



A.S.S.I. NEWS



FROM THE **SECRETARY'S DESK**

Dear Colleague,

Spine surgery an emerging subspecialty is making huge strides universally and India is no exception. With 79 new members ratified as life members of the Association of Spine Surgeons' of India, we are soon becoming one of the larger national bodies of Spine Surgeons internationally.

It is time for us to introspect and try and improve this association to achieve more for all of us. I am forwarding a few documents for your perusal and response.

1. **A.S.S.I. personal information update form:** Please send your complete and latest information for a directory planned in the near future.
2. **A.S.S.I. registration form:** This form is for a colleague of yours who may be interested in joining the ASSI but is unable to download if from assweb.org
3. **A.S.S.I. Constitution:** This is being forwarded for you to suggest changes which can be implemented after discussion at the Extraordinary General Body Meeting at ICS - 2008 at Shimla. Please send your suggestions on orthoram@vsnl.com, so that the committee for constitutional amendments can look into it.
4. **Minutes of the AGBM held on January 19th, 2008 at Coimbatore:** Please go through the minutes and make your suggestions. Please participate in making the A.S.S.I. research projects on "tuberculosis (abhaynene@yahoo.com), trauma (issicon@isiconline.org) and non-specific backache (spine_clinic@rediffmail.com)" a success. Your inputs by email are most welcome to Dr. Abhay Nene, Dr. H.S. Chhabra and Dr. Shekhar Bhojraj respectively.

5. **Information about the Dartmouth fellowship:** Please send in your applications by the end of February 2008. The selected fellow should have a US Visa for travel ready and should give a written report on his return to India.

6. **Report of the A.S.S.I. - Depuy traveling fellows for 2007:** Dr. Manish Chadha and Dr. Sree Harsha C.K. submitted a report on their two week fellowship which I hope increases the interest of the younger generation in applying for the fellowship.

I am sure you will participate whole heartedly in the events of the A.S.S.I. in future.

- **ICS - 2008, Shimla — August 7-10th, 2008 :**
Dr. Shankar Acharya
- **SRS regional meet — October 2-5th, 2008 :**
Dr. Arvind Jayaswal
- **ASSICON - 2009, Chennai — January 2009 :**
Dr. Sajan Hegde
- **ICS - 2009, Khajurao — August 2009 :** Dr. Jitendra Jamdar
- **ASSICON - 2010, Nagpur — January 2010 :**
Dr. Sajal Mitra

Please feel free to respond by mail or in person.

Best regards,

(Ram Chaddha)
January 28, 2008

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Minutes Of The Annual General Body Meeting Of The Association Of Spine Surgeons Of India Held At Coimbatore, Ganga Hospital Auditorium, On Saturday, January 19th 2008

The meeting was attended by the members of the A.S.S.I. as per register. Dr. Arvind Jayaswal, President was in the chair and called the meeting to order.

1. **Condolences:** There were no condolences for 2007-08.

2. **Minutes of past GBM:** The minutes of the last Annual General Body Meeting of the A.S.S.I. held at Ahmedabad, January 27th, 2007 were passed, proposed by Dr. J. Jamdar, seconded by Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar. The minutes of the Extra-ordinary General Body Meeting held at Goa, on August 11th, 2007 at Marriott Hotel were passed, proposed by Dr. Sajan Hegde and seconded by Dr. Rajesh Sharma.

3. **Secretarial Report:** Dr. Ram Chaddha, Secretary cum Treasurer, presented the Secretarial Report for 2007-08. The salient features were:

