



### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I wish to thank all of you for your confidence having elected me as President of this prestigious and time-honored society. I consider it a special privilege to take over responsibility and steer the course of the largest society for functional and stereotactic neurosurgery for the next 4 years. As the first German neurosurgeon chosen for this position I feel truly honored to execute this office,

and to follow my predecessors who have led our Society since its inception in 1961, when it was founded as the International Society for Research in Stereotaxial Neurosurgery by the pioneers in our field. Over the past 8 years I had the pleasure to work closely with the officers of the society, the board of directors and the continental vice presidents.

Functional and stereotactic neurosurgery has become one of the most important fields in neurosurgery. It is an ever more developing superspecialty rooted deeply in its common grounds with links to many other specialties. Functional and stereotactic neurosurgery has reached a point where many new areas of added competence

are being created – all over the world. WSSFN has become a truly integrative and interactive society, a place for the exchange of ideas and the advancement of techniques and science. WSSFN is bigger and stronger than ever.

The spirit of WSSFN was nicely reflected during the extremely well organized 16th quadrennial WSSFN congress which was held from May 27 – 30, 2013, in Japan. Big thanks go to Takaoma Taira, our past president, and the scientific congress planning committee. This congress had the highest numbers of attendees and we had an overwhelming positive feedback. I think every one of us had the opportunity to learn something new and to benefit from the innovative attitudes. The international community which constitutes WSSFN has various historical and sociocultural backgrounds, but one common gain – to provide the most appropriate treatment options for our patients.

The growing number of WSSFN membership over the past 4 years (from 362 in 2009 to 794 in May, 2013) which was marked in particular by reintegrating ASSFN and ESSFN under one common umbrella, made it necessary also to think about having a wider presentation in the board of directors. At the general meeting of the Society it was approved that the membership of the board was increased from 15 now up to 25, and changes in the By-laws were made accordingly. This new structure will (Continued on page 2)

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the Fall 2013 issue of the WSSFN newsletter. The recent meeting in Tokyo is the most prominent recent accomplishment for the Society (please see page 2 for the link to our meeting photos). A number of important events and occurrences are also highlighted.

The Society is grateful to Dr. Taira for years of dedicated leadership and now looks forward to future accomplishments with Dr. Krauss as president. His letter provides an inspiring outlook for the next 4 years.

The Society continues to grow and we have included a membership report at the conclusion of this issue. You will see growth in all sectors of our Society as well as the noteworthy addition of the ESSFN to the WSSFN. Our total membership has more than doubled over the past four years – growing from 362 to 794. Following this theme, we have included a report from the Outreach Program (page 4) and the travel grants (page 3), as well as a highlight piece on Dr. Zrinzo in London (page 4). The happy news of the Tasker Award (page 5) is regarded in tension with news of the loss of Dr. Munding (Obituary, page 6). (Continued on page 2)

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**Editor in Chief**  
Erich Richter, MD

United States

#### Regional Editors

Hiroki Toda, MD, PhD  
Paresh Doshi, MD

Japan, Asia Pacific  
India

**Have feedback or news to share?**

**Contact us!** Melody Dian [mdian@centurytel.net](mailto:mdian@centurytel.net)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

allow to involve more persons than before and have a wide consensus for all decisions made.

During the next 4 years, I wish to follow the tradition of my predecessors and to expand further the activities of our Society. I hope we can see another rise in membership integrating more stereotactic and functional neurosurgery societies either on a continental or a national level depending on the different existing structures. Discussions have been started with colleagues from Japan, and from SLANFE. We still need to overcome some administrative issues, in particular with regard to the need to provide uniform pricing and benefit packages worldwide. Basically, WSSFN in the future will offer both individual membership as before and automatic add-on membership by being member of a continental or national society. Things have become much easier since Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery now is the official journal of WSSFN, ESSFN and ASSFN.

The establishment of the Committee on Neurosurgery for Psychiatric Disorders was a great success. Under the leadership of Bart Nuttin the committee met several times meanwhile, and has resulted in two important activities. The consensus guidelines on the ethical responsibility of psychiatric neurosurgery which have been worked out and which are being submitted currently for publication, and a Literature Library providing an overview on what has been published in the field summarizing also the level of evidence which is being accomplished together with Sam Eljamel and Marwan Hariz. We are currently thinking to establish also other committees concentrating on other specific topics.

WSSFN will continue to bear responsibility for worldwide education and to fulfill special needs. The tradition of the Interim meeting will be followed, and it has been decided to have the next WSSFN Interim meeting in Mumbai, India, in 2015, hosted by Paresh Doshi. This meeting will have a new design, however: the combination of the two day WSSFN teaching course/ workshop (dedicated mainly to the interest of local and also young international neurosurgeons) plus a one day WSSFN interim congress (dedicated mainly to new developments and presentations selected from abstracts from the international WSSFN community). This new format will keep both the spirit of the teaching course on one hand, but it will also be the first step to a possible 2-year WSSFN congress format as it has been requested by many colleagues.

