

History of the WASOG and current activities

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The World Association for Sarcoidosis and Other Granulomatous Disorders (WASOG) was founded on the September 7, 1987 in Milan, Italy, during the World Congress for Sarcoidosis (held in Milan), with a Deed of Constitution by Public Notary P. Guzzetti (Notarial File 8048, Serial 616). The Founder Members were G. James (President), G. Rizzato (General Secretary and Treasurer), A. Blasi, J. Chretien, Y. Hosoda, T. Izumi, W. Jones Williams, G. Semenzato, O.P. Sharma and A. Teirstein. The deed of constitution and original statutes have been previously

published [1]. The Statutes were changed at the time of the Kumamoto World Congress (in Japan) and the current By-Laws are also published (Public Notary L. Guarnieri, Milan, Italy) [2].

At the time of the Milan Congress, the Journal *Sarcoidosis* (two issues per year) became the official voice of the WASOG. Over the years, its scientific level has improved. As a result, in November 1993 it was included in *Current Contents/Clinical Medicine*, and in October 1994 the Journal received coverage in *Index Medicus/Medline*. Its inclusion in these major databases induced many authors to submit articles on various subjects and it soon became clear that the title of the Journal was no longer appropriate for its content as many articles were concerning interstitial lung diseases other than sarcoidosis. Consequently in 1996, after a resolution taken at the time of the London World Congress (UK, 1995), its name was changed to *Sarcoidosis, Vasculitis and Diffuse Lung Diseases*. The flourishing of this Journal during the last few years, thanks to the hard work of the current Editor in Chief G. Semenzato and the current Associate Editor C. Agostini, is demonstrated by the growth of the impact factor. Since the start of 2000, the periodicity has passed from two to three issues per year. The Journal is currently (April 2005) ranked eighth in the specialist list of respiratory journals, given by the Institute of Scientific Information (Stamford, CT, USA). However, if four Journals of basic research, molecular biology, physiology and thoracic surgery are not considered, the Journal is ranked fourth, just a notch below *Chest*.

What is the interest of the WASOG members? Internal Medicine has given birth to a number of sons and daughters (cardiology, gastroenterology, *etc.*, and among them pneumology), and now their sons and daughters are giving birth to independent grandsons and grand-daughters; cardiology has delivered electrophysiology and others; gastroenterology has delivered hepatology and others, each one with their own experts, journals and congresses. Pneumology is delivering physiopathology, bronchology, thoracic oncology, *etc.* What is our position? Many interstitial lung diseases (*e.g.* rheumatoid arthritis) are part of a larger systemic problem, where the lung may be a minor target; others (*e.g.* idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis) are nearly exclusively a lung problem from the beginning. Thus, the future lies as a branch midway between

pneumology and internal medicine, but it is clear that currently the WASOG has its own experts, Journal, society and patients.

What about the activities of the society? When G. James organised the first congress of the sarcoidosis movement in London, UK (1958), there were 22 participants from eight countries. In a few years, the delegates of the congresses had reached 400. The WASOG members are now ~300 from 30 different countries. The WASOG World Congress is held every 3 yrs; the next will be in Denver, CO, USA, in June 2005 (organisers: L. Newman and R. Baughman), and in Athens, Greece, June 2008 (endorsed by the Hellenic Lung Society; organiser: S. Constantopoulos). The topics of the Congresses reflect the interest of the WASOG members to extend the scientific programme to all the interstitial lung diseases, but the final programme is still in the hands of the organiser. A look to the Denver programme shows that the major topic will be sarcoidosis. However, this will probably not be the case for the Athens Congress. In addition, the WASOG has started a series of international congresses on diffuse lung diseases; the first congress was held in Venice, Italy (organiser: M.G. Bocchieri) in June 2001, the second was held in Siena (organiser: P. Rottoli), Italy, November 2003, and the third will be held in Catania, Italy, June 2006 (organiser: N. Crimi).

The activities of the WASOG are directed by an Executive Committee of 16 Members. Current Officers are O.P. Sharma (President), B. Baughman (vice-president for the USA), U. Costabel (vice-president for Europe), S. Nagai (vice-president for Asia/Pacific), G. Rizzato (General Secretary) and G. Semenzato (Treasurer). For those interested in more information on the WASOG, the website (in the hands of C. Agostini) is available [3]. According to new bylaws, the association has its registered office at the address of the Treasurer. Thus, the current official address is that of G. Semenzato, Università degli Studi di Padova, Via Giustiniani 2, 35128 Padova, Italy (g.semenzato@unipd.it).

References

1. Guzzetti P. Deed of constitution and statutes of WASOG. *Sarcoidosis* 1988; 5: 83–85.
2. Guarnieri L. WASOG bye-laws. *Sarcoidosis Vasc Diffuse Lung Dis* 2001; 18: 203–204.
3. Agostini C. WASOG website. <http://www.pinali.unipd.it/sarcoid>. Date last updated: May 2005; Date last accessed: 12 July 2005.