

## AsMA, A Global Organisation

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I am writing this while watching the rain fall heavily on a beautiful part of Cornwall in the far South West of England; in other words, a fairly typical English summer. However, when you have the chance to read this page summer in the Northern hemisphere will have drawn to a close and spring will have come to the temperate parts of the southern hemisphere. AsMA members and the readers of this journal are present in all those parts of the world: east and west, north and south.

The Association is rightly proud of its roots and its heritage in the U.S. The first annual scientific meeting took place in Detroit and although I was not present on that occasion I did attend when AsMA returned there 70 years later. In the intervening period, and perhaps even more since the second Detroit meeting in 1999, AsMA has grown to be the major international force in providing leadership for all the professions engaged in aerospace medicine and human performance. It has taken on advocacy roles, publishes clinical guidance material, supports education in the science and medicine of the specialty, and indeed publishes its specific, peer-reviewed journal. In short, the Association has a multifaceted role for practitioners and researchers, as well as being a source of advice and guidance for the wider population.

AsMA is U.S.-based and more than two-thirds of its membership is drawn from the States. However, the Association also works closely with other organizations in aerospace medicine around the world. This is seen in the close links with the leadership of the International Academy of Aviation & Space Medicine and the fact that the leadership of the two has sometimes been overlapping or sequential. There are also other, often more regionally focused, organizations that look to AsMA for leadership and linkage. This is true this year, with the 5<sup>th</sup> European Congress in Aerospace Medicine taking place in Oslo, Norway, and being conducted as a joint venture with AsMA. Whilst always alert to the costs of conducting a meeting and the expense to individuals attending, there is much to be gained by working together to promote collegiate and comprehensive education in our fields of endeavor. In that context we are investigating a potential opportunity for AsMA members to engage with the Cuban aviation authorities to better understand their aeromedical challenges and perhaps provide some guidance on raising standards if appropriate.

The leadership of the Association are always asking themselves, "Can we do more and is it appropriate to do so?" We certainly seek to have a presence at each of the annual International Congresses of Aviation & Space Medicine and in November this year I will represent AsMA in New Delhi, India. We are also

looking to see what we can offer to advance the education and practice of aerospace medicine in locations where it is less well developed. Since air travel is global, we are all potentially affected by aeromedical standards and practices in every country. There is mutual benefit to be derived from helping others to achieve the standards we enjoy in the countries with the longest histories of the professional practice of aviation medicine.

A further way in which this outward looking approach may be seen is by the change of the former AsMA International Activities Committee into the Global Liaison and Outreach Committee. The focus thus moves from looking to see what AsMA is doing specifically for the benefit of members from outside the U.S. to one in which the committee looks at what it can do to help to inculcate AsMA professional links in other parts of the world, thereby carrying the AsMA "brand" to new locations.

The AsMA scholarships for students and residents provide a further, very tangible aspect to the global reach of the organization. The awards provide financial recognition and support to the winners and, perhaps of even greater importance, these individuals are selected after competitive assessment of their applications. Therefore the recipients of the scholarships have a real demonstration of the endorsement by senior individuals in AsMA of their commitment and success in pursuing education and training in aerospace medicine. The applications for these awards come from all around the world and are a very clear indication of the impact that our organization can have far beyond its regular meetings and publications.

So, wherever you are reading this journal, in the U.S. or around the world, in whatever season it may be there, I invite you to consider what part you can play in extending still further the reach and capability of AsMA. By so doing, we can contribute to improving the health of all those who fly, for whatever reason, increase flight safety, and broaden the career paths for our younger colleagues. The Aerospace Medical Association is the international leader in the field. We are rightly proud of this and jointly wish to ensure all can benefit from it.



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