Finally, I am already excited to announce that the 17th quadrennial WSSFN meeting will be held in Berlin, and I ask all of you for your support, details to follow soon.

I am looking forward to working with all of you. Yours sincerely,

Joachim K. Krauss  
Hannover, Germany  
President WSSFN

## SPRING MEETING PHOTOS

Enjoy photos of the WSSFN meeting. Just use the links below to access the photos. The links will also be placed on the WSSFN web site at [www.wssfn.org](http://www.wssfn.org)

<http://sdrv.ms/173FwrU>

<http://goo.gl/bAxj8D>

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR (CONTINUED)

Perhaps most importantly, we look to the future. Several upcoming meetings are highlighted in announcements and on our calendar. Looking forward, our major meetings will take place in some of the world's most interesting cities: the AASSFN in Shanghai, the ASSFN in Washington D.C., and the ESSFN in the Netherlands. Please look for more information about the details of these important events in our upcoming issues.

If you have news that you would like to share with the membership, please email your suggestions to me at [richter@neurosurgicalreview.com](mailto:richter@neurosurgicalreview.com). On behalf of the Society, I welcome your contribution. The membership is the Society, and this is your newsletter.

Best regards,

Erich O. Richter, M.D.

## Upcoming Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery Society Meetings:

World Federation of Neurological Societies:  
September 8-13, 2013 Seoul Korea

American Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery:  
May 31-June 3, 2014 Washington, DC

European Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery:  
Maastricht, The Netherlands, September 17-20, 2014

## The 9<sup>th</sup> Scientific Meeting for the Asian Australasian Society of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (AASSFN)

January 10 - 12, 2014, Shanghai, China



On behalf of the Asia and Australasian Society of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (AASSFN), it would be our pleasure to welcome you to Shanghai and to the 9th Scientific Meeting which will be held at the Marriott Hotel City Centre of Shanghai from January 10-12, 2014.

The Marriott Hotel City Centre of Shanghai, is located in the center of the city and in Shanghai's busy commercial center. Participants will enjoy the restaurants and shopping centers, as well as the folk-custom culture of China.

For this meeting, we also have prepared an official tour program so as to make sure participants may enjoy their time in Shanghai.

The meeting web is [www.aassfn2014.com](http://www.aassfn2014.com). We look forward to seeing you in Shanghai!

## 16th Quadrennial Meeting a Huge Success

Over 700 attendees were welcomed to Tokyo and the 16th Quadrennial Meeting of the World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery held May 27-30, 2013, at the Hotel Nikko and graciously hosted by WSSFN's past president, Takaomi Taira. This record breaking attendance reflected the thoughtful and exciting program that was organized by Michael Schulder, scientific program chairman, his co-chair Moji Hodaie, and the planning committee, including Takaomi Taira, Joachim Krauss, Joseph Neimat, Hiroki Toda, Moto Hayashi, and Osvaldo Vilela-Filho. Over 43 countries were represented including registrants from Asia, Europe, North, South and Central America as well as the Middle East, Oceania and Africa.

The main scientific program was preceded by 2 successful pre-congress workshops; one on Microelectrode Recording and the other on Neurosurgery for Psychiatric Disorders. A wide array of topics were covered in the 9 breakfast seminars and 9 stimulating Bento Box Debates. There were 13 keynote lectures provided by leaders in the field with the main topic areas focusing on Emerging Technologies, Movement Disorders, Epilepsy, Radiosurgery and Best Science. Over 130 faculty provided a rich variety of presentations. With so much growth and interest in the field of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery, the lectures were both instructive and thought provoking.

There was an overwhelming response to the Call for Abstracts with over 400 submitted for either poster or oral presentations. This offered a logistical challenge, but a good one to have. In order to accommodate the many interesting abstracts, two separate poster presentations were organized, as well as a number of different sessions for paper presentations. One exciting addition to the program was flash presentations. Those selected had 3 minutes to present the highlights of their abstract. Flash presenters did an admirable job of keeping to their time limits, and session attendees enjoyed the variety of topics presented. Another addition to the program was a summary of the scientific highlights of the day. This was an excellent opportunity for those unable to attend a session to hear some important information and discussions from the day's presentations.

The abstracts were placed on a flash drive which was provided to each attendee. They can also be found by going to the meeting web site at <http://www2.convention.co.jp/wssfn2013> or through

## WSSFN Travel Grant Applicants and Locations

This year, the World Society was pleased to offer a large number of travel grants to residents and fellows participating in the quadrennial meeting in Tokyo. These grants, based on scientific merit and geographical location, were made available to facilitate attendance to the meeting and are a direct reflection of the society's mandate of nurturing the field stereotactic and functional neurosurgery across the globe.

