Editorial

The genesis of an idea: the International Committee of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons

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One of the most rewarding committee appointments of my career was to the International Committee of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery. After a 6-year stint that culminated with the chairperson of the International Scholarship Program, my second term sadly came to an end. I know that for everyone on the committee, promoting international education had been an exhilarating and gratifying experience.

Looking for a way to continue to collaborate with international scholars and promote international education, I spoke with Mary I. O’Connor, MD, at the fall meeting of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (AAHKS) in Dallas. However, at the time, AAHKS did not have such a committee. Dr. O’Connor was the outgoing President of the association, and noted that the incoming AAHKS President, Carlos Lavernia, MD, had discussed the idea in the past and was keen on promoting it. Once President, Dr. Lavernia, a committed internationalist, brought the notion to the Board of Directors who agreed to establish a new committee to promote cross-cultural exchange of knowledge in hip and knee surgery and increase the international membership of AAHKS. Since then, the leadership line has continued to support the growth of the program with the net result that AAHKS’s international membership has grown from fewer than 10 members in 2011 to 230 members from 48 countries on 6 continents as of June 2017 (Fig. 1).

The first chairperson of the International Committee was William J. Maloney, MD, who served until his appointment to the Presidential line of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery. I was honored to succeed him in 2015 and Rafael J. Sierra, MD, will take over the reins in 2018. Soon after the inception of the committee, we created a charter that included several goals such as increasing overall international membership to approximately 10% of the organization, establishing international partnerships in the form of educational meetings, and creating an International Guest Society Program. Furthermore, we streamlined the international application process to be simpler and more attractive to potential new members, created clear guidelines for International Committee appointment, designed a rotating schedule to accommodate new committee members, and defined clear timelines for leadership transitions. We are deeply grateful to the AAHKS members who have contributed their time and effort to the committee. Their names are listed in Table 1.

AAHKS helps to run 2 types of educational programs in partnership with international organizations. These are designed to increase our organization’s exposure to like-minded societies around the world. The first and most common are our co-branded programs. These events are centered around pre-existing conferences and meetings to which the host society would likely have invited AAHKS members to speak. The idea is to leverage existing conferences rather than creating (costly) new events. So doing makes these international events virtually free of additional costs to both organizations. The hosts can promote their event as being co-branded with AAHKS and sponsor the AAHKS speakers’ travel and attendance as they normally would. The speakers participate in the meeting as per the host’s requests, but also present information about our organization through an AAHKS highlights reel from the AAHKS annual meeting. To date, there have been over one dozen such meetings, each resulting in greater exposure for AAHKS and new members for the organization. The second type of meeting is where AAHKS is invited as a Guest Society. This type of meeting...
Table 1
AAHKS members who have served on the International Committee.

| Name                                   | Position                  |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jean-Noel A. Argenson, MD               | Chair                     |
| Stefano A. Bini, MD, Chair              |                            |
| Guillermo A. Bonilla, MD                |                            |
| Martin A. Buttaro, MD                   |                            |
| Claudio C. Castelli, MD                 |                            |
| Michele R. D'Apuzzo, MD                 |                            |
| Christian P. Foronda, MD                |                            |
| Felipe Gomez-Garcia, MD                 |                            |
| Fares S. Haddad, BSc MCh (Orth), FRCS  |                            |
| Kazuo Hirakawa, MD                      |                            |
| Michael H. Huo, MD                      |                            |
| Daniel Kendoff, MD, PhD                 |                            |
| Yong Sik Kim, MD                        |                            |
| Per Kjaersgaard-Andersen, MD            |                            |
| Carlos J. Laverna, MD                   |                            |
| William J. Maloney, MD, Past Chair      |                            |
| Christopher Mow, MD                     |                            |
| Yasuharu Nakashima, MD                  |                            |
| Gennaro Pipino, MD                      |                            |
| Andrew J. Shimmin, MD                   |                            |
| Rafael J. Sierra, MD, Vice-chair        |                            |
| Chun Ho Yau, FRCS                       |                            |
| Simon W. Young, FRACS                   |                            |
| Luigi Zagra, MD                         |                            |

Figure 1. Graph demonstrating growth of AAHKS international members over time.

has been held only once, in London, on invitation of the British Hip Society and was very well received by all those who attended. A list of past and future co-branded meetings can be found in Table 2.

The International Guest Society program has been very successful and has drawn an increasing number of international attendees to the annual and Spring meetings. Each year, 2 international guest societies are invited to present a poster session of the best research from their annual meeting and co-host a cocktail hour with AAHKS leadership. The program has been well received and has contributed to promoting international attendance at our meetings. Table 3 shows our past and future international guest societies. The International Guest Society program continues to improve as we encourage the international community to submit scientific research and symposia through our highly competitive selection process and invite our guests to participate in our “ask the expert” sessions.

