

Dr Léon Sebastian Illis – the new Editor of Spinal Cord

With my demitting office as Editor of Spinal Cord, I am pleased to introduce to our readers Dr Illis (known as Dr Lee Illis). He was elected as the new Editor at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia (IMSOP) in Innsbruck, Austria in May 1997.

Dr Illis was born in London on 4 March 1930. He is married with three sons and his main interests and hobbies are skiing and sailing.

His medical school was University College, London, where he gained his B.Sc. in 1954 and MB BS in 1957. In 1964 he was awarded the degree of MD for his thesis on Boutons Terminaux and Applications to Neurology, and in 1975 he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London (FRCP). Academic distinctions include Gold Medals from the Ceylon College of Physicians. He represented London University in fencing and sailing.

Dr Illis was a Second Lieutenant in the British Army from 1948–1950.

Most of his training in Medical Neurology took place in the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen Square, London which included six months at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. In 1967 he was appointed Consultant Neurologist and Clinical Senior Lecturer in the University of Southampton up to 1995.

His main research, following his training and supervision by Dr JZ Young, has been in the fields of regeneration and reorganisation in the central nervous system and in neurostimulation and, in particular, of the dorsal columns of the spinal cord for intractable pain. He is the author or co-author of 72 scientific medical papers published in peer reviewed journals and of 16 books or chapters in books including one on neurorehabilitation. With these interests and involvements, Dr Illis was awarded a Wellcome Trust Travelling Fellowship to academic and clinical neurological centres in the USA. He has also been a visiting professor, consultant or lecturer in many different countries.

A member of several committees and advisory bodies including the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Association of British Neurologists and he has been on the editorial board of the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry and the Journal of Neurological Rehabilitation. Past President of the South of England Neuroscience Association and also of the International Neurostimulation Society; and he is a Trustee of the International Spinal Research Trust.



In 1992, I invited Dr Illis to join the editorial board of what was then Paraplegia; subsequently changed to Spinal Cord; and in 1994 he accepted my invitation to be one of my Assistant Editors of our journal. He has shown great interest and enthusiasm in journal work and I was keen that, if possible, should succeed me as the Editor. Indeed this has occurred and thus I have great personal pleasure in welcoming Dr Lee Illis, a distinguished neuroscientist and clinical neurologist, as my successor as Editor of Spinal Cord and I wish him well in this new position. I know he will have the full support and cooperation from all of the members of IMSOP and of the members of the editorial board and publishers of Spinal Cord.

Phillip Harris
Editor, Spinal Cord