The society wishes to recognize and encourage strong scientific contributions to the field internationally, while promoting the field of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in areas where it is not easily available. We are encouraged by the strong participation and interest during the WSSFN interim meeting of the society in South Africa, 2011. As a result, a number of travel awards have been made available to participants from Africa. We are confident of the fruitful outcome that accompanies increasing international participation and collaboration.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Dr. Joseph Neimat, Vanderbilt University and Dr. Graham Fieggen, University of Cape Town, in the selection process of the awardees. It was been a pleasure to review all the award applications.

Contributed by Moji Hodaie, MD

the society homepage at [www.wssfn.org](http://www.wssfn.org). There is a link that will take you to Karger publications where the abstracts are located.

In keeping with an honored tradition, Spiegel and Wycis Awards were presented to two neurosurgeons who have contributed significantly to the field. The awardees were Professor Volker Sturm and Professor Sang Sup Chung.

Also in keeping with WSSFN mission to support education and recognize leadership, there were several new awards given. The Ohye Award for promoting and initializing research projects was presented to Clement Hamani and the Tsubokawa Award was presented to Itzhak Fried in recognition of the importance of publications in peer reviewed journals. Dr. Andres Lozano was presented the Tasker Award in recognition of his leadership and outstanding contributions to the field.

The oral awards were presented to: Kevin McCain, Basic Science, and Maximilian Mehdorn, Clinical Science. The poster awards to Mesbah Alam, Basic Science and Shiro Horisawa, Clinical Science. Karger Publications provided two awards for posters which were given as Honorable Mention to Anwen White and Volker Coenen.

Dr. Moji Hodaie organized the travel grants which provided funding for 14 neurosurgeons from a variety of countries. Without the support from WSSFN, these talented individuals would have found it very difficult to attend this important meeting and were extremely grateful for the opportunity.

Funding for this important meeting was generously provided by grants from corporate funders, societies, and foundations. 15 companies exhibited at the meeting and were able to share valuable information with attendees. WSSFN was most fortunate to receive over \$355,000 from corporate sponsors which was record breaking! Additional funds were also provided by companies and societies located in Japan. Dr. Joseph Neimat served as Industry Relations Chairman and Dr. Taira and Dr. Toda worked with the Japanese companies and societies. All are to be congratulated for their fine efforts!

The welcome reception and the gala buffet dinner provided time for collegiality and sharing with old friends and new.

Dr. Taira and his colleagues in Tokyo provided a most cordial event and one that will be well remembered.

The travel grant awardees of the 16th quadrennial meeting of the WSSFN were as follows:

Agran, Jason ....Nashville, TN  
De La Rosa, Pedro ....Murcia, Spain  
Gamalya, Anna ....Moscow, Russia  
Hemmings, C. Wu ....Leuven, Belgium  
Kis, David ....Szeged, Hungary  
Liao, C.C. ....Taipei, Taiwan  
Naoufel, Ouerchefani ....Tunisia  
Ochieng, Naomi ....Kijabe, Kenya  
Rasul, Fahid ....London, England  
Ren, Jie ....Beijing, China  
Rughani, Anand ....Toronto, Canada  
Sanoussi, Samuila ....Niger  
Serletis, Demitre .....Cleveland, Ohio  
Szalecki, Krzysiek....Warsaw, Poland

## Featured Neurosurgeon Ludvic Zrinzo, MD PhD FRCS



Dr. Zrinzo is Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Neurosurgery at the University College London (UCL) Institute of Neurology and National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Queen Square, London, UK. However, as a teenager in the 1980s, Ludvic's passions were math and physics, not biology. That all changed in 1985 when a hijacked plane was forced to land in Malta. During the stand off and rescue attempt three passengers suffered cranial gunshot injuries.

Two survived after Laurence Zrinzo, Ludvic's father and Malta's first neurosurgeon, performed emergency surgery. Until then, Ludvic had not seriously considered following in his parents' medical footsteps (his mother is a neuroradiologist). This act of humanity in a time of tragedy was the wake-up call for Ludvic to seriously consider a career in medicine.

Having qualified in Medicine from the University of Malta in 1995, Ludvic moved to London to pursue a career in Neurosurgery. His interest in Functional Neurosurgery commenced when visiting the Neurosurgical Department in Lund, Sweden as a medical student and developed further while pursuing an MSc in Clinical Neuroscience at UCL Institute of Neurology, for which he was awarded a Distinction.

