



Spine Society of Australia first business meeting

Venue: Sofitel Wentworth Hotel, Sydney

Date / time: 29 April 2006, 5.30 p.m.

1.0 Present: Ian Farey (President), Peter McCombe (Secretary) and 46 other members in the attendance book.

2.0 Apologies: Kevin Singer and Dr Simon Hadlow

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting: It was moved that the Minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as a true and accurate record of the Business Meeting held at Auckland in April 2005.

Proposed: Gordon Howie

Seconded: Gary Speck

The motion was passed unanimously.

4.0 Business arising from previous minutes:

4.1 Affiliation with the RACS

Ian Farey reported on a meeting with the President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (Dr Russell Stitz) that occurred on 18 October 2005. The matters discussed were forming some form of closer affiliation with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. At the very least it was suggested that a pathway of communication be established so that any requests to the Royal Australian college of Surgeons for information or action items to do with spine surgery could at least be passed to the Spine Society of Australia as well as to the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia and the Australian Orthopaedic Association. After due deliberation, the College of Surgeons replied in a letter dated 26 April 2006. The College in principle agreed that some form of closer liaison was appropriate, though the details were unclear. The College had interest in developing post fellowship training and felt that the Spine Society may have some role to play. In the meantime the College agreed that a line of communication would be established to pass on matters to do with spine surgery to the Spine Society of Australia as well as to the Australian Orthopaedic Association and the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia. Graeme Brazenor felt that it was important that the College be aware that all members were not fellows of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Dr Farey stated that the College had been made aware of this fact and was

not unhappy. Matthew Scott-Young felt that the Spine Society of Australia should have a role to play in post fellowship training.

4.2 Secretariat

Peter McCombe reported that with the extra workload the Society was taking on board, the secretarial position was becoming somewhat onerous. The Executive had considered moving towards a paid secretariat, possibly to be housed within the College of Surgeons building. The cost of this would be \$35,000 per annum, which at present was felt to be more than the Society would be prepared to pay. However, strategically this would be where the Society wished to be headed. As an alternative means, Dr Orso Osti suggested that the secretary be paid for some services. Rob Moore stated that the secretariat in Adelaide did not at this stage feel stressed. Adrian Nowitzke spoke and supported the need for a paid secretariat. Nik Bogduk supported paying the secretary and that a paid secretariat may lose control of the Society's business and he supported maintaining control by the office holder. Graeme Brazenor also felt that it was important for the secretary to remain in control. Rob Fraser suggested that the secretary should continue to maintain control. Professor Taylor felt that it was the role of the Executive to decide the matter.

4.3 Website

Peter McCombe reported that the website was up and running with a new graphic appearance and most of the programming work had been completed. Further development was needed in a number of areas. Ian Farey offered congratulations from the chair on the development of the website and a general vote of thanks to Dr Peter McCombe was passed. Ian Farey stressed the need for members to keep their email addresses up to date and to use the website as a means of getting views across.

5.2 Differential Subscriptions

It was reported to the meeting that the executive had suggested there was a need to increase fees to cover the increasing costs of services. In general the society now had to pay for more services. There was at least one executive meeting outside the annual general meeting, which entailed travel expenses, expenses had been incurred in the development of the website, and that the society now had a paid bookkeeper and a paid accountant as well as a paid auditor. Given the fact that there was some move in the future to pay for some form of secretarial services, the executive had suggested that clinical membership fees be raised from \$100 to \$300. Bill Sears raised the issue that whilst the financial record to the end of 2005 showed that the society was in a sound financial position, this did not reflect the significant expenses borne since the end of the 2004/2005 financial year. Brian Ashman did point out the society had \$2,000 in cash. Ian Farey said that in the future the conference dinner may not be sponsored and this may take a

substantial portion of the profit from the annual general meeting, and he felt that the interest on this sum of money may be required in other areas.

Orso Osti proposed a motion that the fees be raised to \$200. This was seconded by Brian Ashman.

The motion was carried by a majority count.

5.3 Disc Replacement Audit

Bruce McPhee had been working on an audit proposal. He suggested that it was probable that the government would eventually help fund a register for disc arthroplasty. The executive had proposed an ad hoc committee with Bruce McPhee to be the chairman and Dr McPhee was going to develop an audit program for disc arthroplasty.

5.0 Reports from committees

5.1 Rules Committee

Nothing to report

5.2 Scientific Program Committee

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Bruce McPhee reported that there were a record number of papers and that a significant number had to be turned down. The earlier closing date made it much easier this year to formulate a substantial program. Dr McPhee stated that the disc replacement section of the program had become a little commercial and there needed to be some control placed on industry. He reported that 56 papers had been accepted and there were eight requested papers. Two out of three papers submitted were accepted. Dr McPhee suggested that in the future it may be possible to reduce the time for presentations and this may increase the number of papers that could be accepted. The website online submission was used for the first time and it needed some tidying up. Peter McCombe reported that this was in process and the recent website submission was used as a test case. Dr McPhee reported that the general quality of abstract had improved and that some statistical guidelines were needed. As Professor McPhee was retiring from this position, a vote of thanks was moved by Ian Farey. Ian Farey noted the strong support that Professor McPhee had given the Society over the last three years. The vote was carried unanimously.

