

Editorial

The AO Trauma and AO Trauma Greece: mission, history, and perspectives

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Abstract

AO Trauma is the world's biggest universal trauma and orthopedic community promoting excellence in the surgical management of trauma and disorders of the musculoskeletal system. It is part of the AO and is the biggest global group of dedicated orthopedic and trauma surgeons, operating room personnel and researchers, committed to excellence and volunteering for a common goal. It offers an unparalleled route to education, research and community development opportunities related to fracture management and orthopaedic trauma surgery. Becoming a member of AO Trauma unveils new horizons in young orthopaedic surgeons' careers, and we encourage all of them to become members and actively participate in the numerous activities of this exceptional community (<https://www.aofoundation.org/trauma/membership>).

AO Trauma is the world's biggest universal trauma and orthopedic community promoting excellence in the management of trauma and diseases of the musculoskeletal system¹. It is part of the AO - Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteosynthesefragen, i.e. "Association for the Study of Internal Fixation". It is the most renowned global group of orthopedic and trauma surgeons, operating room personnel and researchers, dedicated to excellence and volunteering for a common goal.

AO Trauma History

The Orthopaedic Trauma management, related education and research were not always in their best form.

It is not a long time ago when the management of fractures was mainly nonoperative, empirical, guided by experts' opinion and taught only on a personal face-to-face basis, not substantiated by any educational approach or method.

In the late 1940s, the biology of bone healing had not been scientifically investigated and knowledge was sparse. Maurice Muller an enthusiastic young surgeon from Switzerland was fascinated by the work of the Belgian Surgeon Robert Danis, as this was published in the book titled 'Théorie et Pratique de l'Ostéosynthese' in 1949. After Mullers visit to Danis in 1950, a small group of three Swiss surgeons Robert Schneider,

Hans Willenegger, Martin Allgöwer, and Walter Bandi was formed. In November 1958, the AO Foundation was established at the Hotel Elite in Biel in Switzerland.

AO Milestones

- At the beginning, AO founders looked for a suitable place to conduct research. Davos was selected as the location and the Laboratory for Experimental Surgery (LECD, Labor für experimentelle Chirurgie Davos) was the first place that AO operated in 1959 under the leadership of Allgöwer.
- In 1984, the Charter of the AO Foundation was signed in Davos, Switzerland, formally establishing the AO as an international organization with Martin Allgöwer as its first president.
- The official opening of the AO Center took place in 1992 and at the same time the AO's headquarters, known as the AO Center, opened in Davos, Switzerland.
- In 2005, the Clinical Priority Program (CPP) Fracture Fixation in Osteoporotic Bone (FFOB) commenced.
- The AO Surgery Reference was introduced in 2006. AO Surgery Reference (<https://surgeryreference.aofoundation.org>) is an online resource for the management of fractures, which is used daily by thousands of surgeons in everyday clinical practice.
- In 2008, the AO celebrated its 50th anniversary and AO Trauma was created serving as the main pillar of the AO Foundation.
- The new AO Trauma membership program took place in 2010.
- The second Clinical Priority Program (CPP) Bone Infection was established in 2012.
- In 2013, the first education curricula for basic principles and advanced principles courses and introduction of the Skills Lab into the basic principles course were launched.
- In 2014 the global evaluation and assessment package for all principles courses and, later, for all AO Trauma courses was presented.
- In 2017 AO Trauma's fellowship community programme was introduced.
- In 2017 the Clinical Priority Program (CPP) Patient Outcome was set in motion.



Figure 1: The practical exercises session of an AO Advanced Principles of Fracture Management Course offers an unparalleled hands-on experience to participants.

- In 2018 AO Trauma celebrated its tenth anniversary

AO Trauma Mission

Following its core values AO trauma, the basic mission statements of the organization are to

1. Educate surgeons, researchers, and ORP.
2. Carry out and fund clinical and translational research.
3. Offer membership to a distinguished international network that provides members with rich opportunities for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, professional development, and collaboration across the AO Trauma community worldwide.
4. Focus to empowering and developing its contributions to the entire orthopedic trauma community, and further develop our membership by providing great support, so that we can make a significant impact to improve patients' lives

The key activities of AO trauma can be summarized as education, research and membership-related activities. AO Trauma conducts more than 400 educational events every year around the world. More than 34.000 participants attend these events, and more than 5.000 faculty members voluntarily contribute to knowledge, skill and attitude education. These events include



Figure 2: Group photo of the AO TESA Subregional courses, May 2025, Larisa - Greece. More than 30 faculty members, 100 participants are experiencing the unique AO spirit.

courses and seminars, webinars and webcasts and hospital-based education.

The Basic and Advanced Principles of Fracture Management Courses constitute the core of education events and focus on delivering the fundamental principles of fracture management to young orthopaedic and trauma resident surgeons (Figure 1). At the same time courses dedicated to sub-speciality orthopaedic trauma education are taking place mainly at regional and international level. These more advanced, master-level courses explore subspeciality topics include: Foot and ankle, Orthogeriatrics, Pediatrics, Hand and wrist, pelvis and acetabulum, Operating room personnel, periprosthetic fractures, upper extremity, lower extremity and soft tissue management. The content and the structure of these courses are developed based on the AO Trauma's competency-based curricula, promoting education that is dedicated to addressing patient problems and improving patient care.

