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AOSpine Knowledge Forums: Research in Motion

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Since the inception of AOSpine, there have been many unique milestones. However, in the fall of 2010, the launch of the AOSpine Knowledge Forums began and redefined the ensuing “footprints” and “cadence” of the society, and its impact on the spine field. It was during that period that Dr Luiz Vialle, from the Department of Orthopaedics, Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Paraná, Curitiba, Brazil, and past Chair of AOSpine’s International Board, spearheaded the establishment of the AOSpine Knowledge Forums that eventually became the premier knowledge “broker” within the spine community.

AOSpine’s Knowledge Forums are pathology-based study groups focusing on degeneration, deformity, spinal cord injury, trauma, and tumor. Each AOSpine Knowledge Forum is composed of Steering Committee Members, Associate Members, and their respective Chairs. Invitation to these groups is based on a proven track record of research, a passion to collaborate, and being regarded within the community as a key opinion leader. The main goal of these entities is knowledge creation that is intended to fill research voids, challenge long-held beliefs, influence practice worldwide, and positively influence all health care stakeholders.

With the aforementioned framework in place, since 2011 the AOSpine Knowledge Forums have published over 139 peer-reviewed articles in numerous esteemed journals such as *Cancer*,¹ *Neuro-Oncology*,² *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*,³ *Spine*,^{4,5} *European Spine Journal*,⁶ and the *Global Spine Journal*,⁷⁻¹⁰ among others. The AOSpine Knowledge Forums have amassed over 20 international awards and accolades related to their research, such as the Russel A. Hibbs Award, the Whitecloud Award, various Young Investigator Awards, and other Best Clinical Presentation Awards at various conferences. Their collaborative work has also led to various journal theme issues and textbooks, such as the AOSpine Masters Series. In fact, they not only transfer knowledge through peer-reviewed publications, abstracts, and book chapters, but each year at the Global Spine Congress they deliver pre-courses and/or symposia, and further partner with other societies to disseminate their findings. In addition to receiving funding from AOSpine, the AOSpine Knowledge Forums have also secured competitive funding from the Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation, Scoliosis

Research Society, the United States Department of Defense, and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, among others. In short, the AOSpine Knowledge Forums have ultimately become the most international, collaborative research entity among any spine society worldwide.

The main hallmark of the AOSpine Knowledge Forums has been the ability to conduct multicenter studies on a global level. Studies range from retrospective to prospective cohort and randomized controlled trials. In addition, registries and research networks have been established. Through this research and collaboration, the Forums have gone on to develop guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of various spinal disorders, outcome instruments, cost-analyses/cost-effectiveness, novel classification schemes, predictive modelling, and treatment recommendations.²⁻²⁵ As a knowledge “mobilizer,” they have sought to raise awareness of their findings via knowledge exchange and dissemination, have fostered research education and mentorship, and strived to translate their findings to ultimately improve patient care and quality of life on the international stage.

We are proud to present in this special focus issue some of the recent work by AOSpine’s Knowledge Forums. Each of the 5 groups has contributed 2 articles that range from reviews of pressing issues and presenting key concepts that spine surgeons should know, to bringing to the forefront some key findings from their multicenter studies. This work is a glowing example that even though 8 years have passed since the AOSpine Knowledge Forums began, their research and activities continue to remain in “motion,” always striving to influence patient care and alter the tempo of the spine field by the combustion of the creation and transmission of knowledge upon the global stage.

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