

ASA AND THE WFSA: A Complementary Arrangement

Mark J. Lema, M.D., Ph.D.
WFSA Honorary Treasurer
Chair, Committee on Representation to the WFSA

Did you know that you are a member of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA)?

ASA's unwavering support of WFSA charitable activities helps to elevate the safety of anesthetic care in underserved nations.

So why should you care about this membership? What has the WFSA ever done for you? If you've pondered that question, then your perception of WFSA is inaccurate. The WFSA functions much like the World Health Organization interacts with the American Medical Association ... and every other nation's medical association. WFSA exists to unite anesthesiologists around the world for the enhancement of patient care (Mission). The WFSA also serves as the premier global alliance for all anesthesiologists, together with national, regional and subspecialty organizations, to facilitate outreach and to promote the highest standards of patient care.

WFSA has two main sources of income: 1) dues from national societies that support the infrastructure and operations (about \$260,000 yearly) and 2) profits from the quadrennial World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA), most recently held in Buenos Aires (9,000 physicians from 122 countries attended the WCA). The congress proceeds will be spent, along with modest interest income on reserve funds, to provide seed monies for training programs on five continents. We recently calculated that for every dollar WFSA spends on philanthropic activity, an additional \$6.80 is generated in supplemental support from its members and their national societies or governments.



Mark J. Lema, M.D., Ph.D. is Chair, Department of Anesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, New York. He was ASA President in 2007.



ASA Plays a Key Role in WFSA's Activities

In recent years, ASA has focused on sharing its knowledge and resources with the global community. Through our Committee on Global Humanitarian Outreach, under the direction of Kelly McQueen, M.D., charitable outreach efforts are coordinated among ASA, WFSA and the American College of Surgeons. She, along with Alexander A. Hannenberg, M.D., has played a key role in the Lifebox project, which supplies pulse oximeters to underserved regions (see article on page 28).

WFSA has a major communication mission that sends teachers to underserved nations, prepares publications for anesthetic delivery in several languages and has a "Tutorial of the Week." The April 2 tutorial topic was "Management of Obstetric Hemorrhage." In addition, WFSA publishes *Update in Anesthesia*. Both offerings are most suitable for resident education and as refresher course material. You can access these publications and archived content on the WFSA website <http://www.anaesthesiologists.org/> by clicking "WFSA Educational Resources" at the top of the page.



WFSA-supported Workshop on Regional Blocks in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

ASA is also well represented on the WFSA's Executive Committee. Berend Mets, M.B., Ch.B., F.F.A.R.C.S. serves as one of two North American representatives to this committee. Adrian Gelb, F.R.C.P.C., M.B., Ch.B. chairs the important Safety & Quality of Practice Committee, and Vinod Malhotra, M.D. chairs the Constitution Committee. I am one of seven members who serves on the Management Group (similar to the ASA's Executive Committee), and currently occupy the Honorary Treasurer's position. These ASA members certainly contribute significantly to the functioning of the WFSA, which meets electronically in a virtual environment.

So, WFSA actually has done a significant amount for both you and the ASA, even though it's a charitable organization.

By example, WFSA:

- Works on behalf of all its members and their national societies to fulfill our humanitarian activities by giving back to those less fortunate to improve the quality of care they provide to their patients via educational projects.

- Works on behalf of ASA to coordinate programs and resources from all societies to make anesthesia as safe as it can be throughout the world.
- Provides free educational resources to all its members, downloadable from its website.
- Interfaces with other global societies, such as WHO and FIGO, on behalf of all its member societies to oversee anesthesia's interests in global outreach.

On behalf of the WFSA Management Group, I thank the ASA, and you, its members ... in fact, *our* members, for all that you do to ameliorate the sufferings and deaths from avoidable anesthetic shortcomings through your support and efforts. You really matter!