

Editorial

The model spinal cord injury system was established by the Rehabilitation Service Administration in 1970. One of the early initiatives under this federal program was the establishment of a national database, first housed in Phoenix, Arizona and subsequently at the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Over the past twenty years, 79,824 patients with spinal cord injury have been entered into the database. These patients were contributed by twenty-one different regional centers over the years.

During the twenty years that this system has been functioning, there have been three efforts to analyze the statistics and draw some conclusions. The first of these was *Spinal Cord Injury Statistics, Experience of the Model SCI Systems* which was edited by John Young and published in 1982. In 1986, Dr Sam Stover and the group at the University of Alabama in Birmingham produced *Spinal Cord Injury: The Facts and Figures*. In 1989, a consensus conference was held in Washington DC and the proceedings of that conference were published as *Spinal Cord Injury, the Model*. These publications presented the raw data without an attempt at in-depth analysis.

As the model systems program completes twenty years, the present project directors believe that an expanded publication to feature in-depth statistical analysis of the significant items contained within the data base should be produced. The first step in this process was taken at a meeting of all the project directors in Birmingham, Alabama in August 1992. The effort to be expended should produce a monograph that will become a valuable resource to all those people who are involved and interested in the problems of spinal cord injury. We look forward with anticipation to this publication when it becomes available in late 1993.

Paralympics update

In March of this year, the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee, composed of nine people and additional representatives

of US disabled sports organizations, travelled to Albertville to make a presentation to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The purpose was to obtain permission from the IPC to hold the Paralympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 following the Olympics. This nine-person committee had overcome numerous local and national problems to make the presentation, and this they accomplished over a seven month period. The effort was successful. The right to stage the 1996 Paralympic Games was awarded to Atlanta.

Utilizing personnel and funds largely supplied by Shepherd Spinal Center in Atlanta, this nine-person group has enlisted additional support and travelled to Barcelona to act as official observers of the Paralympic Games. At the time of writing this editorial there are several details, among them a marketing agreement, which must be worked out with the US Olympic Committee and the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, before the paralympic effort can move vigorously forward. Once this agreement has been reached, efforts will commence to raise the approximately 48 million dollars necessary to stage the games. The Paralympic office and committee structure to develop the organization will be formulated to make the paralympics a reality.

At the instruction of the International Paralympic Committee, one of the commitments of the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee was to hold a medical conference approximately one year prior to the games on the medical aspects of athletic activities for the physically challenged. We bring this to your attention so that you can consider and devise research activities directed towards the important aspects of athletic participation and athletic excellence for the physically challenged athlete. Begin now to prepare for your presentation at this important conference as a preamble to the 1996 Paralympic Games.

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Associate Editor