- 79 new applicants for life membership
- Successful ICS-2007 at Goa with Spine Society of Europe: Well attended and academically excellent from August 9-12th, 2007 at the Goa Marriott Hotel. Interactive format for "Dilemmas in Decision Making", with adequate non-academic time well appreciated. Efforts of Dr. Abhay Nene, Dr. Ram Chaddha and Bombay Spine Club lauded.
- Subspecialty meeting at Kolkata - IOACON 2007: Half day symposium on "Lumbar Canal Stenosis" convened by Dr. Saumyajit Basu on December 6th, 2007 at Science City, Kolkata. Good lectures, case discussions and debates.
- ASSICON - 2008 with ISSLS meeting in tandem, well conducted by Dr. Ajoy Shetty and Dr. S. Rajasekaran at the Ganga Hospital Coimbatore, January 17-20th, 2008.
- A.S.S.I. Oration - 2008: Dr. Shekhar Y. Bhojraj on "Journey beyond Spine Surgery"
- Dr. V. T. Ingalthalikar Gold Medal Best Paper ASSICON 2007: Dr. Mihir Bapat for "Pedicular Subtraction Osteotomy for Complex Spinal Deformities"
- The A.S.S.I. Depuy Awards:
 - i. Traveling fellows: Dr. Bhavuk Garg and Dr. Swapnil Keny
 - ii. Research Award: Dr. Siddharth Badve
 - iii. Publication Award: Dr. S. Rajasekaran

4. **Income tax status:** Dr. H.S. Chhabra, joint secretary informed the house that the returns for the last year had been filed on behalf of the A.S.S.I. from Delhi and the pending dues for the last few years, 2002-03 onwards were being sorted out with the Tax authorities. He proposed that the accounts would be presented at the ICS 2008 at Shimla in an Extra-ordinary General Body Meeting which should be held for the same. The house was supportive of the executive committee decision that the surplus of funds of the A.S.S.I. which need to be utilized for academic purpose should be used towards the "Research Projects"

5. **A.S.S.I. website:** Dr. Samir Dalvie appraised the house of the state of the assiweb.org website. Dr. Abhay Nene had liaised with a webmaster in Mumbai and given a new face to the site. The links and the utility of the site for members were to be increased. Dr. Amit Jhala from Ahmedabad and Dr. Suresh from Kochi would help rejuvenate this site and sort out the password issues. Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar would act as a guide. Dr. Samir Dalvie would get back in a months time with his inputs.

6. **Research projects:** The donation of British pounds 1,000/- (one thousand only) per year offered by Dr. Manoj Krishna were to be used for the research projects. Dr. Shekhar Bhojraj non-specific backache & Dr. H.S. Chhabra fracture spine projects were offered the facility of having fellows or physician attendants to collect data. This was offered seeing the effectiveness of Dr. Vishal Kudnani working as a fellow on the T.B. project with Dr. Abhay Nene. Dr. Gautam Zaveri suggested deadlines to be established for all projects to present results. Dr. Yogesh Pitwa felt that a "Study Design" be created for all the projects. Dr. Arvind Jayaswal felt we should get started and then fine tune the projects. Dr. Appaji felt that the A.S.S.I. should create a registry of the data on all the research projects and any member desirous of analyzing a part of this data should seek permission for the same from the A.S.S.I. All the information should be posted on the web.

7. **Awards:** Dr. Ram Chaddha thanked the Depuy spine for supporting the traveling fellowships, the research and publication awards. He felt the lack of applications for the traveling fellowships was possibly linked to the fellowship stipend being Rs. 12,500/- only. This amount seemed inadequate to look after travel and stay for two weeks at two centres beginning after the ASSICON. The house seconded his suggestion that the amount of Rs. 20,000/- or 25,000/- would be more suitable. He offered to pursue the discussion with Depuy Spine to try and increase the amount. Dr. Rajasekaran felt the criteria for selection of the awards should be displayed on the website and all selections should be transparent. Dr. Ram Chaddha felt that academic achievements of members like books published or exceptional awards or achievements should be acknowledged at the annual meeting each year.

8. **Dartmouth fellowship:** The report of Dr. Sanjay Behari, the Dartmouth fellow for 2007 was still awaited. The fellowship for the year 2008 would be announced in the forthcoming ASSI bulletin and selection criteria were read out. The importance of having a valid U.S. Visa for travel was emphasized as it becomes a pre-requisite for the Dartmouth fellowship.

9. **ICS - 2008 - Shimla:** Dr. Shankar Acharya invited the house to attend the ICS-2008 at Shimla from August 7-10th, 2008. This joint meeting with the Sine Society of Europe being hosted by the Spine Society Delhi chapter would be at the Holiday Home/ Oberoi/Radisson. He promised an academic feast along with the best of non-academic activities for the delegates and their families. The theme was to be "Newer Techniques". Dr. Gautam Zaveri and Dr. Raghav Dutt Mulukutla who had offered to streamline the format of the meetings were requested to prepare the guidelines at the earliest.