Another accomplishment for the International Committee is the international scholarship program. AAHKS works closely with the Chinese Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons to bring fellows to multiple US host institutions for 3-month observerships. For 2017 to 2018, we will welcome 15 fellows that are fully sponsored by the Chinese Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Despite some early challenges with logistics, survey results from both the hosts and the guests have been very supportive of the program. In addition, AAHKS is in its second year of sponsoring the Guest Society Fellowship that brings a young and promising fellow from each of our 2 annual Guest Societies for 1-2 weeks to 2 AAHKS associated institutions that volunteer to host the scholars. Furthermore, the scholars attend the annual meeting over their nearly 4-week stay in the United States. This exchange has also been highly successful.

The AAHKS commitment to international orthopaedic collaboration is further reflected in the mission of Arthroplasty Today, which is published by AAHKS and Elsevier. One of my roles as a founding associate editor was to bring an international perspective to our journal. Each year, our September issue highlights international manuscripts. With the publication of this issue no fewer than 17 different countries outside the United States have contributed research to the publication. Additionally, our partnership with the American Joint Replacement Registry has produced 2 manuscripts (published in June 2016 and 2017) that examine revision burden and infection burden with an international perspective.

The International Committee also has a limited on-line presence. The AAHKS website promotes events around the world sponsored by organizations devoted to the education of surgeons interested in hip and knee surgery and will soon host online applications for guest society programs and international membership, moving us away from our current e-mail and paper-based processes.

There are several new ideas being vetted by the committee for how AAHKS can create an increasingly vibrant international community to bring us interesting insights. One example was the very popular symposium from “across the pond” presented by the British Hip Society at the 2016 annual meeting. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to increase our social media presence going forward.

Table 2
AAHKS co-branded meetings, past and future.

| Year | Meeting                                                                 |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2016 | Indian Society of Hip & Knee Surgeons 10th Annual Meeting, Chennai, India12th Latin American Meeting of Hip and Knee Surgeons 2016 (ELCCR 2016), Cartagena, Colombia Arthroplasty Society in Asia (ASIA) Meeting, Guangzhou, China12th Congress of the European Hip Society (EHS), Munich, Germany |
| 2017 | British Hip Society Conference (AAHKS served as Guest Society), London, England Argentinian Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (ACARO) Congress, Buenos Aires, Argentina Ukrainian Association of Orthopaedists and Traumatologists Annual Meeting, Kharkiv, Ukraine EKA, European Knee Associates, section of ESSKA EKA-ESSKA Open Meeting “Innovation in Degenerative Knee Surgery,” Berlin, Germany Chilean Society of Orthopedic and Traumatology Annual Meeting, Viña del Mar, Chile |
| 2018 | Chinese Hip Society Annual Meeting, Gui Yang, Gui Zhou, China (to date) Chinese Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (CAOS) Annual Congress, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang, China |

Table 3
AAHKS International Guest Society meetings, past and future.

| Year | Guest Society                                                                 |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2015 | The Japanese Society for Replacement Arthroplasty (JSRA)                    |
|      | The Chilean Hip Society (CHS) of the Chilean Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology |
| 2016 | The Indian Society for Hip & Knee Surgeons (ISHKS)                         |
|      | The European Knee Society (EKS)                                          |
| 2017 | Colombian Orthopaedic and Traumatology Society (SCCOT)                     |
|      | European Hip Society (EHS)                                               |
| 2018 | British Hip Society (BHS)                                                  |
|      | Italian Hip Society (SIdA)                                                 |
| 2019 | Argentinian Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (ACARO)                   |
|      | Arthroplasty Society of Australia (ASA)                                     |
| 2020 | Chinese Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (CAOS)                         |
|      | European Knee Associates (EKA)                                             |
In summary, if the success of any venture is a measure of the value it brings to its target audience, then the International Committee has been a valuable addition to the AAHKS community. Furthermore, it has clearly furthered our stated mission to “advance hip and knee patient care through education and advocacy” by extending that vision to an international audience and broadening and deepening the perspective of our members both domestically and abroad.

I’d like to conclude by acknowledging the vision and support of the leadership of AAHKS, starting with Dr. Mary I. O’Connor, Dr. Carlos Laverna, and Dr. Bill Maloney who created the committee and all subsequent Presidents and Board Members who supported its expansion. It is also important to thank the tireless AAHKS staff who support our program, initially Krista Stewart and now Joshua Kerr with the support of the Executive Director of AAHKS, Michael Zarski.