBS) surgery for his 24-year-old daughter with treatment-resistant (OCD), a Hyderabad-based doctor said her health is consistently deteriorating and the surgery would "significantly improve her condition".

The HC directed the board to advance to Monday (Dec 26) its meeting to decide on the application. Justices Ramesh Dhauka and Mihind Sathave gave the direction when told that the board was to meet on January 4.

The father's petition says her OCD exacerbated during college life as she developed

HERE'S WHAT THE LAW SAYS...

The law: Under section 96 (1) of Mental Health Care Act, 2017, psychosurgery shall not be performed as treatment for mental illness unless informed consent of patient and approval of Board to perform surgery concerned are taken

The petition: Deep Brain Stimulation surgery entails focal, adjustable & reversible neuromodulation through implantation of electrodes that send electrical impulses to specific locations in the brain. It qualifies as a psychosurgery under the Act.

ken. He said, under the Act, the application must be decided in 90 days and the decision informed in five days.

Government pleader Priyabhushan Kakade said DBS surgery "involves draining of the brain or stimulation of the area where OCD is located". "There is no evidence such operations are successful," he pointed out.

Given the woman's "critical condition", the judges directed the meeting be held on December 26. They noted that Dr Doshi has successfully performed DBS surgeries six lesion surgeries and two DBS. "If the board is of the opinion that the limited surgery would be necessary, needful should be done at the earliest," the judges said, directing the decision to be communicated in five days.

strong dislike for certain people, institutions, language and started viewing them as contaminants. Despite treatment, there was no progress.

In July, the daughter moved to Mumbai. In August, the father consulted functional neurosurgeon Dr Paresch Doshi who referred her to psychiatrist Dr Amit Desai. On October 8, Dr Desai recommended DBS surgery. A day later, the father filed the application with the board.

Advocate for the woman's father, Rashmin Khandekar, said her consent had been taken.

Fig. 1: Times of India, reported the court case on 22, December 2022.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/citymumbai/she-has-isolated-self-in-a-flat-dad-of-girl-with-ocd/articleshow/96408955.cms>

Inauguration and First Educational Symposium of the Hong Kong Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (HKSSFN)



Group photo of all the participants at the Inauguration Ceremony



DR. TAK-IAP POON

PRESIDENT, HKSSFN; EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER, AASSFN; PRESIDENT, HONG KONG EPILEPSY SOCIETY (HKES); DEPUTY CHIEF OF SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF NEUROSURGERY, QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, HONG KONG

December 23, 2023 marked a significant milestone for stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in Hong Kong. Colleagues and specialists in this field gathered in person to celebrate the inauguration of the Hong Kong Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (HKSSFN). Our society's mission aligns with that of the WSSFN and other regional societies, serving as a platform in Hong Kong for the exchange of knowledge, facilitating academic collaboration across professional disciplines, and promoting training and research in this field.

We take pride in promoting the integration of cutting-edge technologies into our surgical treatment strategies. We are honoured to have Professor Takaomi Taira, retired Director of Functional Neurosurgery at Tokyo Women's Medical University, as our Honorary member, supporting the development of our society.

Our inaugural educational symposium featured discussions on the history of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in Hong Kong and Japan, basics in DBS surgery, lesioning surgery for dystonia, interventional pain procedures, and more. Esteemed experts from Japan, China, and Taiwan delivered insightful talks to our diverse audience, including young fellows, neurosurgical trainees, medical students, and scientific colleagues.

On behalf of the HKSSFN, we commit to supporting the ongoing development of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in Hong Kong. We eagerly look forward to connecting with our global friends in this field.



HKSSFN Council members – Dr. Teresa Tse, Dr. Ronald Li, Dr. Tak-Iap Poon, Dr. Danny Chan, Dr. Michael Lee and Dr. Jason Ho (from right to left)



Beer Toasting after the inauguration ceremony with Professor Shiro Horisawa, Dr. Danny Chan (Vice-President), Professor Takaomi Taira and me (from right to left)

History of the Brazilian Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (SBENF)

1896

PAOLO JOSETTI
performed a Gasserian
Ganglion Resection

The history of Brazilian functional neurosurgery goes back to 1896 when Paolo Josetti performed a gasserian ganglion resection for the treatment of trigeminal neuralgia; in 1903, when João Burnier and José Hungria Jr. performed periarterial sympathectomy for the treatment of causalgia; and in 1913, when Nascimento Gurgel performed peripheral neurectomies to treat spasticity.