10. **ASSICON - 2009 - Chennai:** Dr. Sajan Hegde addressed the house and invited all for ASSICON 2009 at Chennai. He proposed the meeting to be at the Taj Group Resort Fisherman's Cove. The proposed dates in the third week of January 2009 could clash with the Pongal festival and he was to get back to Chennai and work out the details to avoid any practical inconvenience to faculty and delegates during ASSICON 2009.

11. **SRS meeting:** Dr. Arvind Jayaswal informed the house of the proposed Scoliosis Research Society (SRS) regional meeting in Delhi with the A.S.S.I. and Spine Society Delhi Chapter from October 2-5th 2008. He suggested five faculties from the SRS would attend. Dr. Gautam Zaveri offered that international faculty of the AO-workshop being organized immediately prior to the SRS event could be included for the SRS regional meeting, increasing the strength of international faculty without additional effort on part of the organizers. The funding for the event would be from registration and the trade. Profits if any would be evenly divide between the ASSI and Spine Society Delhi Chapter.

12. **Election of office bearers:** The executive committee for 2008-09 was proposed and accepted unanimously:

President	Dr. Arvind Jayaswal 2 years (2007-09)
Vice-President	Dr. Rajasekaran 2 years (2007-09)
Secretary & Treasurer	Dr. Ram Chaddha 3 years (2007-10)
Joint Secretary	Dr. H.S. Chhabra 3 years (2007-10)
Members	Dr. Raghav Dutt 3 years (2006-09)
	Dr. S. K. Srivastava 3 years (2006-09)
	Dr. Amit Jhala 3 years (2007-10)
	Dr. Anil Jain 3 years (2007-10)
	Dr. Shashank Kale 3 years (2008-11)

Co-opted members-	Dr. R. Sivakumar 3 years (2008-11)
	Dr. Abhay Nene
	Dr. Samir Dalvie
	Dr. Shankar Acharya
	Dr. Sajan Hegde

The next committee would take over from April 1st 2008.

13. **A.S.S.I. Orator - 2009:** Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar proposed Dr. K. Sriram as the A.S.S.I. Orator for 2009. Dr. Arvind Jayaswal seconded the proposal. Dr. K. Sriram would be sent an official invitation by the A.S.S.I. for the same. He would deliver the Oration on a subject of his choice at ASSICON 2009 at Chennai. He would be a guest of the local organizing committee for ASSICON 2009 and his travel, registration and local hospitality for the entire conference would be looked after by them.

14. **Ratification of new members:** Seventy-nine members applied for life-membership after the previous AGBM. Their applications were scrutinized by the executive committee and were ratified as life members.

15. **ICS - 2009 and ASSICON - 2010:** Dr. Jitendra Jamdar (drijitendrajamdar@hotmail.com) from Jabalpur proposed ICS 2009 at Khajurao. His proposal was accepted by the house. Dr. Sajal Mitra (sajalmitra2007@yahoo.co.in) proposed Nagpur and Dr. Suresh proposed Kochi for ASSICON 2010. The house decided on Nagpur for ASSICON 2010. Both Dr. Jamdar and Dr. Mitra were informed to send an official application to the secretariat on behalf of the host local body with three signatories of ASSI life members who would be a part of the organizing team and who would hold responsibility for the event. They were also reminded of the conventional contribution of Rs. 1, 00,000/- for the ICS and Rs. 1, 50,000/- for the ASSICON towards the A.S.S.I. account.

