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Your Next Stop: Barcelona

by Robert S. Haber, MD, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

by the time you read this, the program for the 5th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery, to be held at the Hotel Rey Juan Carlos in Barcelona, Spain, from October 15-19, 1997, will be in the mail. Final arrangements will have been made for excursions, presentations, surgery, parties, and more. All that remains is for the hair surgeons (and their loved ones and staff) to make plans to attend the most extraordinary hair event of the year. Barcelona awaits with local activities, people, culture, and food that will delight all comers. The meeting itself will be one of the best, with an array of well-known speakers as well as many newcomers, who will bring all of us up to date in our specialty.

Have you been struggling with placing over 1,000 grafts effortlessly in less than four hours? In Barcelona, you will be shown the latest secrets. Do you harvest strips that are less than ideal, or have problems with bleeding or pain? In Barcelona you will find your answers. Are you hunting for that perfect device to speed up the grafting process? In Barcelona, you will see it demonstrated. Have you always wanted to stand in the operating

room next to an experienced hair surgeon? In Barcelona, you will have that opportunity.

To celebrate our first European meeting, we are delighted to announce that Norman Orentreich will deliver the keynote address, giving his perspective of where we started from, and where we are now. By the end of the meeting, we will know where we are going as well.

The International Program will showcase advances from colleagues in various countries and regions, many of whom we have not heard from before. A new series of didactic workshops has been developed and expanded to provide a more interactive learning experience each morning of the meeting. And an optional (at no additional cost) Beginner's Program will be offered at the start of the meeting for those who need to start from the very beginning.

Regional exploration will be possible, with a myriad of ancient and modern attractions within a relatively short distance from Barcelona.

Don't wait until it's too late! The meeting will be limited in size this year, due to space constraints, and we want to see you there. Watch for your registration packets, and we'll see you in Barcelona! ■

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President's letter

by James E. Vogel, MD, Baltimore, Maryland, USA



I hope this summer time message finds the membership of our Society keeping cool during the warm days of summer. They say that hair grows faster in

warm climates, so I am sure that our patients are enjoying the climate-induced, accelerated growth.

Summertime is also a wonderful opportunity to travel with friends and family. Within our Society, this holds true as well. I recently returned from Rome, where numerous members of the ISHRS joined me at the 3rd annual meeting of the Italian Society of Hair Restoration Surgery. This was a fantastic meeting from an

educational and social standpoint. A column on the meeting and its highlights will be featured in the next *Forum*. The Italians are wonderful hosts and we are most enthusiastic about their Society's success and growing enthusiasm among their ranks.

On another note, an issue has arisen which certainly affects all of us in one manner or another. The topic has to do with the degree of involvement by medical assistants and nurses during hair transplant procedures. The discussion and debate among different members of the Society has become so intense that we, as a Society, have been requested to develop a position paper on the role of assistants during hair transplant procedures. It is the Board's decision, which I support, that no position statement on this is warranted. State and Federal laws are very clear on the details of some of these roles and the

standard of care within our communities is also fairly clear as well. With regard to this last issue, let me slate on a personal note only, that I do believe an efficient hair transplant procedure cannot be performed without the help of numerous assistants. It is my preference to use at least three assistants for a procedure and their involvement in all aspects of the case is quite extensive. While I never relinquish my role as physician and, "captain of the ship," the current state of the art using thousands of small grafts requires many hands and many routine repetitive motions.

Finally, let me invite you to pull up your Society's Web page. You can do this by typing in www.ishrs.org. The details of participating on the Web site will be forthcoming in the mail. Best wishes for an enjoyable summer, and keep a lookout for the Barcelona program which will be in your mail any day now.

Participate in the ISHRS Web Site

"Hello, Doctor, I saw your home page on the ISHRS Web site and would like to know more about your services." The prospect of receiving an e-mail or telephone call from this potential patient is a very real one—but only if you are part of the ISHRS on-line data base or have a physician profile.

More and more companies are marketing their products and services on the World Wide Web. The key to success is having a popular service, a good understanding of your market, and, or course, a terrific Web site that facilitates communication between patients and physicians.

"The ISHRS has all of these strengths—and more—going for it as our organization ventures into Cyberspace," says ISHRS executive director Christina Achziger, who is overseeing the development of the Society's Web site. "Our goal is to be the number one source for reliable information about hair restoration surgery on the Internet. We want prospective patients to view our Web site as a trusted resource that

makes finding factual information quick and easy."

People who want to learn more about hair restoration and the services available to them will be able to search for, find and contact member physicians. This search feature, called Physician Finder, promises to be a great new way for our members to promote their services.