Dr. Zrinzo pursued two Stereotactic and Functional Fellowships, at Queen Square, London and at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) under the aegis of Professors Marwan Hariz and Antonio De Salles, respectively. He was awarded a PhD by the UCL Institute of Neurology for work on "MRI Guided and MRI Verified Deep Brain Stimulation: Accuracy, Safety and Efficacy".

Dr. Zrinzo's clinical and academic work at Queen Square focuses on the use of stereotactic MRI to guide and verify the surgical procedure without the use of invasive multi-track microelectrode recordings. This approach is associated with several clinical advantages, including performing surgery under general anesthesia, a reduction in the risk of hemorrhage, shorter operative time, and lower surgical costs. This MRI-verified approach to DBS surgery is gaining popularity in a number of centers around the world.

The multidisciplinary nature of DBS is at the heart of this London Unit. Dr. Zrinzo works closely with Professor Marwan Hariz, his mentor in Functional Neurosurgery, Dr. Patricia Limousin, who pioneered subthalamic nucleus DBS in Grenoble with Professor Benabid, and Dr. Thomas Foltynie, Senior Lecturer and Consultant Neurologist. Apart from work with established indications in movement disorders, DBS is performed for other conditions, including chronic pain and trigeminal autonomic cephalalgia. Patients are also being recruited to clinical trials of DBS in severe refractory forms of Tourette syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and Parkinson's disease dementia, making the Unit one of the busiest DBS centers in the UK.

In addition to a busy general neurosurgical practice at the National Hospital, Dr. Zrinzo is also Visiting Consultant Neurosurgeon to his native country of Malta where he introduced a DBS service some years ago. Dr. Zrinzo has authored numerous peer-reviewed manuscripts and book chapters and has given many invited talks on neuromodulation and the philosophy of neurosurgery. His work has received several awards, including from the ESSFN and WSSFN. He is a member on the Board of Examiners for the UK Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship in Neurosurgery. Educational work extends beyond the UK as faculty instructor for international courses in functional neurosurgery. Functional neurosurgeons from many different countries regularly visit his operating theatre

and his fellows have gone on to establish their own neuromodulation services within Europe and the United States.

Within the UK all patients receive free care at the point of delivery as part of the National Health Service (UK NHS), irrespective of whether they have private health insurance. This includes DBS surgery for established indications and follow-up. Providing such an expensive therapy within the UK NHS framework can be a challenge. Improving patient access to DBS therapy and acquiring the financial resources for administrative staff and nursing support can be a struggle. Nevertheless, finding a cost effective means of delivering excellence in health care can be very rewarding. Supporting stereotactic and functional neurosurgery by driving international education is a central goal of the WSSFN. Like many others, Dr. Zrinzo hopes that DBS will prove effective in the increasing number of neuropsychiatric disorders currently under investigation. However, it is clear that many challenges remain in the more established field of movement disorders. He would also like to see the WSSFN promote studies on ablative surgical therapies. All but abandoned by richer nations, these safe and effective procedures can still provide benefits to patients in countries that cannot yet afford the latest technologies or provide the extensive follow up associated with DBS.

Dr. Zrinzo is married to Mireille, a Lecturer in Law, and they have two daughters, Ella and Holly.

Contributed by Marina Abramova, MD

## Out Reach Program

Opportunities remain available for WSSFN membership through the Outreach Program. This program, organized by Dr. Jason Schwab in conjunction with Karger Publications, provides a one year complimentary membership in WSSFN including a one year online subscription to the journal Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery for neurosurgeons in developing nations as categorized by the World Bank.

The intent is to encourage neurosurgeons that might otherwise be unable to join the society to benefit through membership in WSSFN. To date, 34 neurosurgeons have taken advantage of this opportunity.

Please reach out to those who might benefit from this opportunity and provide them with information on the Outreach Program. Further information on how to apply can be found on the web site at [www.wssfn.org](http://www.wssfn.org). WSSFN administrator Melody Dian: [mdian@centurytel.net](mailto:mdian@centurytel.net) can also provide assistance.

## News and Notes

### -WSSFN Interim Meeting 2015 to be in Mumbai, India

Dr. Paresh Doshi will be the host chairman of the WSSFN Interim meeting which will be held fall of 2015 in Mumbai, India. The scientific and planning committee will be starting preparations for the meeting in the fall. Watch for information on the website at [www.wssfn.org](http://www.wssfn.org)

-With the growth in membership, the Board of Directors proposed an increase in the number of persons serving on the Board of Directors from fifteen to up to 25. Also, a new position of Second Vice Secretary-Treasurer was proposed. Both proposals were approved at the business meeting.

-Clement Hamani will serve as the WSSFN web site master. Eric Richter will serve as the WSSFN newsletter editor. Philip Gildenberg will continue as historian and Giovanni Broggi will also serve as historian. David Roberts will continue as journal editor.

Have feedback or news to share? Contact us!