The AO Davos Courses <https://www.aofoundation.org/aodavoscourses> is the organization's premier educational event. For many surgeons, Davos courses constitute a unique experience that serves as a window to a world of lifelong education and networking experience. Every year more than 300 faculty members interact with more than 1000 participants sharing experience and knowledge.

Organization

AO Trauma is active around the globe, nurturing self-directed regional research and educational activities. AO Trauma's boards and commissions are responsible for implementing AO Trauma's strategy. The AO Trauma International Board is the highest

governing body of AO Trauma. The Board works in close collaboration with the regional trauma-related AO Trauma organizations to ensure a solid global vision and strategy. It supports harmonization between the different regional organizations and the central AO functions and services. Global AO Trauma has five distinct regions: a) Europe and Southern Africa, b) Asia Pacific, c) Latin America, d) Middle East and Northern Africa and e) North America.

Country Chapters were introduced to facilitate the representation of the various needs of national groups and provide local members the opportunity to get involved with the most fundamental activities of AO Trauma. In most regions, AO Trauma Country Chapters are in an advanced stage of development, and they are managed by elected Councils comprised of AO Trauma officers.

AO Trauma Greece

The AO Trauma Greek Chapter was established in 2008 and thrived under the leadership of Prof. Minos Tylanakis from Patras University, who successfully organized the first and subsequent events and established the chapter as the leading organization of trauma education in Greece. AO Trauma Greece is part of AO MID (Middle Europe), which was established in 2005. AOMID was created by representatives of the following countries (in alphabetical order): Hungary, Israel, Poland, Slovenia and Turkey. It was essentially an effort of South and East European Countries to group and to ensure that the educational needs of the countries were recognized and served from the respective educational activities. This effort is one of the many success stories within the AO Foundation. AO

MID has grown from the original 5 members in 2005 to the current 23 member countries. It has become the forum in which the country members can gather together, discuss common problems and find shared solutions organizing more than 40 courses each year.

In 2018, Prof. George Babis from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens took over as the Chair of AO Trauma Greece. Under his leadership, the chapter grew even further, and new faculty members joined, thus ensuring the continuity of the educational process. Theodoros Tosounidis is the current Chair of AO Trauma Greece and the Chair of AO MID (East Cluster of Trauma Europe and South Africa) since 2022. AO Trauma Greece has successfully managed to organize at least two courses every year, a) the Basic and b) the Advanced Principles of Fracture Management Courses. Our primary focus is to communicate the fundamental principles of fracture management to young residents of Greece. We conduct our courses in the English language to ensure the participation of esteemed international faculty and also to attract attendees from around the globe. Our courses have been highly evaluated and have attracted people from around Europe and also countries like United States, Singapore, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Australia etc. AO Trauma Greece has also organised sub-speciality master level events and has also successfully fostered two regional events of outmost importance in 2024 and 2025 in Larisa, Greece. These international events attracted participants from more than 30 countries, thus confirming the organizational and educational capabilities of the AO Trauma Greek Chapter (Figure 2). Today the chapter has more 80 active-paying members and it is one of the biggest and strongest at the East Cluster of AO Trauma Europe and South Europe. In addition to the aforementioned local and regional events, the chapter annually organizes a very well-attended community development event that serves to strengthen the bonds between its members and empower the Greek trauma community.

Membership and community

Members of the AO Trauma community share a spirit

of volunteerism and camaraderie along with a desire to advance the care of musculoskeletal trauma patients around the globe. AO Trauma members enjoy access to exclusive privileges, including educational resources, member discounts, and research grants. They have the opportunity to connect with a lively community of surgeons, researchers, and experts from around the world, all working together to formulate the perspectives of trauma care. AO Trauma offers routes to assist you in your professional network, track fellowships, and be involved as a faculty member in various educational activities. Members gain free access to:

- myAO
- AO Trauma video hub
- AO Surgery Reference
- AO/OTA Classification
- AO Trauma e-learning
- AO PEER research knowledge platform (selected content)
- AO Access learning journey
- AO Trauma Orthogeriatrics App
- OSapp interactive osteosynthesis learning platform
- Podcasts
- Discount on Anatomy.tv - 3D Human anatomy software

In addition, member Privileges include:

- Free AO e-books and book discounts
- Online journals
- AO Trauma fellowship opportunities
- Discount on selected AO courses
- AO Member Directory
- Member networking events
- AO research grants
- Faculty development opportunities
- Discount on AO PEER Online course – Principles of clinical research
- AO PEER research knowledge platform (full access)
- Free 6 months trial of AMBOSS medical knowledge platform (Language: German)
- Exclusive discounts on SYNBOSS models
- Faculty Development Essentials online modules

References

1. <https://www.aofoundation.org/trauma>