

EDITORIAL

Profile of Mr Wagih El Masri(y): the new President of ISCoS

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Mr WS El Masri(y) MBBCh FRCS FRCP

President, International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) 2008–2010

Following graduation from Cairo University Medical School and training at Guys hospital, London, Oxford, Stoke Mandeville and in the USA between 1971 and 1982, Wagih S El Masri(y) obtained the first accreditation in the specialities of Spinal Injuries and General Surgery by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1982. He was the last doctor trained by Sir Ludwig Guttmann. Since 1983, Wagih El Masri(y) has led the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries at the RJA Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry. This Centre serves a population of 10 million from the West Midlands, North Wales, Mid Wales and South Mersey.

Wagih El Masri(y) founded SPIRIT, a charity that promotes teaching and training in spinal injuries. He developed Transhouse, the first transitional housing scheme in the UK to prevent institutionalization of patients and ensure

effective use of beds. He also raised £4 million from charity to rebuild the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries. His work has been commended in the House of Lords as an example of good practice (Hansard 2003 and 2006). He was a member of the External Reference Group of the National Service Framework for Long Term Conditions. He strongly believes in the benefits of holistic lifelong care for patients with spinal injuries from the time of injury in specialised centres and in liaison with the community services.

He contributed to the training of over 30 consultants in Spinal Injuries and in Rehabilitation Medicine. Wagih El Masri(y) held the office of Chairman of the British Association of Spinal Cord Injury Specialists (BASCIS) between 1999 and 2006. Before his Presidency of the International Spinal Cord Society he held the offices of Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and President Elect of the International Spinal Cord Society.

Wagih El Masri(y) initiated the collaboration between International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) and WHO in the hope that ISCoS regains its recognition by WHO as an NGO. He strongly believes this will enhance the mutual interest of ISCoS and WHO in promoting Spinal Injury Centres and Spinal Rehabilitation Services for individuals with spinal paralysis throughout the world. Wagih El Masri(y) has contributed to the medical literature with over 110 publications about half of which in peer-reviewed journals.

He fine tuned, documented and published the clinical prognostic indicators of neurological recovery following spinal cord injury. He demonstrated that following complete motor paralysis with sensory spino thalamic sparing significant neurological recovery occurs with containment of the biomechanical instability in the presence of traumatic spinal canal encroachment and traumatic cord compression without surgical intervention. This is provided complications related to the paralysis are prevented. He was the author of the term 'Physiological Instability of the injured Spinal Cord'. He highlights the importance of giving equal attention to both the 'physiological instability of the injured spinal cord' and 'biomechanical instability of the spinal column' to enhance neurological recovery and/or prevent deterioration. He was the first to demonstrate evidence of higher incidence of death from bladder cancer in spinal injury patients compared to the neurologically intact population.

Editorial and academic activities include: Assistant Editor of 'Spinal Cord', Ex member of the Editorial Board of 'Injury', peer reviewer to a number of medical journals, supervisor of a number of MSc Theses and adjudicator of Phd Thesis. He has lectured worldwide and represented ISCoS in many

national and international conferences on spinal injuries and allied specialities.

Wagih was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship in 1999, the Gold Medal of the International Spinal Cord Society in 2002, the Hospital Doctor National Innovation Team Award 2005, an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal College of Physicians in 2005, The Oswestry Mayor's community award in 2007 and Freeman of Oswestry Borough Council in 2009.

He is currently working with the executive members of ISCoS on the future development and strategy of our prestigious society. Wagih always says that Wagih is proud to carry on the mantle from previous Presidents. He appreciates all the support he has had from the Executive team, Marianne, Sylvia and all the members of ISCoS.

He also acknowledges the support he has had from members of staff and colleagues on the Midland Centre for Spinal Injuries and Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry. Wagih always says that without Bettina, his wife, Hannah May, his daughter and Heather, his Personal Assistant, he would not have been able to contribute as he has done over the last two decades.

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