Administrator: Melody Dian [mdian@centurytel.net](mailto:mdian@centurytel.net)

## The Ronald Tasker Award



### A few words about Ronald Tasker....

Ronald Tasker has always been one of the most brilliant stars of the constellation of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery and is, undoubtedly, the greatest icon of the field still alive.

He was born in Toronto, Canada, on December 18, 1927. He graduated with Honor in Science (Physiology) at Victoria College, University of Toronto (U of T), in 1948, and in Medicine (U of T), in 1952. In 1954 he obtained his MA (MSc) in Physiology (U of T), and was a post-graduate in Neurosurgery at U of T from 1952 to 1959. After that, he spent the next years (1960/1961) at the University of Wisconsin as a post-doctoral fellow in Neurophysiology with Clinton Woosley, who, to use his own words, taught him and many others to think about the nervous system in an organized fashion. Still in 1961 Ronald Tasker joined the staff of the Division of Neurosurgery, Department of Surgery, Toronto General Hospital (TGH), U of T, and in 1978 he was promoted to Full Professor. From 1979 to 1989 he headed the Division of Neurosurgery of the TGH. He was a very active member of the Graduate Faculty of Medical Science, School of Graduate Studies and Playfair Neurosciences Institute from 1978 to 1999, when he became an Emeritus Member. In 1990 the whole staff of the Division of Neurosurgery of the TGH integrated that of the Toronto Western Hospital, which was already headed by Charles Tator. Ronald Tasker continued his superb work in Functional Neurosurgery as Senior Neurosurgeon at the Toronto Western Hospital until his retirement in 1999, when he became Honorary Staff. Even after his retirement he still goes to his office once a week, on Wednesdays, to see some of his patients who simply refuse any other doctor to take care of them.

Colleagues from all over the world became functional neurosurgeons under his supervision. Even more difficult than to be a Full Professor is to be a Real Professor. This is a characteristic shared by very few and Ronald Tasker is one of those belonging to this very restricted group. I was very lucky to be his fellow at the Division of Neurosurgery of the Toronto Western Hospital of the U of T (1991/1992). I could learn a lot of things from him, but above all, he was able to teach me his philosophical way to approach patients harboring chronic intractable pain in a standard fashion. And that is how I still proceed nowadays.

Although a very complete functional neurosurgeon, his main areas of expertise were pain and movement disorders. In fact, it seems that the apple of his eyes has always been pain. This supposition is supported by, probably, his main contributions to the field: he was the first to firmly establish the differences between nociceptive and neuropathic pain and to perform the physiological mapping of the sensory (also motor) thalamus and midbrain by means of electrical stimulation.

His academic career was extremely fruitful. He was author of five books. The most well-known are *The Thalamus and Midbrain of Man* (1982) and the bible of our field, *Textbook of Stereotactic and*

*Functional Neurosurgery*, co-edited by Philip Gildenberg in its first edition (1998), and also by Andres Lozano in its second edition (2009). Excluding abstracts and posters, he was the author of 326 publications (articles and book chapters). He was also an invited lecturer at many renowned institutions around the world in 324 instances.

Looking at the results of his operations published in so many papers, they are usually among the worst in the literature. How come that someone with his experience and with all the high technology available could obtain such results? The answer to this question, actually, is very simple: someone is lying, and obviously, it is not Ronald Tasker! He is one of the most honest people I have ever known.

He was the recipient of seventeen awards. The most well known in our field are the Spiegel & Wycis Medal of the World Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery – WSSFN (1993) and the Ron Tasker Young Investigators Award in Pain Research, established by the Joint Section on Pain of the AANS and CNS (1997). In 2005, he was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada, the most important title a civil can receive in this country.

He also had a very busy associative career. Among many other functions, Ronald Tasker was President of the American Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (1980/1981), WSSFN (1985/1989), Canadian Pain Society (1991/1994), and Aesculapian Society (2003).

His main interests besides functional neurosurgery have always been nature and bird watching. He is the most renowned "layman" bird watcher of his country. Accordingly, he was member of the Board of Directors (1975/1980, 1982/1990, and 1991/1995) and Chairman (1978/1980, 1983/1987, and 1988/1996) of the Long Point Bird Observatory – Bird Studies Canada, member of the Executive Board of Directors of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (1982/1984), and Trustee of The Nature Conservancy of Canada (1987 and 1994). In 1991 he published the book *The Ontario Butterfly Atlas*.

Ronald Tasker was married with his beloved Mary Grace Tasker for 58 years, since he was 28, until she passed away 10 years ago, is father of four (Alison, James, Moira and Ronald), and grandfather of four children (Gavin, Kiley, Liam and Quinn), all of them marvelous people, just like himself. But that is enough about the functional neurosurgeon/neuroscientist and naturalist/bird watcher!