16. **Any other matter with the permission of the chair:**

- Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar proposed that the Constitution of the A.S.S.I. was formulated in 1985 and needs to be looked at for certain amendments to suit the present strength and outlook of the association. He felt a group should look into the constitution and propose suitable changes at the extra-ordinary general body meeting to be held at ICS 2008 Shimla. This would allow us to ratify and pass the same at ASSICON 2009, Chennai AGBM. Dr. Ram Chaddha offered to circulate the existing Constitution to all members who could write back their suggestion to the secretariat.
- Dr. S. Rajasekaran informed the house that a press meeting was held informing the public of the present state of experimental therapies for spinal cord injury as available in literature.
- Dr. Anil Jain, editor of IJO (Indian Journal of Orthopaedics) suggested a special issue or supplement of the journal on Spine as requested by the A.S.S.I. The members were requested to contribute towards the same.
- Dr. S.K. Srivastava expressed his concerns over free paper sessions not getting suitable importance due to simultaneous halls or non-prime sessions, discouraging the efforts of free paper presenters. The future organizers of conferences were requested to avoid such situations
- Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar expressed his disapproval of a paper being presented by none of the authors but by some other delegate in their absence. He felt such presentations should be discouraged and not taken as precedence in future. The concerned presenter should be suitably informed,
- Dr. Rajasekharan expressed his unhappiness on award winners being absent to receive their awards at the inauguration of ASSICON. He suggested there should be some rules formulated so that winners receive awards in person.
- Dr. S. Rajasekaran presented a cheque of Rs.1,50,000/- to the A.S.S.I. as contribution from ASSICON -2008.

The meeting was adjourned with gratitude to Dr. Arvind Jayaswal, President for chairing.

The Dr. V.T. Ingalthalikar Gold Medal for Best Paper at ASSICON 2008 will be awarded to Dr. Rohit Amritanand for his presentation "Treatment of hematogenous pyogenic vertebral osteomyelitis with single stage anterior debridement, defect grafting and posterior instrumentation" at the Inauguration Ceremony of ASSICON 2009 at Chennai. The winner is requested to be present in person to receive the same.

A.S.S.I. - Dartmouth Spine Fellowship 2008

A.S.S.I. announces its annual fellowship in spine surgery in collaboration with the Dartmouth Medical School, New Hampshire, USA. The selected fellow will work in the spine surgery unit of the department of Orthopedics of the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in May-June 2008 for a period of 4-6 weeks. Though this fellowship will have no stipend, the selected fellow will receive travel and stay allowance. Applications are invited from interested ASSI life members. Please submit applications to the ASSI secretariat's office BEFORE FEBRUARY 29th 2008, at the following address.

Dr Ram Chaddha.

Secretary cum Treasurer,
Association of Spine Surgeons' of India

Requirements for A.S.S.I. - Dartmouth Spine Fellowship

1. A.S.S.I. life member
2. Age : Less than 45 years at time of application
3. Applicant should have a US visa valid for at least one year from date of travel
4. Indicate your current professional position
5. Current work profile (Please mention approximate percentage of spine work in practice)
6. Special Spine interests
7. Contribution to A.S.S.I. so far
 - a. ASSICON s attended / papers presented / papers submitted
 - b. ICS attended / papers presented / papers submitted
 - c. Local spine meetings organized / attended
8. Scientific contribution
 - a. Papers presented at national / international level meetings
 - b. Lectures at national / international level meetings
 - c. Publications in national / international journals
9. Specific expectations from the Dartmouth fellowship (mention in 50 words)

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Fellowship report of A.S.S.I. traveling fellows 2007

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We started our fellowship on a happy note at ASSICON 2007 at Ahmedabad. We were given accommodation at the Spine Hospital which was the official conference secretariat and this made for a very comfortable stay as we had ready transport available all the time. We would like to thank the local organizing secretary Dr Bharat Dave for the warm hospitality and courtesy extended to us. The conference by itself was interesting with 3 days of useful lectures, interesting scientific presentations and stimulating debates. On 28 January we started our journey to Mumbai to start our fellowship.

29 January morning we headed to Shushrusha hospital as our first visiting hospital in Mumbai. Here we had opportunity to see Dr Samir Dalvie performing an instrumented fusion of L5-S1 for a degenerative listhesis. Thereafter we left for Hinduja hospital where we had an opportunity to assist Dr Abhay Nene. The patient had a large disc prolapse at L5-S1 with associated spondylolysis and instrumentation and fusion was planned for the same. Interesting part was that posterior interbody fusion was done with bonegrafts alone.

30 January we were in Leelavati hospital. Dr Ram Chaddha and his team were operating on a patient with 6 month old post traumatic kyphotic deformity of thoracic spine. Posterior corrective instrumentation was followed by anterior strut grafting to achieve fusion was done. In the evening, we made use of free time by visiting Haji Ali mosque and narrowly missed getting lost in the Moharram crowd.