Rob Moore commented that he felt there were too many international speakers on the program and too many industry based presentations, and that more time needed to be given to local speakers. There was a general view that more formal disclosures of conflict of interest were required. The motion was put that the Spine Society adopt the policy of having mandatory disclosures of conflict of interest on submission of

abstracts. The motion was proposed by Ian Torode and seconded by Orso Osti. The motion was passed unanimously.

5.3 Site Committee

5.3.1 Report

Peter Wild reported that the Site Committee had confirmed Hobart for the Annual General Meeting in 2007. He proposed Adelaide for the 2008 meeting, and suggested either Darwin or Perth for the meeting in 2009. There was a general view that the dates of the meetings need to be published in advance and he suggested that the Society settle upon a date such as the last day in April every year. There was general agreement that this be adopted. (A subsequent executive decision has been taken to shift this to the second last weekend in April on the basis of a clash with Anzac day and a website vote of members felt they would wish to avoid having the meeting on Anzac Day.)

5.4 Membership Committee

Dr Gordon Howie reported that there had been eight applications for membership and that all applicants passed the Society's requirements for membership. The following were proposed:

1. Dr Matthew Scott-Young for transfer of membership from associate membership to active membership.
2. Dr Jon Ford for active membership.
3. Dr Angus Gray, Neurosurgeon, for active membership.
4. Mr Tiew Han, Neurosurgeon, for active membership.
5. Dr Greg Finch, Orthopaedic Surgeon, for active membership.
6. Dr Warwick Stening, Neurosurgeon, for active membership.
7. Dr Reza Zarrinkalam, Scientist, for active membership.
8. Dr Yoshio Shimamura, Orthopaedic Surgeon, for corresponding membership.

6.0 Reports from subcommittees

6.1 Screening Procedure on Spinal Disease and Disorder

Professor Taylor reported that the committee had been active, that the Spine Care Foundation website had had 40,000 hits. Due to various reasons the Spine Care Foundation had been dissolved and the new organisation was that of Scoliosis Australia. The executive reported that the Spine Society of Australia had agreed to fund the mail-out to all schools in Australia directing parents to the Scoliosis Australia website for the second year. Following this, Professor Taylor felt that alternative funding could be obtained.

Rob Fraser moved a vote of thanks to Professor Taylor for his work on this committee.

6.2 DePuy Spinal Fellowship

Ian Farey reported that the Society was in danger of losing this investment. DePuy Australia expressed some concern that its funding was being used for research projects that had little to do with its core business of spinal surgery. Dr Farey had significant negotiations with DePuy Australia and it was finally agreed that the \$50,000 donated on an annual basis be split between a \$35,000 research fellowship grant and a \$15,000 travelling fellowship. The \$35,000 grant was to be strengthened somewhat, and that applications for the research grant needed either to be clinical papers to do with spine surgery or if a scientific paper that there be some obvious relationship to spine surgery. The travelling fellowship grant was to be made available for young surgeons to travel to significant overseas meetings or to travel to other centres to view techniques.

7.0 Spinal Research award

Determined at the end of the program.

(Winner of Spinal Research Award – Dr Neil Broom, Dr Celina Pezewicz and Dr Peter Robinson for a paper entitled “*Mechanisms of annular failure resulting from excessive discal pressure: a microstructural-micromechanical investigation*”)

8.0 Rob Johnston Award

To be determined at the end of the program.

9.0 Medtronic Sofamor Danek award for best paper

Determined at the end of the program.

(Medtronic Sofamor Danek best presentation award was to Ashish Diwan for a paper entitled “*Effects of OP-1 device on a posterolateral intertransverse spinal fusion model in osteoporotic rats*”)

10.0 Election of nominating committee

Nigel Jones nominated Gary Speck and Rob Moore to be the other members of the Nominating Committee. Both members were elected by unanimous vote.

11.0 Correspondence

Note is made that the Society wrote a letter to the Medical Services Advisory Committee in reply to a request to nominate members of an advisory committee for the purposes of examining non-fusion stabilisation devices. The Society recommended Ian Farey, Roy Carey and Charles New.

12.0 New Business:

12.1 Accreditation of spinal fellowships

Ian Farey pointed out that the Society was keen to accredit surgical and non-surgical fellowships. Bruce McPhee stated that this sits with request for input from the College, and also pointed

out the Australian Orthopaedic Association refuses to accredit any fellowship that has company funding. As the majority of spine fellowships in Australia have some form of company funding this is impractical. Proposed documentation for accreditation of spinal fellowships has been posted on the website. Professor Taylor stated that it was vital that the Society accredited fellowships. Michelle Atkinson asked why the Australian Orthopaedic Association could not accredit at least orthopaedic fellowships and the main reason being the failure to accredit company sponsored fellowships.

A motion was put that the Spine Society of Australia moves to accredit post-training fellowships, both clinical and non-clinical.

Proposed: Dr Gary Speck

Seconded: Dr Michelle Atkinson

The motion was passed unanimously.

Meeting closed at: 6.05 pm