All this is Ronald Tasker. An outstanding functional neurosurgeon and professor, who loves and knows how to teach, making difficult matters simple. A man of great honesty and wisdom, owner of an immense heart and immeasurable kindness. A wonderful husband, father, and friend, and on top of all that, a very humble and modest human being. A true example for everyone!

These are only some of the reasons why the WSSFN decided to pay him this homage. As per myself, I am sure that nothing I can do will ever be enough to repay what he has done for me.

## The Ronald Tasker Award

Under my proposal, the WSSFN has decided to create the Ronald Tasker Award. It is a very nice and more than deserved gesture. As you are aware of, homages are usually paid after people who are already dead. This time, however, it is being done after someone who is still alive. Isn't that great?

The Ronald Tasker Award will be given every 4 years to the most accomplished and still active functional neurosurgeon (ages from 36 to 65) along the 4 years that precede the WSSFN Meeting. Its first version happened in Tokyo, Japan, on May 2013, which is very opportune, since many Japanese functional neurosurgeons

## The Ronald Tasker Award (Continued)

were trained by Ronald Tasker.

There will not be any applications for this award. The candidates will be indicated and then voted by the WSSFN officers.

The Ronald Tasker Award is constituted by an Official Certificate emitted by the WSSFN and a stipend of US\$ 3000.00, sponsored by Diros Technology Inc., from Canada.

Once established the amount of the stipend related to the award, we had to decide which company should be asked to sponsor it. Ronald Tasker designed many of the electrodes commercialized by Diros Tech, and has always been a friend with its president, George Damos. That was the reason why this company was selected.

The first recipient of this prestigious award was former WSSFN president Dr. Andres Lozano

Contributed by Osvaldo Vilela-Filho, MD, PhD

## Obituary Professor Fritz Munding



It is with sadness to announce that Professor Fritz (Karl Friedrich) Munding passed away in May, 2012. He was not only a pioneer in functional neurosurgery, but also in nuclear medicine and radiation biology. He was an inventor of medical devices, founding member of the ESSFN, President and Honorary President of the ESSFN, as well as a knight of the order of templars and an aficionado of culture, mediterranean art and music. Prof. Munding was born 1924 in Freiburg in southwest Germany, the city where he developed his career

and which became the major hub in stereotactic and functional neurosurgery in Germany for many decades.

Early in his career, before he came to neurosurgery, he studied the heredity of the human singing voice. Then, in 1950 he decided to become a resident in the Department of Neurosurgery in Freiburg, Germany. It was only few years earlier, that Riechert had become Professor of Neurosurgery in Freiburg and had commenced a close collaboration with Behringer, Jung, and Hassler. When Munding joined the department, Hassler had already established his classification of the thalamus based on cytoarchitectonic features. Furthermore, there was a strong interest in developing functional neurosurgery and using other targets than the pallidum. In this unique setting, the young resident first worked on the perfection of a stereotactic frame, which soon became known as the Riechert-Munding frame. Only one year later, the first thalamotomy for tremor ever was performed based on the studies of Hassler in a patient with tremor-dominant Parkinson's disease. The surgeon was Fritz Munding and the other persons present in the OR were Riechert and Hassler. Nevertheless, when the efficacy of this operation was reported two years later in the German journal *Der Nervenarzt*, the authors were Hassler and Riechert. Munding's name was not mentioned as it was not the custom at that time to include residents as co-authors.

In the 1950s, Munding was extremely productive working both on the development of methods for interstitial brachytherapy of brain tumors and on the refinement and development of procedures to treat movement disorders. In the early 1960s "subthala-

motomy" was added to the armamentarium to treat Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders. While the target actually was the zona incerta and the neighboring fields of Forel, neuropathological studies published in the book "Stereotaxis in Parkinson Syndrome", edited by Hassler, Munding and Riechert, showed that some of these lesions actually extended into the subthalamic nucleus. In the 1960's, before levodopa was introduced in daily practice, Freiburg became the early epicentre of functional neurosurgery in Germany, and as many as 5 thalamotomies were performed daily. Visitors from all over the world came to see Munding operate and learn about his technique.

In September 1970, during a combined meeting of the International Society of Stereotaxial Neurosurgery and the German Society of Neurosurgery in Freiburg, out of dissatisfaction with the policies of the international society at that time, several European neurosurgeons decided to found a new society: the European Society of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery. Among the founding members were Munding, Gillingham, Riechert, Leksell, Laitinen, Siegfried, Gybels, Guiot and others. It was only a few years later, that Munding became the second President of the ESSFN and hosted the third ESSFN congress in September, 1977, in Freiburg.

