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EDITORIAL

2009: The year of innovations in the European Spine Journal

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2009—The year of innovations in the European Spine Journal: we present in this Editorial the first of three major innovations, which will enrich the European Spine Journal in 2009.

1. The European Spine Journal Grand Rounds, or the Case Method of Learning and Teaching.

One of the missions of the European Spine Journal, besides publishing results of original research and advancing the knowledge in spine sciences is teaching.

As the official publication medium of EuroSpine—the Spine Society of Europe, we wish to have a fundamental role in the education of our spine community.

Teaching in the form of print media distributed throughout the medical community is classically done in the form of book chapters, however, that is not suitable for our journal and also not in the current increasing “interactive” medical environment.

The teaching according to the “case method” was introduced a century ago in 1908 in the curriculum of the prestigious Harvard Business School by the School first

Dean Edwin F. Gay. In 1921, the first case study “the General Shoe Company” written by assistant Dean Clinton Biddie was published. This has been a success story and is one of the trademarks of this university that now publishes more than 350 cases a year. This puts the student in a very concrete situation with a real life scenario where a complex situation is analyzed, where different possible courses of action are analyzed and their consequences are anticipated.

In the Academic and Medical environment around the world, surgical Grand Rounds have been taken place over several centuries. They have long been one of the principal educational activities of our surgical residents at teaching hospitals. Initially, such Grand Rounds were at the bedside with discussion of the case with the most eminent specialist, and then they took place in the “hospital amphitheaters” where a specific case or topic of discussion was discussed. Usually a resident, a fellow or a young attending will present a case that represented a diagnostic or treatment challenge. Following such presentation, a summary of the background data and evidence-based literature would ensue. Different scenarios of treatment would then be discussed. Then finally, the outcome of treatment would be presented. Such Grand Rounds with “live cases” have been proven to have a very positive impact on the education and on changing the practice pattern of the attending audience. However, in today’s world where information cannot be restricted to one institution, but must be spread worldwide with the click of the mouse, the concept of Grand Rounds had to be shared with the whole medical community.

The European Spine Journal Editorial Board therefore decided in their last meeting to implement this new concept of “European Spine Journal Grand Rounds” that would be based on two concepts: our hospital Grand Rounds tradition and the case method of teaching and learning.

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In this issue, we shall present our first “European Spine Journal Grand Rounds”. This case written by our young Chinese colleague Dr Liang Jiang on a challenging upper cervical chordoma best illustrates our Grand Rounds concept. Throughout the case, we are faced with the challenges of a very difficult tumor to be treated, the different therapeutic options and then we are shown the outcome of surgery. The discussion written by an expert in the field, Professor Stefano Boriani, sheds further insight to the

challenges of such tumors along with his extensive experience.

The European Spine Journal Grand Rounds section is now open to all the scientific medical community and we have added a specific section called “Grand Rounds” in our online manuscript submission system. We hope that with such European Spine Journal Grand Rounds we shall increase our readership interest and will fulfill our fundamental mission that is Teaching our Spine Community.