

# Editorial

## **International Association for Ambulatory Surgery**

As ambulatory surgery has developed over the last 25 years, the countries where there has been the most rapid growth have formed associations of ambulatory or day surgery. The purpose of these associations is to support the concept of ambulatory surgery by sharing experience, promoting research and encouraging the continual quest for the highest quality treatment. Despite facing or having faced similar problems these national associations have had no formal interchange of ideas. In March 1991, however, the First European Congress on Ambulatory Surgery was held in Brussels. This meeting drew together many delegates from Europe and also a few from non-European countries such as the USA and Australia. Informal discussions amongst some of those attending the meeting came to the conclusion that an International Association for Ambulatory Surgery and international meetings would be beneficial, not only to countries where ambulatory surgery is established but also to those wishing to develop this form of treatment. Consequently, at the Second European Congress on Ambulatory Surgery in March 1993 in Brussels, an ad hoc committee organized by Dr Claude de Lathouwer and with members from 12 countries was established to form the International Association for Ambulatory Surgery.

This committee subsequently met in London in September 1993 and in Orlando in May 1994. A draft constitution and statutes have now been drawn up and *Ambulatory Surgery* has been recognized as the official publication of the new group. The International Association will be launched at the Third European Congress on Ambulatory Surgery which will be co-titled the First International Congress, to be held in Brussels on the 16th and 17th March, 1995.

Full membership will be open to national associations of ambulatory surgery and associate membership to groups developing ambulatory surgery in countries without a national association. Full details of the International Association for Ambulatory Surgery will be published in a future edition of this journal.

## **Quality issues**

There is no doubt that the new International Association will be heavily involved in quality issues in ambulatory surgery. In the December issue of *Ambulatory Surgery*, quality will be looked at in a series of invited papers, edited by Dr Tom Ogg. Preoperative management, care in the day unit and postoperative outcomes will all be examined from the point of view of quality and its measurement. If ambulatory surgery is to prosper in the future it will be because it is high quality treatment and not because it is cheaper than inpatient surgery.

Monitoring of quality is essential to maintain and improve the standards of ambulatory surgery, particularly in face of the rapid move to this form of treatment which is being engendered by the purchasers of health care, often purely on the basis of cost.

**Paul E M Jarrett**