Deep brain stimulation for treatment of "torticollis spasmodicus" was introduced by Munding in the mid 1970s. The target was the thalamus and all seven patients benefitted from chronic stimulation which was delivered via a radiofrequency coupled external pacemaker. The results were published in German in the journal *Medizinische Klinik* in 1977. This remarkable study and its publication were well ahead of their time and therefore, in addition to the fact that the results were published in German, they did not attract much attention, and were forgotten later.

Munding was also a pioneer in functional stereotactic neurosurgery for treatment of psychiatric disorders. In particular, he performed radiofrequency lesions for patients with obsessive compulsive disorder. While he was hesitant to perform psychosurgery on a wider range, a leading article with the title *Seele unterm Messer* (soul under knife) appeared in the German magazine *Der Spiegel* showing him while performing a stereotactic procedure on the title page. He was not happy with this article conveying both lust for sensation and critical appreciation of the use and possible misuse of psychosurgery. Soon thereafter, out of frustration with the report and in light of the increasingly negative public image of psychosurgery in Germany, he abandoned this field completely. He made numerous technical innovations and he was the father of several inventions over the decades. He worked extensively on early radiosurgery for pituitary tumors and he constructed new machinery for interstitial radiosurgery which became known as the Gammamed. In 1987, the count of stereotactic operations, which had been performed in Freiburg, reached the number 10,000. Munding was active also in the last years of his career as director of the Department of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery in Freiburg. He considered to perform neurotransplantation for Parkinson's disease, however, he discarded the idea because he was unsure about the results published at that time. Together with his co-workers and young residents at that time, including the author of this obituary, the longterm results of thalamotomy for a variety of movements disorders were obtained and published in the early 1990s in the English literature.

After his retirement from the University of Freiburg he was still active and performed surgery in a teaching hospital in Freiburg and occasionally in Rome, Italy. He used many opportunities to spend time in this south European country that he loved. After his final retirement from professional activities he was bravely fighting against several ailments with a sharp mind and a passionate soul until the very end. He passed away peacefully on May 23, 2012 in Freiburg. Rest in peace.

Contributed by Joachim K. Krauss, MD

## Membership Report

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 Medical University of Hannover, MHH  
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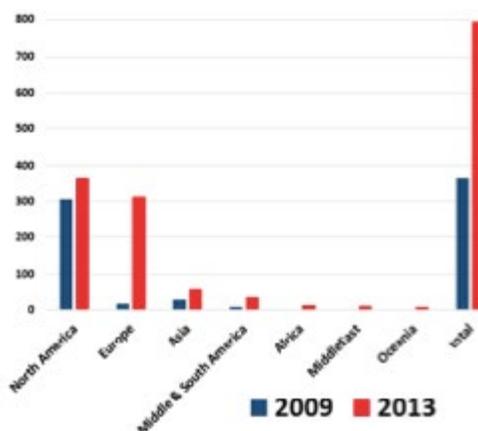
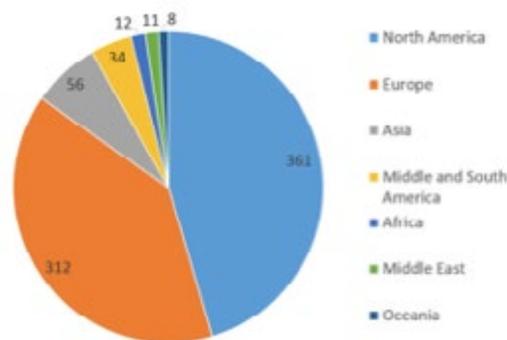
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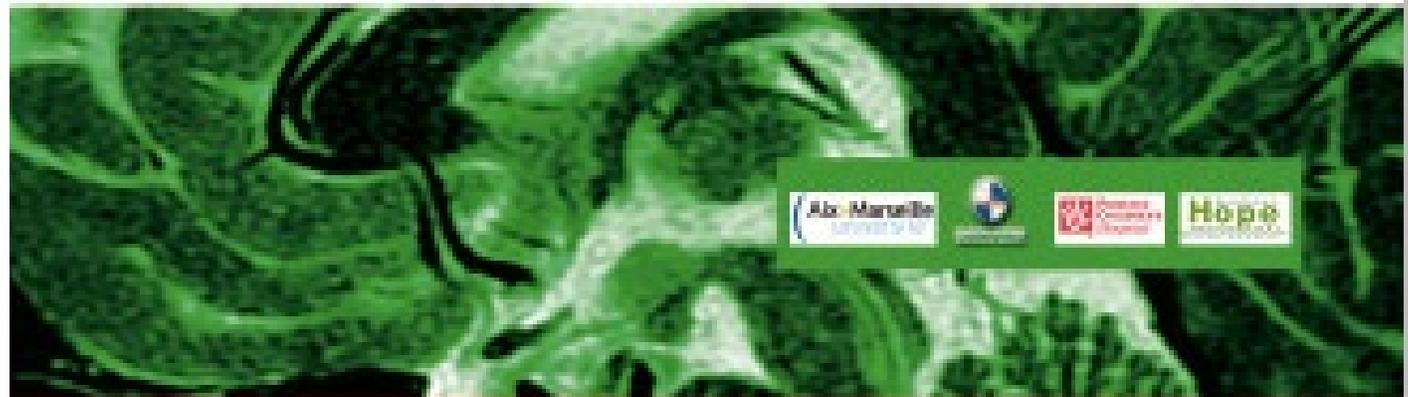
With the inclusion of the European Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery (ESSFN) members in WSSFN, the numbers have increased significantly in the past four years. American Society for Stereotactic and Functional Surgery (ASSFN) members continue to incorporate North American neurosurgeons into WSSFN giving a broad base of neurosurgeons, residents and fellows throughout the world. The charts below clearly show the growth of interest in the Society

