ACTA
ORTHOPAEDICA ET TRAUMATOLOGICA HELLENICA

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

It gave me great pleasure to accept the invitation of the Editorial Board committee of the Acta Orthopaedica Hellenica journal to coordinate the edition of a volume on Hand Surgery and Microsurgery.

I would like to refer to some milestones that were major breakthroughs for the evolution of Hand Surgery and Microsurgery in Greece.

Everything started in the 1960s when the Head of the Orthopaedic Department, of the University of Athens, in the "KAT" Hospital, Professor G. Hartofilakidis recognised and ardently supported the need for the development of the specialty of Hand Surgery.

In 1967, the first reimplantation of an amputated upper limb proximal to the elbow joint was accomplished by A. Giannikas and P. Ballas, while in the 1970s the team of P.N. Soucacos performed the first reimplantation of an amputated finger with microsurgery techniques.

In the mid 1980s, the Hand Surgery and Microsurgery Department in "KAT" Hospital was organised and headed by N. Daoutis and afterwards by N. Gerostathopoulos. This Department played a significant role in the evolution of Hand Surgery and Microsurgery and gave a high-level training to young orthopaedics in Greece.

During the same period, in 1989, a systematic three-month workshop in Microsurgery in laboratory animals started taking place in the Laboratory for Research of the Musculoskeletal System "Th. Garofalidis" of the University of Athens in the "KAT" Hospital. Since then, more than one thousand surgeons of various specialties have been trained in this lab workshop.

Similar workshops have been organized by the Orthopaedic Department, University of Ioannina, while Microsurgery workshops in lab animals are also organized on a regular basis at the "Soucacos" Orthopaedic Center at "Attikon" Hospital.

Nowadays, we have achieved mastery in Hand Surgery techniques such as brachial plexus surgery, new techniques on peripheral nerve lesions, free flap transfers, toe transfers, arthroscopic techniques, arthroplasties, and gradual expansion of operations on the entire upper limb.

At the moment, surgical teams specialized in Hand Surgery and Microsurgery with rich clinical, educational and scientific experience work in both the public and private health system.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the authors who have accepted my invitation and contributed to this volume by submitting manuscripts of high quality.

Sincerely,
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