VANESSA MILANESE, MD, PhD

BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF
NEUROSURGERY COMMUNICATION
DIRECTOR, SECRETARY DIRECTOR
OF THE BRAZILIAN SOCIETY OF
STEREOTACTIC AND FUNCTIONAL
NEUROSURGERY, FUNCTIONAL
NEUROSURGEON AT BENEFICÊNCIA
PORTUGUESA OF SÃO PAULO HOSPITAL,
BRAZIL; ADJUNCT ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR OF NEUROSURGERY AT
MAYO CLINIC FLORIDA, USA

1957

**BRAZILIAN SOCIETY
OF NEUROSURGERY
(SBN) was founded on
26 of July, 1957**

The Brazilian Society of Neurosurgery (SBN) was founded on 26 July 1957 by the twelve Brazilian neurosurgeons who attended the first International Congress of Neurological Surgeons in Brussels, Belgium and became affiliated to the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies in the same year. Some of these pioneers had particular interest in functional neurosurgery.

1980

**BRAZILIAN SOCIETY
FOR STEREOTACTIC AND
FUNCTIONAL
NEUROSURGERY
was founded**

THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW SOCIETY

It was on Tuesday, September 16, 1980, during the XIII Brazilian Congress of Neurosurgery (CBN), held in the city of Guarapari, Espírito Santo state, that Dr Carlos Telles called a meeting to found the Brazilian Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (SBENF).

The following were present at this meeting: Dr Carlos Telles, Dr Renato Barbosa, Dr Otoid Pinheiro, Dr Raul Marino Junior, Dr Alceu Correa, Dr Jorge Roberto Pagura, Dr Delfim da Silva Nunes Neto, Dr Nilton Luiz Latuf, Dr Bernardo Antonio Montinho Couto, Dr Gianne Aurelio Temponi, Dr Djacir Gurgel de Figueiredo, Dr Sergio Ottoni,



Dr Carlos Telles

Dr Telmo Tonetto Reis, Dr Manoel Jacobsen Teixeira, Dr José de Araújo Barros, Dr Luiz Fernando Martins, Dr José Vitor, Dr Pedro Motta, Dr Lourenço de Freitas Neto, Dr Blaine Nashold and Dr Hitchcock. All the participants and members suggested by them were considered founding members. In this meeting, Dr Renato Barbosa, considered the father of Brazilian Stereotactic Neurosurgery, was elected president; Dr Raul Marino Junior, who inaugurated the first integrated multidisciplinary stereotactic and functional neurosurgery at the University of São Paulo Medical School, was elected vice-president, and Dr Carlos Telles, general secretary.

1987

**First CBENF meeting
took place**

2024

**16th CBENF meeting
will take place in May**

continued on page 13

History of the Brazilian Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (SBENF) continued



Dr Daniel Benzecry, Dr Osvaldo Vilela, (past SBENF president 2006-2007), Dr Raul Marino Junior, (the first SBENF vice-president and past president 1982-1983), and Dr Murilo Menezes during the book signing of the "Tratado de Neurocirurgia Funcional e Estereotáxica" at the 20th Brazilian Congress of Updates in Neurosurgery in 2022.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

In 1987, the first Brazilian Congress of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (CBENF) took place. It has been held every two years since. The 16th Brazilian Congress of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery will take place in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina from May 1st to May 4th, 2024 (<https://www.cbenf.com>).



General SBENF assembly of associate members during the 15th Congress of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery in 2022: Drs Rodrigo Labruna, Jorge Pagura (past SBENF president 2000-2001, SLANFE vice-president and president elected 2025-2026), Eduardo Quaggio, Soraya Cecílio, Alexandre Novicki (past SBENF president 2011-2012), Meire Lopes, Leonardo Takahashi, Arthur Cuckiert (past SBENF president 2013-2014), Ana Moura, Alessandra Moura, Alexandro Galassi, Edvaldo Cardoso, Antônio Nogueira (past SBENF president 2019-2020), Yuri Souza, Alexandre Amaral (SBENF vice-president and president elected 2025-2026), Carla Ceres, José Osvaldo de Oliveira Júnior (past SBENF president 2021-2022), André Costa, Rômulo Marques, Sérgio Barata, Benedito Amorim, Vanessa Milanese, Arthur Ungaretti Júnior, Osvaldo Vilela, Wulker Knoner (SBENF president 2023-2024).

THE SPEAKERS

DOCTOR MOJGAN HODAIE

Professor in the Department of Surgery, University of Toronto and the Greg Wilkins-Barrick Chair in International Surgery at the University Health Network.



WEBINAR #18

Imaging advances in facial pain



by Dr. Mojgan Hodaie
7th November, 2023

In this Webinar, Professor Hodaie described the role of advanced imaging techniques in understanding facial pain, with a focus on trigeminal neuralgia. The session addressed recent technical advancements in imaging and their impact on revealing nerve and brain related abnormalities. Professor Hodaie examined emerging therapeutic strategies and their relevance to the surgical management of facial pain.

This and other recorded webinars are available to WSSFN members on <https://www.wssfn.org/webinars>

TRAVEL GRANTS

available for the **WSSFN XX World Congress**
to be held in **Chicago, USA, Sept 3-6, 2024**

The World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery is offering travel grants towards the cost of travel and accommodation for young neurosurgeons who wish to participate in the WSSFN World Congress to be held in Chicago, USA, September 3-6, 2024.

