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Elevating Surgical Spine Care Through International Engagement

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The October issue of the *International Journal of Spine Surgery (IJSS)* again presents a collection of scientific communication from around the globe. This international theme is at the heart of the International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery (ISASS) and *IJSS* and reinforces our connection as a global spine surgeon community.

In August, I was privileged to represent *IJSS* at the Annual Meeting of the ISASS Asia-Pacific Section in Seoul, Korea. This was truly an international meeting with more than 500 attendees from more than 20 countries. The scientific program was matched by unique cultural performances during the closing ceremony and banquet. ISASS Asia-Pacific Meeting Presidents, Professors Seok Woo Kim and Keung Nyun Kim, organized and delivered a truly energizing, informative reminder that innovations in spine surgery are global with an emphasis on the importance of sharing experiences in order to advance the field of surgical spine care.

Much of what we learn and share is confined to our local communities or regions. Often this is driven by educational institutions, locally available resources, or practice standards. This concentration of experience is beneficial but may also be limiting. Our patients should have the opportunity to benefit from global advances in spine surgery without having to travel great distances to receive that care. Yet, meaningful interaction and critique from colleagues with different experience in scientific forums elevate the quality of care globally and reduce the risk of those patients being attracted to a perceived but not fully tested scientific advance in another country.

While there are many societies that include global sharing in their mission, ISASS has embraced this as the dominant purpose of the society. This mission is reflected in recent changes, including the creation of the international president role, the promotion of major regional chapters, and a Board that brings representation from around the world. Aligned with this mission,

the *IJSS* again presents an issue with a dominant international flavor. This is paired with a position statement from ISASS regarding neurostimulation for back pain associated with neuromuscular instability. This publication presents a compelling assessment of a novel technology that has global relevance as well.

To paraphrase Thomas Friedman, author of *The World is Flat*, spine surgery communities need to be fully functional on the global platform, allowing more people to plug and play, collaborate and compete, and share knowledge and share work, that is unlike anything we have ever seen in the history of the world.¹ The *IJSS* remains committed to this vision.

REFERENCES

1. Friedman TL. *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, Giroux; 2005.

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