

The Cartilage, Prevention and Treatment of Arthritis Study Group (GECA), was made official by the Portuguese Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology (SPOT) in late 2007. It is part of its curriculum to conduct training courses, holding and participating in National and International Conferences, Workshops, Courses, Meetings, with a total of 17, so far.

GECA's webpage (<http://www.spot.pt/grupos-de-estudo/geca.aspx> ) on SPOT's website, although in need of improvement, is intended to be a tool of dissemination, queries and constant updates. Thanks to the commitment of the founding partners, who were joined by Portuguese and International colleagues, we have achieved a prestige that we want to be reflected on a contribution to our orthopaedic community.

The collaboration of national research centers engaged in the cartilage is an asset, and aims to create a much desirable synergy between those centers and the orthopaedic departments. The commitment of Prof. S. Joaquim Cabral in coordinating the participation of those centers in the annual meetings of GECA, lending his prestige to this cause, has greatly contributed to the success of the GECA Annual Meetings.

Speakers and Members of the Committees have been the guarantors of the recognized good level of these training activities. The sponsorship that has been granted, by several companies, is an indicator of their recognition. We would also like to emphasize the unconditional support over the years, as a friend and as member of the Portuguese Ministry of Health, of Dr. João Nunes Abreu.

The support we have received, in addition to their committed participation, from Professors Jiri Adler and Mats Brittberg, this one also as Vice-President of the International Cartilage Repair Society (ICRS), also shows great consideration over the years and enforces the belief that we are on the right track.

Prof. António Oliveira's invitation, current SPOT's president, for us to assume the organization of the round table entitled "lesiones del cartilago" (Cartilage Lesions) at the SECOT (Spanish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology) 2015 congress, imposed upon us a great responsibility, but we believed we rose to the occasion.

The presentations, in the Annual Meetings that we held, either of free papers, clinical cases and posters, favoring Orthopaedic residents, have been a success and should also provide a stimulus for the services they represent. In the last Annual Meeting (3rd), it was awarded the free paper "Viscosupplementation in the treatment of gonarthrosis - Long-term Efficacy", to Dr. Afonso Caetano (Orthopaedics Department of the São Francisco Xavier Hospital in Lisbon) and the clinical case "Osteochondral lesion of the external femoral condyle" to Dr. Fabiola Ferreira (Orthopaedics Department of the Vila Nova de Gaia Hospital). The awards were presented by Prof. Mats Brittberg who highly praised both papers.

The next Annual Meeting and Course (4th Annual Meeting and 7th Course), will be held on the 16th of April 2016 and will be the culmination of all this evolution. The success of this event will depend on the active participation of all, especially the orthopaedic surgeons, who should have an relevant and active role in understanding the pathology of the cartilage, its prevention and its correct treatment.

The participation of the National Research Centers and related specialties, has been an indispensable contribution to this project aimed at the optimization and standardization of clinical behavior.

It is also indispensable, of course, the support of the sponsoring companies from which we have truly benefited. We would like to highlight the support of Merck Sharp & Dohme, Biomet, Bial, Bayer, Pfizer, and Zambon.

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