Members who want to be listed on the ISHRS Web site have two options. First, you can request a Physician Profile, which enables you to have your very own page on

our Web site, including a description of your practice, your photograph, and other information as requested on the form. The cost of this page is value-priced at \$600. Alternatively, you can request a basic search option at \$50, which will provide prospective patients with your name, address, and contact information. All members should have received an information packet and sign-up sheet in the mail. If you are a member and have not received a packet, please contact the headquarters office at 800-444-2737.

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Editor's notes

by Richard C. Shiell, MB, BS, Melbourne, Australia



Promotion of Inadequately-Tested Drugs and Devices

Extensive newspaper and TV reports of the latest hair restorer, finasteride, have set me thinking once again about the problems created by the shameless promotion of "wonder drugs" by the media. No doubt the defense is "that the public has a right to be informed," but informed of what? Surely the public is entitled to receive the facts? The facts about finasteride may be summarized as follows:

If taken in a dose of 1 mgm per day, it will produce, for a time, a substantial regrowth of hair in approximately 5% of men with androgenetic alopecia and about 60% of the remainder will get a little regrowth. As with minoxidil, about half the men volunteer that hair loss is decreased. Unlike minoxidil, we have no

long term follow up of the drug greater than twelve months, and the drug must be taken daily for life. There is currently no FDA approval for its use in androgenetic alopecia.

The manufacturers and researchers are already encouraging the promotion of this drug for a lifetime of oral consumption. It is a known 5alpha-reductase inhibitor, yet the only long term tests in the past have been on elderly men with prostatamegally and prostate cancer. Longer term evaluation on younger patients is underway, but how long should we wait to be assured of safety? I don't know, but I would not be happy with anything under five years and ten years would be far better.

In the same basket of doubtful ethics is the promotion of Laser Hair Removal (and a variety of other new depilatory devices). While there is no doubt that all these devices produce temporary hair loss, facts about the long term results are notoriously difficult to obtain. While traditional electrolysis is slow, painful, and unreliable, at least we knew that it had, in good hands, a 50% or better long term success rate. The expensive new ruby-laser devices are proving popular with patients because of the promise of speed and lack of discomfort, but are they being taken for a ride once again?

New Board for Hair Restoration Surgery

For some time now there has been agitation by hair restoration practitioners for the establishment of a Board to provide official accreditation to those who chose to make hair restoration surgery more than a "passing fancy" or a lucrative fill-in between other more "medically worthwhile" procedures.

In June, 1996, a meeting was convened in Chicago to get this off the ground, and representatives from all four existing American-based hair societies submitted two delegates. Elections were held in Nashville in September, 1996, and considerable work has been done by a group of dedicated individuals since that time. Peter Canalia, JD, was engaged as Executive Director, and the organization was incorporated in Illinois.

Led by President Shelly Friedman, Secretary James Arnold, and Treasurer Carlos Puig, the requirements for board certification have been formulated and are published in this issue of *Forum*. The first Annual Review Course will be conducted in Dallas in November, 1997, and the first examinations will be held at Orlando the following month. For details, please see "Upcoming Events."

New Instrumentation

This edition carries a report on a number of new developments which some surgeons will find useful. The indefatigable Bill Blugerman has two new products, a pin cup which is attached to the scalp, and an electronic graft counter. In addition, I "road test" Gary Hitzig's new slot punch.

Although Greco's Illuminator is the first on the market (Ellis Instruments,

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ISHRS WEB SITE

<http://www.ISHRS.org>

Inc.) and Bill Blugerman has a model, the concept seems to have been developed by Paul T. Rose of Tampa, Florida, who developed a prototype in October, 1994. He mentioned the technique to various people, including Joe Greco at several meetings, but did not present it publicly until the meeting in Orlando in 1996. He had a paper accepted for the Nashville meeting, but was unable to attend for personal reasons. In the meanwhile, others have actively pursued and improved his concept, and it is rapidly gaining momentum.

Richard Ochs, DO, has returned to the dilator, but this time has had them made sharp enough to act as a one-step lancet and dilator. Some doctors were doing this with hollow 18- and 20-gauge needles several years ago, but now we have a purposely designed reusable tool for the job, and it works well.

Correction

Forum #1 in February, 1997, carried an article, "Serious Adverse Drug Reactions During Hair Transplantation" by Drs. Bemelen and Fox. In an introduction to this article, which I had commissioned from him twelve months earlier, I gave the impression that Dr. Bruce Fox was the principal author. Dr. Fox has asked me to state that this was not the case, and that Dr. John Bemelen was the author. Dr. Fox, with his extensive experience in hair restoration, "fine-tuned" the manuscript for *Forum* readers.

I commend the article to readers who may have missed it. As Dr. Fox said in a recent letter to me, "It requires only one major problem to blight a career." ■

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Barcelona**



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Meeting**
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