



President's Report
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September 2020

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Annexures:

- (i) Vision, Mission, Core Values, Objectives & Goals
- (ii) Strategic initiative/objectives of each priority along with descriptive analysis
- (iii) Outcome of Survey of members for ISCoS Journals
- (iv) Terms of reference (TOR) for SIGs

A. Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has not only been the defining health crisis of our time, it has also had devastating social and economic effects. For a while normal activities come to a stand still across the globe.

The activities of ISCoS were also similarly affected for a while. The in-person ISCoS ASM at Yokohama had to be cancelled. However, reflecting back as a team we have been also able to accept the challenge, tap on the opportunity and not only continue with our activities using different strategies but also start new initiatives like the Virtual ASM. This has given us the confidence that as a team we would rise up, notwithstanding the enormity of the challenge that laid our path.

As outgoing President, I would want to use the opportunity to request you to contribute wholeheartedly on ways and means to bridge the gap between what “is possible” or “needed” and that “actually available” to persons with spinal injury across the globe. The ISCoS Strategic Plan would provide us the roadmap for the next 5 to 10 years. As the only international society working in the field of spinal injuries, it becomes our mandate as well as moral responsibility to do everything possible within our resources to improve the plight of persons with spinal injuries. Although persons with SCI in developed countries have access to established standards of care and advancements in technology, we know that the vast majority in emerging countries are deprived of even fundamental treatment modalities.

Let's rise up to the challenge posed by spinal injuries

Let's contribute to a progressive change towards a dynamic organization

Let's accelerate the movement to serve our constituency

B. Efforts to bring in a change: greater transparency, inclusivity, accountability and continuity

Efforts were made to bring in greater transparency through regularly sharing information through emails and Zoom meetings and discussing all important issues before taking a final decision. The members were kept informed about the various activities of the Society through the ISCoS Newsletter. An effort has been made to try to drive a culture change in ISCoS, to respond to any questions and concerns in a timely fashion. This has been done with the hope that the endeavour will build trust and promote engagement as well as motivation.

For making the Society more inclusive, it has been an endeavor to let everyone feel valued and comfortable.

The activities of various Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have been streamlined with the finalization of the template Terms of Reference which defines the structure, governance and reporting structure. It is hoped that this will encourage more involvement of all disciplines involved in SCI management.

If ISCoS has to improve its performance the culture of accountability needs to be strengthened. Each Committee /Special Interest Group has been requested to set up its action plan /objectives for the year. They had been asked to spell out any requirements in this regard. The achievement of goals was reviewed just before this ASM and through online meetings of the Executive with the Chairs of the Committees and Special Interest Groups in the month of March.

We have also been working to ensure continuity. As a Society we can't overlook that there could be disruptive events but the Societies functions should be resilient and not just recoverable with any such eventuality. The Strategic Plan has the provision to ensure a succession plan for each official post.

C. Maintaining Communication

An effort was made to try to maintain a periodic communication. There have been 09 online meetings of the Executive since the last ASM at Nice. Other than the mid term Executive meeting, there were meetings to discuss Virtual ASM, the Virtual Platform, the Journals and the format of the AGM. The Board was briefed about the outcomes of all the meetings.

Zoom meetings were held with Chairs of all Committees and Special Interest Groups between 2nd March, 2020 to 13th March, 2020 with a view to discuss the Action Plan for the year before the Executive Committee meeting.

However the bulk of the communication since the last ASM at Nice has been amongst the Strategic Management Committee (SMC) which comprises of the Executive and the Board members as well as Past Presidents and the Chairs of all Standing Committees and SIGs. There was also communication with Standing Committee and SIG Chairs for the Committee/SIGs views on the initiatives for the relevant priority before they were circulated to the SMC.

D. ISCoS Virtual ASM

We are all about to create history for ISCoS with the first ever Virtual Annual Scientific Meeting. A few years ago, we could not have believed this. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to re-imagine an in-person conference at Yokohama to produce a fully virtual conference.

