



Editorial

WSRM—Your Global Gateway to Reconstructive Microsurgery

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As we navigate the fits and starts of our emergence from this never ending coronavirus disease (COVID) pandemic, it is fitting that we pause to reflect on where we've been for the past two years and where we are going. Organizations have had to modify their methods of doing business, to design “workable” alternatives for communicating. In one sense, these efforts have been very successful, and we have not only learned how to do things differently, but some of the COVID-inspired innovations have survived as mainstream adjuncts to our professional meeting models. Yet, while Zoom and other media venues have shepherded us through a very challenging period, there is nothing quite like conducting one's business in person... On my way home from the recent World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (WSRM) meeting in Cancun, chaired by Dr. Eric Santamaria (my first trip abroad in over two years), I reflected on the marvelous complexities of the in-person experience. After countless online meetings, it felt so refreshing to converse face-to-face engaging the subtleties of three-dimensional dialogue (if even through a mask). We reacquainted ourselves with old colleagues, met new ones, shared stories, proffered opinions, floated new ideas, and learned on many levels.

The world has changed. We've all made adjustments and continue to do so to adapt to the constant emergence of new virus strains. Amidst all this chaos, however, one thing has remained certain, the specialty of microsurgery thrives and continues to exert its influence and importance throughout the surgical specialties. Of the microsurgical societies, the WSRM has weathered the pandemic storm in good form. Even during the recent shutdowns, a growing body of young microsurgeons from around the globe has sought out the WSRM as their gateway to the international microsurgical community. As the current president of WSRM, I would like to acquaint you with a brief history of the organization, why WSRM is important to the global microsurgery community, and to give you an update of the goings on in the society.

WSRM was the result of the merging of two international microsurgical organizations, the International Microsurgical Society (IMS) and the International Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (ISRM) in 1999. Its mission is “*aimed to stimulate and advance knowledge of the science and art of Microsurgery and to provide an international forum for the exchange of ideas.*” The first meeting of WSRM was held in Taipei, Taiwan on October 31 to November 3, 2001, under the leadership of Professor Fu-Chan Wei. Despite its proximity to 9/11, the meeting was well-attended and bustling with innovation and excitement proselytizing the potential applications of microsurgery in reconstruction and stimulating a future generation of microsurgeons. Can you imagine, the audiovisual format at that time was slides and carousels—how times have changed! We have come a long way since that inaugural meeting. With the exception of our 2021 meeting (moved to 2022 because of COVID), WSRM has met biennially registering nearly exponential growth in the number of attendees with each meeting.

WSRM has been fortunate to have among its ranks renowned leaders in the field who have shepherded the society to its current prominence. The society has grown considerably over the past 21 years and currently serves over 466 active members from 50 countries. Beyond its Biennial Congress, WSRM also conducts selected programs and specialty symposia at many national scientific meetings around the globe. Upcoming scheduled WSRM programs include the ESPRAS meeting in Porto, Portugal (October 5–7, 2022) and the ASRM meeting in Miami, Florida (January 20–24, 2023). As part of its educational initiative, the Society hosts two online symposia on special topics during each year and will initiate its first visiting professorship in January 2023.

During these pandemic years, there has been plenty of “down time” providing ample opportunity for analysis and reflection. In this context, WSRM has also reflected on its

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mission and purpose as a microsurgical organization. Considering all the plastic, orthopaedic, otolaryngologic, and microsurgical societies around the world begs the question as to why is membership in WSRM important? The clear and obvious reason is that most regional and national organizations are just that, regional and national. WSRM is a global microsurgical organization that has its fingers on the pulse of the specialty, its international leaders, and innovators. It brings together the global body of microsurgeons to codify their collective knowledge and experience into an agreed standard of practice and care in the discipline of reconstructive microsurgery and complex reconstruction. Through its Biennial Congress, symposia, panels, and media presentations, WSRM provides for its members the opportunity to share and learn about new research, comprehensive reviews, and the best practices in the field from the recognized leaders in the field. Importantly, WSRM provides to underserved scientific societies, health care agencies, academic institutions, surgeons, and students at all levels access to its vast resources for continuing education, guidance, and program development.

Recently, WSRM has implemented several changes in its organization to enhance the value of society membership. We are currently updating our Web site to include an educational forum for members to post challenging reconstructive cases for input and to provide links to online continuing education. In January 2023, we are excited to initiate the WSRM Visiting Professorship. Two WSRM members will be selected by committee to serve. WSRM will provide transportation costs and the host institution will provide for housing and meals. The visiting professorship promises to enhance our outreach, and particularly to underserved areas in the international community. Institutions interested in hosting a WSRM Visiting Professor can apply online through the WSRM Web site: www.WSRM.net. In December 2022, WSRM will launch its online Master Series Symposia in Microsurgery where topics of special interest to the membership will be addressed in comprehensive detail.

A second symposium is scheduled for the Spring. These educational programs will be free to WSRM members and residents/fellows in training and available at a nominal fee to nonmember surgeons and other health care professionals.

Over the past several years, there has been a growing interest among women members of WSRM to have a formal platform for their representation. At the recent WSRM Council meeting in Cancun, we voted to establish a “*Women in Microsurgery*” committee chaired by Dr. Sinikka Suominen. This standing committee is tasked with organizing panels and social programs focused on promoting women in microsurgery and to provide a mentoring resource for women microsurgeons around the world. Going forward, we hope this initiative will encourage more women who have an interest in microsurgery to come forward and become involved in our organization.

We are now in full planning mode for the 2023 WSRM Congress to be held in beautiful Singapore, August 17–19, 2023. Under the capable direction of hosts, Drs. Ong Yee Siang and Adrian Ooi, the meeting promises to be nothing less than outstanding. For the first time, a cadaver anatomy laboratory will be offered as a premeeting course to provide attendees a hands-on review of traditional microsurgical flap techniques and to introduce new microsurgical flaps and techniques taught by leading experts. We are excited about how this meeting planning is evolving and look forward to another memorable immersion into the great realm of reconstructive microsurgery at WSRM 2023.

For more information on WSRM, please visit our Web site at www.WSRM.net.

I invite you to sign up for any of our upcoming meeting panels or educational symposia and hope to see you in Singapore at WSRM 2023.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.