



Board Walk – October 2019

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Building our future together



Dear colleagues,

I am grateful for the trust you have bestowed upon me and I am greatly honored to be the President of the International Headache Society.

First, I thank Past-President Lars Edvinsson for his service to the International Headache Society as well as his immense contributions to the field of headache sciences.

The International Headache Society is a prosperous organization that was established in the 1980s with an ambition to tackle the global health problem posed by headache disorders. This is the journey we continue today.

During the past two years, I have sought knowledge and inspiration from young as well as senior members of our society, with the purpose of developing a future vision for the International Headache Society. Through your invaluable input I have formulated a vision that I would like to share with you.

Education

Education is constructive in nature and capable of bringing much-desired change. Therefore, education constitutes an integral part of any health professional organization and is the focus of the Educational Committee of the International Headache Society. My ambition is to continue our long tradition of disseminating knowledge and promoting educational strategies worldwide.

To empower educational initiatives, I would like our junior members to assist me in creating high-quality online educational platforms. This initiative will aim to reduce substantial knowledge gaps about optimum clinical management and treatment of headache disorders. Here, it is important to remember that limited availability of educational platforms in languages other than English constitutes a major barrier. Therefore, I would like the national headache societies to join me in translating our online educational platforms into multiple languages. We must do away with language barriers, and a concerted effort of this magnitude will be vital for progress in the field of education on headache disorders.

Research

Headache disorders are a public health challenge, with insufficient funding and recognition. Nevertheless, great advances have been made thanks to a continuous stream of novel research.

As President, I would like to promote more collaborative research efforts with other health professional organizations such as the European Headache Federation, American Headache Society, European Academy of Neurology, American Academy of Neurology, and the International Association for the Study of Pain. This will facilitate information exchange and collaboration across the research community. In this context, joint scientific meetings provide a unique opportunity for young innovative researchers so that they can wield scientific wonders to reduce the huge burden of headache disorders.

We should also focus more resources on headache sciences in low- and middle-income countries around the world. At present, novel research opportunities are inconsistently available to healthcare professionals and scientists in these countries. To address this challenge, regional meetings are needed to advance the process from research idea to clarity on underlying disease mechanisms and development of novel treatments. Some of you are already working tirelessly on this matter and my ambition is to work alongside you to make headache sciences flourish worldwide.

Electronic media

Electronic media have changed the world, and we will change with them. I believe more can and should be done to increase the visibility of the International Headache Society.

We must go beyond a clinical and research audience and implement policies to raise public and political awareness. Again, we need the help of our bright junior members whose innovative thinking and imagination meets the demands of a technological age. Together, I believe we can establish the International Headache Society as the main electronic source of information on all aspects of headache sciences. This will lay a foundation for continuous growth and bridge the gap between academia and the public.

Patient advocacy

Over the past two years, the International Headache Society has collaborated with the Global Patient Advocacy Coalition (GPAC) to promote headache awareness worldwide. GPAC works in conjunction with patients, healthcare providers, and health

professional organizations to improve the lives of those affected by migraine, cluster headache, and many other headache disorders. In the future, we will continue to collaborate with GPAC and strengthen our efforts to raise awareness of the huge burden and societal costs of headache disorders. I will also continue to work with the global Lifting the Burden (LTB) campaign, whose activities include implementing better medical care for people affected by headache disorders.

Lastly, I believe that with common effort and purpose, with innovation and dedication, we will continue to shape a great future for the International Headache Society and bring forth a new era where science and progress will move us forward together.

Messoud Ashina

Professor of Neurology

President of the International Headache Society

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