With the continuous strategic review and planning, the ISCoS Annual Scientific meeting has been progressively setting higher standards and is gradually becoming the hub for scientific deliberations for all disciplines concerned with SCI management. Although the circumstances surrounding this conference has been unusual, it will have all the regular features of our Annual Scientific meeting. There will be Keynote addresses, presentations, free papers, posters, instructional courses, workshops and Special Interest Group meetings.

A lot of thought has gone into the organization of this conference and the delegate experience. A series of meetings were held to decide the format of the conference and chose the Virtual platform. It was decided to have the conference run over 5 days rather than the usual 4 to reduce the daily hours which would in turn reduce screen time. The programme has been designed to provide the most convenient schedule for maximum participants. Pre-recorded presentations will be available post-conference, so delegates can catch up at their leisure. There will also be an opportunity to socialize and network through live chat rooms, face to face video calls and group Zoom lounges as we stay connected.

As they say, there is an opportunity in every adversity. We are creating opportunities through this Virtual Conference by helping save expenses on travel, accommodation and registration charges. The need of the hour is judicious use of available resources. Thus, there is an opportunity to divert the savings towards measures to contain the impact of the pandemic.

We hope you will like this new experience from the safety of your home or workplace. We will look forward to your feedback.

E. Strategic Plan of ISCoS

The need to develop a Strategic Plan of ISCoS in conjunction with the 'Objectives of ISCoS' was felt so as to be able to move forward constructively with clearly defined goals. This was vital for the success of various initiatives/ventures of ISCoS and to chalk out a roadmap for the future. Furthermore, it would provide an opportunity to listen to the voice of the members and transform their relevant ideas into reality. The work on the strategic plan was started during the first year of presidency when a Questionnaire was finalized after extensive deliberations amongst the Executive and Board. This was then circulated to the members. The responses were analysed and compiled as SWOT analysis which was presented at Nice during the ASM on 4th November 2019. Over the last year a core team worked on Vision, Mission and Core values. These were circulated and finalized after the approval of the Strategic Management Committee (SMC) (copy enclosed at **Annexure (i)**). The initiatives for various priorities were brainstormed and listed. These were circulated amongst the SMC and scores were obtained. A statistician was requested to compile and analyse the scoring. Details are enclosed at **Annexure (ii)**.

Milestones achieved in compilation of the Strategic plan during first year of Presidency (2018-19):

- Circulation of the report of Adhoc Constitution and Byelaws Committee-July, 2019
- Drafting & finalization of Questionnaire 30th September, 2019
- Circulation of Questionnaire for Members-11th October, 2019
- Circulation of Questionnaire for Affiliated Societies- 18th October, 2019
- Compilation of responses and SWOT analysis - 26th October, 2019

Milestone achieved during the second year of Presidency (2019-2020)

- Circulation of Draft Strategic Plan amongst members
- Comments received from the members/Executive and board
- Circulation of first 'Mission and Vision statement and Values
- Finalization of 'Mission, Vision and Values'
- Brainstorming on various Goals, Objectives and Initiatives
- Compilation of specific initiatives
- Finalization of Initiatives
- Scoring of Initiatives
- Compilation of scoring of initiatives
- Circulation of Final Initiatives and road map

Every year the SMC would need to finalise the operational plan in consultation with the relevant Standing Committees/SIGs /officials. This will include initiatives to be implemented in that particular year. For this year the Operational Plan would be finalise within one month of the Virtual ASM.

F Review of ISCoS Journal

There were a series of meetings and a lot of communication in order to review the working of the ISCoS Journals. It was decided to conduct a survey of the members to take their feedback on the Journals. The Questionnaire for the Survey was finalized by the Executive in consultation with the Board and Strategic Management Committee. There were 20 responses. The outcomes of the survey are depicted in **Annexure (iii)**.

