

Invited Editorial

# Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery: Our International Future

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Facial Plast Surg 2021;37:688–690.

To build our future, we must understand the past, be truthful about the present, and commit ourselves to actions that will achieve our future goals. We must remain humble, resilient, and adaptable as we reach objectives and expand our horizons.

## Our Past

In our recent past, the International Federation of Facial Plastic Surgery Societies (IFFPSS) was founded in 1997 and now represents 14 national and regional global societies with over 3,100 members.

Beginning with the creation of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 1974, our federated societies have focused on clinical excellence, quality research, and masterful teaching to achieve recognition from our peers, hospitals, universities, regulatory bodies, and the public.

We have earned our acceptance. Initial opposition to us as facial plastic surgeons and our specialty development has been a universal experience. This has come from our own specialty and others but, with increasing recognition of our education, training, and capabilities, we continue to grow as individuals and globally as a super-specialty. Each of you reading this article is a member of this genuine movement.

## Our Present

Our education has traditionally been through our in-person meetings, where we have not only learned from each other, but also developed respect and friendships. The COVID-19 pandemic has presently replaced these valued experiences with webinars. These have exponentially expanded access to mentoring by global masters and established many collegial relationships. We can envision a hybrid future.

Importantly, the IFFPSS is developing global fellowship programs to offer advanced training. This will create dozens

of fellowships to meet the needs of young surgeons who aspire to become the best they can be—our everlasting mantra.

We must increase our research and publications in our superb peer-reviewed *Facial Plastic Surgery & Aesthetic Medicine* and *Facial Plastic Surgery* journals. These represent the imprimatur of our academic and clinical excellence.

A critical pillar demonstrating specialty distinction is the board certification process. This began with the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 1988, which helped create the international board (IBCFPRS) in 2012 and the European board (EBCFPRS) in 2013. More than 2,000 surgeons have taken the board examinations and almost 1,400 have become certified diplomates, including the 147 diplomates of the IBCFPRS in 33 countries. Of note, the pass rate for international candidates is commendably in the 85% range.

Parallel to the IFFPSS fellowship programs, our certifying boards have harmonized their governing principles and eligibility requirements for the examination and certification process. Working together, the IFFPSS and IBCFPRS are providing the opportunity for advanced education and certification for aspiring surgeons. These individuals represent our vanguard and next-generation leaders.

## Our Future

Notwithstanding our progress, our specialty faces headwinds as it develops globally. We must continue to create our place within otolaryngology—head and neck surgery, cooperate with our peer specialties, and remain resolute to mitigate opposition to our legitimacy. Our continuing success will depend on the personal commitment of each of us to be our best and promote our specialty locally.

To choose to be a facial plastic surgeon is to choose a life journey. Each of us progresses on our own path through our achievements in education, clinical skills, teaching, research,

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**Issue Theme** Facial Plastic Surgery Original Research; Guest Editors: Anthony P. Sclafani, MD, MBA, FACS, and Alwyn D'Souza, MBBS, FRCS Eng, FRCS (ORL-HNS)

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Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc.,  
333 Seventh Avenue, 18th Floor,  
New York, NY 10001, USA

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0041-1736159>.  
ISSN 0736-6825.

and board certification. Many have led the way, and we each lead the way for the next generation.

Our journey today has additional, existential challenges. The information technology (IT) revolution and social media have “connected” us. However, our “silos of knowledge” are surrounded by wastelands of ignorance (sic), often littered with “alternative facts.” We must remain analytically critical, differ respectfully, and remember we each have a responsibility to our profession, not only our self-serving interests.

The IT revolution has enhanced our personal agency while threatening our personal connections with the professional organizations that traditionally have protected our collective interests. The centrifugal forces of rapid change

can separate us from the organizations that have bound us together. Global alliances can be fractured in the pursuit of self-interest. Ultimately, we could drift untethered from our common goals, to the detriment of our organizations, our specialty, and each of us personally. We must remain cohesive and loyal to each other. Therein lies our mutual strength.

Your future is our future—the future of facial plastic and reconstructive surgery (FPRS). Ask yourself, “How would I like to change the face of FPRS?” There are so many opportunities for you. Support your professional organizations, contribute to your specialty journals, become board-certified, and be the best you can be every day. You can make a difference!