



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF GEOGRAPHICAL
& EPIDEMIOLOGICAL OPHTHALMOLOGY

SOCIÉTÉ INTERNATIONALE D'OPHTALMOLOGIE
GÉOGRAPHIQUE ET ÉPIDÉMIOLOGIQUE

Minutes from ISGEO Business meeting Sao Paulo, Brazil, 18 February 2006

Report on the 19th Congress of the ISGEO

The 19th Congress of the ISGEO was held at the Blue Tree Towers Morumbi Hotel in Sao Paulo. Dr. Richard Wormald, ISGEO President presided over the congress. There were 50 participants and 28 presentations. We are grateful to the assistance provided by Dr. Norma Medina for local logistics. Additional thanks go to Anne Ganley. ISGEO provided 4 travel grants to assist those in developing countries to come and present at the Congress. Presentations were of a high quality and the discussion following each was stimulating. A copy of all of the abstracts and the programme are found on the ISGEO website (www.kcco.net/isgeo).

While all participants expressed positive perceptions of the congress there were a number of difficulties encountered with the congress:

- A number of ISGEO members who had planned on attending encountered insurmountable difficulties obtaining a visa for Brazil.
- The cost of travel to Sao Paulo was very high, limiting participation by members from Africa and Asia.
- There were a number of conflicts with pre-WOC meetings that forced a number of participants to limit their time at the ISGEO Congress.
- The currency exchange rate changed significantly between the time that reservations were made for the venue and the congress day; this almost doubled the US\$ cost of holding the congress.

Changes to the ISGEO Constitution

Prof Sheila West has taken the lead on reviewing the ISGEO constitution and suggesting changes. Rather than go through the constitution item by item it was decided that the suggested changes would be submitted to the Counsellors for review. Prior to the next ISGEO congress the revised (and approved by the Counsellors) constitution will be circulated to all members in order to expedite approval or any further changes. There was some discussion regarding changing the name of the society; in particular to remove the word "Geographical". While most members are quite comfortable with a name such as "International Society for Epidemiological Ophthalmology" or "International Society of Ophthalmic Epidemiology", there was some concern about removing "Geographical" from the name, in respect to the founders and long-time members of the society. For the time being it was decided not to suggest a name change but to seek more input from the membership.

ISGEO Start up Research Grants

After review of 5 applications, ISGEO approved providing \$1,000 each to Dr. Joseph Oye for an ISGEO Start up Research Grants. The recipient of the grant was selected through review of proposals and scoring by 4 counsellors. We are grateful for their assistance. Recipients, and their

study titles are as follows:

Dr. Joseph Oye.

ISGEO will be accepting submissions for consideration for research funding for the next funding cycle. Applications can be sent to Dr. Paul Courtright (pcourtright@kcco.net); the deadline is Jan 31, 2007 and the decision regarding funding will be made by Mar 1, 2007.

20th ISGEO Congress

The next ISGEO congress will be held in Hyderabad, India under the presidency of Dr. Ravi Thomas. The date of the congress, to be held in 2008, will be set after review of schedules for meetings for the year. We expect to be able to set the date by April, 2006. ISGEO members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Other ophthalmic epidemiology meetings

Two other meetings, of potential interest of ISGEO members were noted. These are:

The 4th US Symposium on Ocular Epidemiology will be held on Jan 29-31 2007 in Sarasota, Florida. The symposium will be preceded by a Cochrane workshop, to be held on 26-28 Jan. Those interested in participating in this symposium are encouraged to contact Dr. Barbara Hawkins at bhawkins@jhmi.edu. Dr. Hawkins will be sending out additional information in the coming year.

The World Conference on Refractive Errors will be held in Durban, South Africa from 28 Feb to 2 Mar, 2007. Members interested in this conference should contact Prof. Kovin Naidoo at k.naidoo@icce.org.

Nominations for ISGEO executive committee

Dr. Jim Ganley, ISGEO Treasurer, will be stepping down from this role after over 30 years of service to the society. ISGEO is grateful for his volunteer assistance to the society for these years. The ISGEO Counsellors are proposing Dr. Emily West for the position of ISGEO Treasurer. ISGEO executive positions are voluntary and we are grateful for Dr. West's willingness to serve in the role of ISGEO Treasurer.

Dr. Paul Courtright, ISGEO Secretary, will also be stepping down from his role as Secretary, which he has filled since 1994. Dr. GVS Murthy was proposed to become the new ISGEO secretary, starting in 2007 in order to facilitate a smooth transition for the 2008 congress in India.

In the last (2004) ISGEO congress there was a large number of new ISGEO counsellors elected; this has meant that there were no positions to consider in 2006.

Within the next year, following review by the ISGEO counsellors, a vice-president will be proposed.

Treasurer report

The treasurer's report follows as an appendix. This report is an update from that presented at the congress meeting in Sao Paulo, but is still a preliminary report since many bills were paid with the treasurer's personal credit card and final expenses dependent on currency exchange rate at the time of credit card bill. The final report will be close to the one enclosed as an appendix.

Affiliations of ISGEO

In 2005 ISGEO joined the International Federation of Ophthalmological Societies (IFOS) at the suggestion of the Board of Councillors. Dr. Wormald participated in the IFOS meeting in Sao Paulo in February. ISGEO is the only epidemiologic society within the IFOS and its participation in IFOS is aimed at promoting recognition and support for epidemiologic ophthalmic research and resident education within IFOS.

ISGEO members voted to become part of IAPB. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness includes NGOs, academic institutes, and some specialized groups (such as ISGEO). In joining IAPB ISGEO will be in a position to influence and support initiatives for epidemiologic research aimed at international prevention of blindness.

Ophthalmic Epidemiology

The journal, *Ophthalmic Epidemiology* was started in 1994 and has seen phenomenal growth in the past 2 years. It is the official journal of ISGEO and many members contribute to the journal. The number of submissions continues to grow and the journal is in the upper third ISI listing of top ophthalmic journals.

After 13 years as the editor of *Ophthalmic Epidemiology*, Dr. Ganley will be handing over the reins to Prof Sheila West in April 2006. ISGEO is very grateful for the stewardship provided by Dr. Ganley.

This is the first year of a special agreement with Taylor and Francis, publisher of *Ophthalmic Epidemiology* and ISGEO for our members to subscribe to the journal at a significantly reduced rate.

Subscription to the journal through the publishers is approximately US\$220. ISGEO membership offers significant advantages: subscription to *Ophthalmic Epidemiology* is included in the \$100 annual ISGEO membership fee. Of the annual membership fee \$60 is paid to the publisher and \$40 is used to support ISGEO activities such as Start up Research Grants, travel scholarships, and congresses. Those interested in joining ISGEO are encouraged to contact Dr. Paul Courtright for a membership form.

History of ISGEO

It was recognized that ISGEO has a long, somewhat eccentric, but clearly illustrious history. It was proposed that Prof Gordon Johnson and Dr. Jim Ganley prepare an article on the history of ISGEO for consideration for publication in *Ophthalmic Epidemiology*.