G. Registration of ISCoS

In the last AGM at Nice, some members wanted to explore the option of registering ISCoS as a charity. It was also discussed that we should explore doing a registration which would give a global legal validity even if it requires moving out of UK. The matter has been discussed with experts and responsible officials of various International Societies. After discussions it could be interpreted that the law of the land wherever the Society is registered would prevail. It is possible to have a Treasurer from outside the country, but since the bank would be in the country and financial regulations of the country would need to be followed, it is suggested that the Treasurer is from the country. Alternatively, a process could be set up such that the formalities are completed even if the Treasurer is from outside but it becomes cumbersome. Hence the registration as it is now, may be appropriate.

The matter of whether to register ISCoS as a Charity was also explored. ISCoS doesn't need to pay tax on donations. Opinion of Solicitors/ auditors on additional pros & cons of registering as a Charity had been sought. However, their opinion was delayed due to the pandemic.

The matter was discussed by the Executive, Board and Strategic Management Committee. There was an agreement on the above and it was decided that we should wait for the opinion of the Solicitors/auditors before taking a final decision.

H. Association of SIGs

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have played an important role in fulfilling the Mission and Vision of ISCoS. The recognition of SIGs has also motivated Allied health professionals to get more involved in various activities of ISCoS. SIGs have been requesting for an administrative structure for better functioning of their Groups. ISCoS believes that there would be more representation of Allied health professionals from across the globe, especially economically less developed regions, if we could provide them with such a platform. It was hence provisioned that ISCoS members working in a particular discipline involved in the management of persons living with SCI, including Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Nurses, Clinical Psychologists, Social Workers, Surgeons, and Consumers living with SCI or those with a common interest, may request ISCoS to form a SIG of ISCoS.

ISCoS had the following SIGs:

- Physiotherapists Special Interest Group
- Occupational Therapists Special Interest Group
- Nurses Special Interest Group
- Psychosocial Special Interest Group
- Quality of Life Special Interest Group

During the year the following two SIGs have also been approved:

- Consumer Engagement
- Sustainability

Terms of reference (TOR) for SIGs

For the functioning of these SIGs, a standard Terms of reference (TOR) has been approved by the Executive, Board and Strategic Management Committee (Copy enclosed at **Annexure (iv)**). The TOR shall provide a framework of scope and reporting structure of work and also govern the membership of the SIGs.

I. Association with Affiliated Societies

There were discussions within the Strategic Management Committee on whether the terminology “Affiliated Societies” should be retained or changed to “Partnering/Collaborating Societies”. After deliberations it was decided that the terminology be retained. However ways and means to strengthen collaboration with them in following areas may be explored:

- Ensure broader representation of these societies in ISCoS Annual Scientific Meetings (ASMs)
- Consolidate further the relationship
- Engage and collaborate to promote SCI prevention and/or treatment
- Promote collaboration in research activities.
- Develop a proactive, tailored communication strategy
- Arrange regular calls/meetings
- Deal with any key issues, expected changes and/or concerns in a timely manner.

J. Administrative Structure of ISCoS

The administrative structure of ISCoS was discussed at depth amongst the Executive, Board and SMC. Detailed discussions were held by me with Marianne with regard to a succession plan. Marianne felt that we should look for a part time administrator whom she could groom to gradually take over. She felt that an office at Stoke Mandeville hospital would not be available for a long time. However, it was felt that we could meanwhile continue with this office and review the situation subsequently. A virtual office may also suffice subsequently depending on who are at the helm of affairs. The Executive, Board and Strategic Management Committee are in agreement with this plan.