Membership	2009	2013
North America	305	361
Europe	17	312
Asia	27	56
Middle & South America	9	34
Africa	2	12
MiddleEast		11
Oceania	2	8
<b>total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>794</b>



It is also the hope that other Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery Societies will consider forming a similar relationship. By this type of collaboration there is strength in unity which can offer many possibilities.

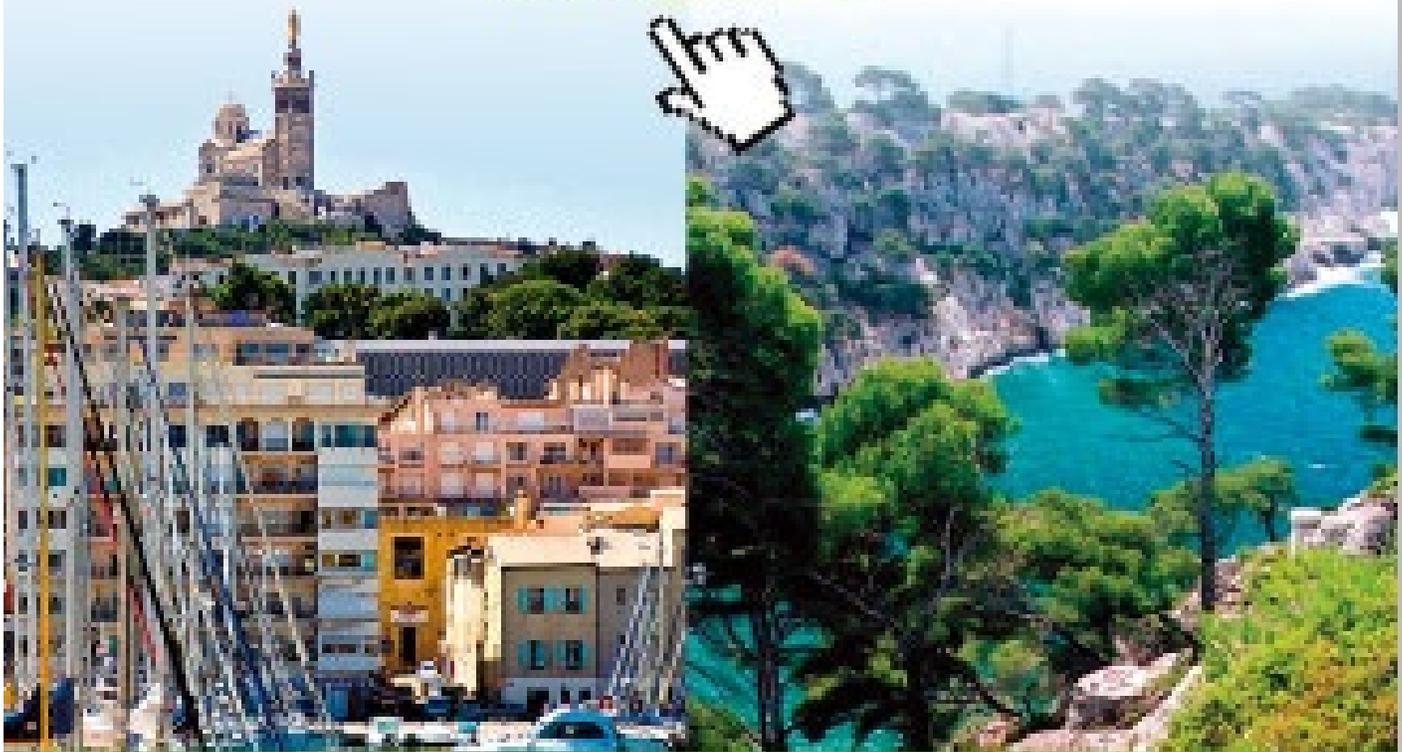
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