Grants range between USD 1,000 to 2,000 depending on the geographical location of the applicant and in consideration of traveled distance.

Travel Grant application form is available inside the abstract submission form, and must be submitted together. See meeting website at www.wssfn2024.org for guidelines.

Abstracts submission deadline is Tuesday, February 27, 2024.

In Remembrance...



DONLIN M. LONG, MD, PHD 1934-2023

Don Long, a pioneer in neuromodulation and treatment of pain, as well as a master neurosurgeon, passed away suddenly on September 19, at the age of 89, while fly fishing near a vacation home in Pennsylvania, USA.

Dr Long came to Johns Hopkins to chair the newly established Department of Neurosurgery in 1973, having completed his undergraduate and MD degrees, followed by a PhD in neuroanatomy, and residency training in neurosurgery all at the University of Missouri, USA. As a faculty member in Minnesota, USA, he reported the earliest series of implanted peripheral nerve stimulators, the earliest transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) devices, and early experience with spinal cord stimulation (SCS) [1,2]. At Johns Hopkins, he began a collaboration with the Applied Physics Laboratory, using technology adapted

from space satellite power and telemetry systems to develop the first rechargeable, implantable pulse generator as well as the first programmable, implantable medication infusion system [3]. He created a clinical program in neuromodulation, which offered the first use of percutaneous SCS electrodes for permanent implantation in 1977, and went on to publish decades of clinical follow-up, new clinical trials, and technical innovations [3]. In parallel, he co-founded a multidisciplinary pain treatment program to which neurosurgery was one of several contributors, establishing modern principles of pain management [4].

A master surgeon, he made every operation look straightforward (a word he used often), inspiring and training practitioners and leaders in all areas of neurosurgery (spinal, paediatric, etc.) and developing multispecialty programs not only in clinical practice but also in research. He taught "evidence-based medicine" before it was in vogue, and he hosted a monthly Journal Club at his home for many years, broadening trainees' views and serving as an inspiring role model. Likewise, before the term "diversity" entered common parlance, he incorporated its principles in his neurosurgical training program. He had broad interests in educational theory and philosophy which he developed and shared with the neurosurgical community [5].

It was Dr Long's good fortune and ours that he remained healthy and vigorous throughout his life and that he left us whilst doing something he enjoyed. More than anything, he enjoyed doing and teaching neurosurgery. He conveyed this spirit to many fortunate trainees and colleagues, and this will live on.

RICHARD B. NORTH, MD

Professor of Neurosurgery, Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine (retired)
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD

1 Long D. Electrical stimulation for relief of pain from chronic nerve injury. *J Neurosurg.* 1973; 39(6):718-722.

2 Long D, Hagfors N., Electrical stimulation in the nervous system: the current status of electrical stimulation of the nervous system for relief of pain. *Pain.* 1975; 1(2):109-123.

3 North RB, Prager, J: History of spinal cord stimulation. In: Krames E, Peckman PH, Rezai A (eds.), *Neuromodulation*, 2nd edition. Amsterdam, Elsevier, 587-596, 2018.

4 Long DM. Conquering pain. *Neurosurgery.* 2000; Feb;46(2):257-9. doi: 10.1097/00006123-200002000-00001.

5 Long DM, Apuzzo MI. Sine qua non: the formulation of a theory of neurosurgery. *Neurosurgery.* 2001; Sep;49(3):567-71; doi: 10.1097/00006123-200109000-00003.

In Remembrance...



DR ABEL PASQUALINI, MD 1983-2023
Neurosurgeon at Hospital Militar Central, Argentina

On December 6, Dr Abel Pasqualini passed away in a surprising, unexpected, and untimely manner at the age of 40.

Those of us who have had the opportunity to get to know him and work together can testify to his leadership credentials and his keenness to support and achieve group unity. This, without a doubt, had made him unique and different. His involvement with the armed forces from a young age and his military training (he was an army Lieutenant) contributed to his personality and to his leadership style, loyalty, and camaraderie.

He embraced functional neurosurgery from his first foray in neurosurgical training, achieving a level of expertise that made him into an authority in the field.

With the same enthusiasm and passion, he divided up his time between his medical practice, his friends, and his two great affections: football and his beloved River Plate Football Club.

Without a doubt, his unexpected departure causes us a lacerating and deep pain, but his love for his profession and his affections, his strength, his unbreakable spirit, and his eternal smile will continue to be an inspiration for us all who have had the fortune to know him.

DR FABIÁN PIEDIMONTE MD, FIPP
Neurosurgeon, University of Buenos Aires



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WSSFN Winter 2024 Newsletter

LIST OF MEETINGS

SBENF | May 1-4, 2024 Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil

INS | May 11-16, 2024 Vancouver, Canada

ASSFN | June 1-4, 2024 Nashville, TN

WSSFN | September 3-6, 2024 Chicago, IL

