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Strides Toward Advancing Spine Surgery: Synergy Between Australasia and the International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, formed in 1927, is a nonprofit organization training surgeons and maintaining surgical standards in Australia and New Zealand. It promotes, teaches, and assesses standards across 9 surgical specialties in Australia and New Zealand: cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, otolaryngology head-and-neck surgery, pediatric surgery, plastic and reconstructive surgery, urology and vascular surgery.

The Australian Orthopedic Association (AOA) was founded in 1937, and the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia (NSA) was founded in 1940. The AOA and the NSA provides training to surgeons interested in treating spinal diseases and disorders. To galvanize the specialty of spine surgery, the Spine Society of Australia (SSA) was founded on 13 July 1990 and facilitates the exchange of ideas, research, and communication about spine health. While most members are orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons, the SSA includes all health professionals concerned with the spine's care.

While most dedicated spinal surgeons embraced the concept of spine surgery as its subspecialty, others remained loyal to their craft groups. However, there remained a diversity of opinions on ownership of the spine specialty, the most appropriate training methods, trainee selection, theories on causation, surgical procedures, and innovation.

The Post-Fellowship Education and Training (PFET) Program in Spinal Surgery was formed after discussions and agreements between the NSA and AOA. The PFET allows suitably qualified independent specialist neurosurgeons and orthopedic surgeons to undertake extensive education and training to achieve advanced proficiency, knowledge, and skills in spinal surgery. The PFET Program has

clearly stated objectives based on achieving a level of competence above that of a generalist neurosurgeon or orthopedic surgeon. The PFET Program complements the Surgical Education and Training Program in Neurosurgery and Orthopedics.

The SSA, in conjunction with Monash University, commenced the development of the Australian Spine Registry pilot in early 2016 and started patient recruitment and data collection in January 2018. This registry aims to be an essential platform for spine surgery research in Australia by capturing information from large numbers of spine surgery patients from multiple surgical and geographical sources with a particular focus on assessing patient-reported outcomes.

Improvements and advancements in patient outcomes with spine surgery have been facilitated by many factors, including the potential offered by innovations and new technologies. Australian surgeons tend to be surgeon scientists and, as such, publish their research on a regular basis. The synergy of the SSA and the International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery (ISASS), including its scholarly publication, the *International Journal of Spine Surgery (IJSS)*, in their objectives is obvious. The goal of the SSA, ISASS, and *IJSS* is to promote and disseminate the most up-to-date scientific and clinical research to their membership. This will result in innovations and new spinal surgery technologies, including advancements in basic science, biologics, and tissue engineering.

As a member of the SSA and ISASS and as an editor, reviewer, and contributor to the *IJSS*, I am aware we have common goals. They are all dedicated to educating spine surgeons worldwide by reporting on the scientific basis, indications, surgical techniques, complications, outcomes, and

follow-up data for promising spinal innovations and procedures.

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