EUROSPINE WAY FORWARD STRATEGY – ON TRACK FOR THE FUTURE

EUROSPINE: CREATING A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO TACKLING SPINE DISABILITIES

Margareta Nordin shares her insight and priorities as incoming Vice President of EUROSPINE

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE THE FIRST FEMALE VICE PRESIDENT OF EUROSPINE?

I was born in Switzerland, grew up in France and Sweden, and then studied in Sweden and the United States. My first degree was in physical therapy and my second degree, Dr Med. Sci., is from the University of Gothenburg, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Sweden under the leadership of the late Professor Alf Nachemson and Professor Gunnar Andersson.

In the 1980’s I accepted a position to start a new unit at New York University (NYU), Department of Orthopaedics to prevent disability from spine pain. I also directed the NYU Program of Bio mechanics and Ergonomics at the Graduate School. In 2011, after my tenure at NYU, I moved back to the Loire Valley in France – a wonderful place. My main interests are the prevention of spinal disabilities, empowering the patient with shared decision-making and creating and implementing effective evidence-based treatments.

In 2011, I set up the Task Force Research (TFR) for EUROSPINE. It has been a truly rewarding experience. I am a person who needs to learn something new every day and I am a dedicated to education and research translating into clinical practice. Seeing patients, students, residents and individuals grow and take on new responsibilities is one of my passions. On a more personal side I am very accessible – I like good discussions, reading, good food and outdoors activities. I am truly honoured to be elected first female Vice President and will build on my predecessors’ prior work to make EUROSPINE the leading Society in Europe.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT YEAR?

To make EUROSPINE grow and diversify. We have women of excellence in EUROSPINE but they are too few. EUROSPINE also needs to become more diversified, attracting more basic scientists, chiropractors, engineers, nurses, physical therapists, osteopaths and others to build a spine community to prevent disability. About 15-20% are specific or surgical ailments, but most spine pain in the world is non-surgical. Our Society should reflect more advancement in non-surgical treatments.

As Vice President for EUROSPINE, I will continue to build on the efforts and successes of prior Presidents and Vice Presidents to strengthen our Society by:

- Making our Councils stronger and more successful
- Recruiting new members and promoting current members who want to participate in taking EUROSPINE to the next level
- Promoting collaboration with other spine societies to create a community approach to the prevention of spine disability as the premier cause of disability in the world
- Increasing interest in research to help patients

We can do it and we should do it. It is important to listen and learn what society members want, what MedTech companies would like to achieve, how other spine organisations and institutions would like to collaborate and how we can raise money for more research and clinical practices. We can do it and we should do it. It is important to listen and learn what society members want, what MedTech companies would like to achieve, how other spine organisations and institutions would like to collaborate and how we can raise money for more research and clinical practices.

WHERE DO YOU STAND ON EUROSPINE’S PROGRESS ON ITS WAY FORWARD STRATEGY?

2015 has been a tremendous year of growth for EUROSPINE on all fronts – record numbers of new members, affiliation with European national societies and a new organisational structure with well-defined councils (members, stakeholders, education and research, and meetings) to lead the society. I am committed to supporting each of our five Councils as described below:

1. Membership Council
   Christoph Stepe has done formidable work in attracting new members and member organisations with EUSSAB. The record number of abstracts submitted for the Annual Meeting in 2015 is a sign that EUROSPINE is growing and striking the right chord with its activities.

2. Education Council
   Jörg Franke has increased participation in EUROSPINE's Master Education – an ongoing success. I would like to integrate a research component into the education so that clinicians feel confident in evaluating research articles – a must for the future clinicians to sort out the good from the less good with no clinical impact or possible impact in the future. Bringing all education under EUROSPINE has improved the Society’s ability meet members’ requirements. EUSAB is a platform for national European Societies to jointly develop a pan-European spine diploma.

3. Research Council
   Chaired by Bjorn Rydevik, the Council has three aims: to promote Task Force on Research (Chair Bjorn Rydevik Research courses and Grant Distribution) Spine Tango (Chair Tim Pigott) and Awards (Chair Michael Ogdon). The Task Force on Research (2011 to 2015) has distributed more than $ 500'000 directly back to members for high quality studies and educated more than 70 researchers in research methodology from 17 countries. This creates a research community and is a start. Spine Tango published 16 peer-reviewed articles in 2014-2015 on EUROSPINE registries. Finally, EUROSPINE awarded € 12'000 for best papers at the Annual Meeting in 2014. Research is the key to excellence in clinical practice and I will continue to promote the Research Council.

4. Stakeholders Council
   Led by Finn Christensen, this is a very important Council as it deals with the patients, all external organisations, government, patient organisations, press and media and other societies.

5. Meeting Council
   Chaired by Thomas Blattert, this Council organises our Annual Meetings, Spring Meetings, Lunch Symposiums and Pre-courses to the Annual meeting. It is a success story, attracting more participants to each meeting every year. Going forward we need to advertise our meetings and collaborate with other spine organisations and institutions for increased participation and success...

ANY FINAL MESSAGES FOR OUR READERS TODAY?

My role as Vice President is to listen carefully to what members and stakeholders consider important for the Society. A tremendous amount of work has been done by my predecessors. EUROSPINE is growing and I want to thank Haluk Berk, Phil Sell, Ferran Pellisé and Federico Balagüè. If you have any suggestions for making our Society even more successful in a cost-efficient way, please feel free to contact me at margareta.nordin@nyu.edu. I will be sure to review and consider all suggestions I receive.

Thank you for the honour of making me Vice President of EUROSPINE.