With the arrival of this issue of the Canadian Journal of Surgery, it is timely to reflect on international surgery. The CJS is receiving increased submissions from the global community and is publishing more on international surgery; this issue profiles articles and abstracts on education, practice and research relating to the field.

The increased interest in international surgery was reflected this year in the 8th Annual Bethune Round Table Conference on International Surgery, which enjoyed resounding success with record numbers of abstracts submitted, countries participating and people attending. Initiated by the Office of International Surgery at the University of Toronto, the conference was hosted in Vancouver by the Branch for International Surgery at the University of British Columbia and the Canadian Network for International Surgery. The conference theme was “Assessing Outcomes and Impacts of International Surgery Initiatives”; by critically assessing surgical outcomes, the conference aimed to improve the health of communities throughout the world. The surgical trainees who are our future leaders in surgery made an impressive contribution to the round table in terms of both presentation and attendance.

Throughout Canada, surgeons in many communities are making altruistic and enduring contributions to international health. For example, writing about his recent experience with Médecins Sans Frontières in the 2008 Spring CAGS newsletter, Dr. Patrick Whelan reports that his experience was one of the highlights of his professional career and expresses the belief that many Canadian surgeons would like to work in a developing country environment. Similar feedback has been provided to our department from civilian surgeons who have accompanied the Canadian Forces to provide care in shattered countries.

Tertiary centre departments of surgery can take additional steps to broaden their mandate for international surgery. To focus interest and attract expertise that improves surgical care in low-income or disadvantaged populations, departments of surgery can promote education, surgical skills development, service contributions, research and advocacy. They can do this by establishing centres or branches for international surgery charged with several responsibilities: Such centres can recruit cohorts of interested surgeons and related professionals who are dedicated to international health. They can facilitate communication. Internal rounds can be used to profile experiences and share ideas. External communication can be encouraged by organizing conferences like the Bethune Round Table. Further, these centres can facilitate networking and collaboration. Mentorship of surgeons and surgeon trainees is an essential outcome of this networking, with benefits to both mentors and mentees both within and outside Canada. Research projects can be initiated and designed for success, ultimately to receive scholarships and peer-reviewed funding. Degree-granting programs in international surgery are increasingly sought by trainees and can be formalized through these centres. Finally, the centres can house well-coordinated systems of financial control, including fundraising efforts, partnerships, development offices and collaborations with sister departments in universities.
Un mandat élargi en chirurgie sur la scène internationale

A vec l’arrivée de ce numéro du Journal canadien de chirurgie, le moment est bien choisi pour réfléchir à l’état de la chirurgie dans le monde. Le JCC reçoit de plus en plus de communications de la communauté internationale et publie davantage sur la chirurgie dans le monde. Ce numéro présente des profils d’articles et des résumés sur l’éducation, la pratique et la recherche dans le domaine.

Le succès retentissant de la 8e Table ronde internationale Bethune sur la chirurgie a témoigné de cet intérêt accru par le nombre record de résumés présentés, de pays représentés et de participants. Financée par le Bureau de la chirurgie dans le monde de l’Université de Toronto, la conférence a été organisée à Vancouver par la Direction de la chirurgie dans le monde de l’Université de la Colombie-Britannique et le Canadian Network for International Surgery. La conférence avait pour thème «Évaluer les résultats et les effets d’initiatives en chirurgie dans le monde». En évaluant d’un œil critique les résultats chirurgicaux, la conférence visait à améliorer la santé des communautés dans le monde entier. Des stagiaires en chirurgie qui sont nos futurs chefs de file dans cette discipline ont apporté une contribution impressionnante à la table ronde par les communications qu’ils ont présentées et leur participation.


En summary, burgeoning interest in international surgery is reflected at all levels throughout Canadian surgical communities, in academic centres and among our surgical trainees and surgeons. All the evidence demonstrates that international surgery is increasingly viewed as a legitimate discipline of study that requires expertise for a surgical career. The CJS is helping to broaden this mandate to deliver high-quality surgery for international health.

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Reference


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