

Internationalism of veterinary orthopaedics

During the last half century, the veterinary profession has witnessed an unprecedented growth in expertise and knowledge in regard to the management of fractures and traumatic injuries in animals, both large and small. As we pause to reflect on this development, we recall with great fondness our memories of the late Wade O. Brinker who was a spark and catalyst for much of this progress (see memorial in this issue of *VCOT* starting page xi). A brilliant teacher and surgeon, Wade accrued an immense volume of clinical experience in fracture surgery. Using this experience, he refined the clinical application of the intramedullary pin, the external skeletal fixator and bone plate devices in fracture treatment. Through his textbooks, teachings at Michigan State University, and courses in the USA and around the world, Wade Brinker was an inspiration and mentor figure to many of us. He was a humble man who was quick to attribute credit to others when it was due. Therefore, I am sure he would have been one of the first to acknowledge that many of the techniques of fracture treatment used today have their origins in different and far off corners of our world. For example, it was Gerhard Küntschner, a German surgeon, who pioneered intramedullary nailing of diaphyseal fractures, and then later Ronald Huckstep, a British surgeon working in Uganda, who introduced the interlocking nail. The circular external fixator and distraction osteogenesis were originated by Gavril Ilizarov in Russia, and further refined by the Italian surgeons before being introduced to the rest

of the world. Numerous European surgeons tried in vain to treat fractures with bone plates and screws, mainly due to a lack of understanding of aseptis. However, it was Robert Danis in Belgium and George Bagby in the USA who devised the concept of the 'self-compressing' bone plate to allow the generation of interfragmentary compression, prior to the AO who brought this concept of fracture management to reality in Switzerland.

So, in looking back over the last 50 years, we can readily appreciate the value of internationalism in veterinary orthopaedics for the way in which it has facilitated the exchange of inspiration, ideas and new developments. As an organization, the ESVOT has provided a healthy and vigorous forum dedicated to orthopaedic teaching on an international level. The first congress of the World Veterinary Orthopaedic Society was hosted by ESVOT in Munich in 2002. Now you will read in the report of Aldo Vezzoni, the Past President of ESVOT, about the launch of the Ortho Vet Supersite (www.orthovetsupersite.org). This big step will take ESVOT even further forward with their mission to deliver the highest quality teaching in veterinary orthopaedics in a friendly atmosphere that facilitates the opportunities for networking with colleagues around the world. I congratulate ESVOT on their success and look forward to the next World meeting in Bologna in 2012.



*Kenneth A. Johnson, Sydney
Editor-in-Chief*

Editorial



**Kenneth A.
Johnson**

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