31 January it was KEM hospital. After a "close encounter" with Dr Ashok Lahari we were relieved to be with Dr Mihir Bapat. He performed a hemilaminectomy and posterolateral decompression followed by posterior stabilization of thoracic spine for a Pott's spine. This started a discussion on how good was operating from posterior for an anterior disease. At the end of fellowship we realized that opinion was divided equally among consultants between for and against posterior only approach.

Unfortunately the case scheduled for 1 February with Dr Dev Pujari, a neurosurgeon, was cancelled so it was a free day for us to explore the beautiful and vibrant Mumbai.

2 February it was Wockhardt hospital where Dr Ram Chaddha and team were performing excision of sacrum for aggressive chordoma. Team approach consisting of orthopedic, general, oncologic and plastic surgeons made it possible to excise the sacrum and survive the tense moments.

3 February morning we visited Breach Candy hospital where Dr Gautam Zhaveri was performing pedicle subtraction osteotomy for Pott's spine. Pedicle subtraction allowed for adequate decompression and deformity correction with single approach. In the afternoon we visited Bombay hospital where Dr Sanir Dalvie was performed a thoracotomy, anterior debridement and bone grafting for a Pott's spine with acute onset paraplegia. It was followed by lunch with Dr Dalvie. Same evening we left to Delhi. Here we would like to put on record the efforts of Dr Sheetal Moite who was instrumental in coordinating our schedule in Mumbai with the various surgeons in the absence of Dr Abhay Nene who was not in town for personal reasons. The schedule was arranged by him and his team in the best way possible and without a hitch.

On 5 February our Delhi leg of fellowship started from AIIMS. Dr Arvind Jayswal and team were operating on a thoracic scoliosis secondary to neurofibromatosis. One of us (Dr Sree Harsha) had opportunity to assist. Dr Jayswal demonstrated the technique of meticulous anterior release to achieve maximum correction.

6 February morning it was Railway Hospital and Dr Shankar Acharya and Dr Rushma Tandon performed a Transarticular Screw fixation of C1-2 with decompression. Expertise of Dr Acharya made this demanding surgery look very simple. In the afternoon we went to Indian spine injury center. We were welcomed with a grand buffet lunch following which we for brief period witnessed Dr H N Bajaj

and team perform an instrumented fusion for Spondylolisthesis. This was followed by grand rounds taken by Dr Chhabra. Doing rounds with a comprehensive rehabilitation team was something very new for both of us and we could not help but think that there should be many more such institutions to cater to spinal cord injured patients in our country. This was followed by a presentation on interesting cases where innovative techniques had been used.

7 February it was again AIIMS. This time Dr Jayswal was doing a posterior corrective instrumentation on a patient with scoliosis secondary to neurofibromatosis. Dr Manish had opportunity to assist and Dr Jayswal demonstrated the technique of pedicular screw insertion in deformed thoracic spine. This was followed by a quick ward rounds and demonstration of some interesting cases.

8 February morning we visited Dr Rajendra Prasad at Indraprastha Apollo hospital. Here we were taken around for rounds where we had opportunity to see some very interesting cases. Afternoon we headed back to AIIMS for hectic Scoliosis clinic where literally split second decisions were taken by Dr Jayswal with efficient back up team.

9 February in AIIMS. Dr Harsha had his much awaited opportunity to assist Endoscopic disc excision and Dr Manish fulfilled his much awaited opportunity to assist a posterior only surgery for Pott's spine of D3-4.

On 10 February our fellowship was concluded by visiting the Ethicon center where we experimentally fixed the saw bone models.

Special mention needs to be made of our President elect, Prof. Arvind Jayaswal for providing us with a great exposure to a variety of surgery in varied indications in such a short time.

To summarise, the two weeks we spent was a great learning experience- seeing masters at work, an eye opener some procedures are not easy as they seem to be and some procedures are not as difficult as they are said to be, most of all - making new teachers to look upon during difficult times and making new friends with whom we can share our experience.

We would like to thank all the executive members of ASSI who gave us the wonderful opportunity, Depuy for the sponsorship and last but not the least for the consultants who hosted us and who were patient enough to answer our endless queries.