The Advertisement for the post of a part time administrator would be released soon. The Job description for such a post is being finalized.

a. **Task Force**

ISCoS through its External Relations Committee has formed a COVID-19 Task Force / Community of Practice to bring together our Affiliated Societies and Networks, along with other key partner organisations and representatives to facilitate networking and discussion, share knowledge, clinical experiences and strategies, as well as guidelines, resources and other information for wide dissemination to improve our health systems preparedness and responses to this evolving Pandemic, and ultimately the quality of care we can provide to our vulnerable group of patients with SCI.

b. **Registry**

ISCoS Executive has received a proposal from the ERC to establish a COVID-19 Database, which will be an Inception Cohort with longitudinal design with an intention to enroll people with SCI with positive strain of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 infections admitted to the Spinal Cord Injury Units of the participating organisations. You are aware of the background for this project, and in fact were involved in earlier discussions with PRAXIS in Vancouver about the possibility of setting up this database using the RHSCIR platform. For various reasons, it was decided that it would be better to develop the ISCoS COVID Database ‘in house’.

The overall aim of the project is to gain an in-depth understanding of the prevalence, clinical presentation, treatment, outcomes and impact of COVID-19 infection on people with SCI. Pooling of data internationally will increase the total number of subjects with SCI and SARS-CoV-2 infection and allow us to better understand the epidemiology, clinical presentation, evolution and sequelae of COVID-19 in patients with SCI, which in turn will help to inform and guide development of best practice treatments and pathways in acute and rehabilitation management, quality of care and outcomes for this vulnerable group of people.

After deliberations ISCoS Executive has approved the request for the ERC to establish a COVID-19 Database.

L. ISCoS Podcast

A podcast series was initiated by the ISCoS to promote our forthcoming Virtual Conference being held from 1st to 5th September. The podcast series has been given the title ‘SCI Care: What really matters’. In each episode, we speak with experts from all over the world to discuss various aspects of spinal cord injury including etiology, prevention and care, providing valuable insights regarding the most up to date information for those providing care for the spinal cord injured. Collaboration is the key and at the heart of what ISCoS does. The podcast series is an extension of ISCoS, philosophy to make “Life after a spinal cord injury happy, meaningful and worth living..”

Through the podcast series, we also aim to engage with our members and entice non-members to join in our conversation while complimenting all of our existing platforms and giving our listeners a taste of what will come with our Virtual Conference. So basically, many of the topics from the scientific programme have been incorporated and elaborated upon within the episodes through the run-up to the conference.



Till now we have released the 10 episodes, which are as follows:

1. A panel discussion on “COVID-19 and SCI: an overview” **(two parts)**.
2. Exiting the Lockdown: implications for SCI Care **(again in two parts)**
3. Challenges in providing comprehensive management of persons with spinal cord injury **(again in two parts)**
4. Overcoming Adversity after spinal cord injury: A positive psychology perspective
5. Tips on getting your work published in ISCoS Journals
6. Sleep disordered breathing after spinal cord injury
7. Current scenario of Spinal Cord Injury services: The need for developing a grading system to standardize the services
8. President’s podcast and welcome to the conference

In addition to the regular episodes, we have also recorded 06 podcast mini byte episodes where a single expert from a Special Interest Group was invited to give his/her views on the topic of the most recently released regular episode. The mini byte episodes released so far are as under:

1. Precautions Exiting the lockdown
2. Challenges comprehensive management SCI - OT perspective
3. Challenges Comprehensive management SCI - physiotherapist perspective
4. The Psychological and Social Health Impacts on the Quality of Life
5. Improving Nursing Management of SCI through various education initiatives
6. Interview with DJ Aamish
7. Historical perspective and evolution of the SCI service

M. Collaborations

a. Cochrane Corners contract

Dr Carlotte had expressed interest of Cochrane Rehabilitation to collaborate with ISCoS. The draft MoU sent by Cochrane Rehabilitation had been circulated to ISCoS Board members. The modified MoU incorporating all relevant suggestions/comments of Board members had been forwarded to Dr Carlotte on 26th June, 2019. This was approved and signed by both the parties on 9th July, 2019. The salient features are as under:

- ISCoS can consider organizing at their annual Congress at a regular basis a Cochrane Rehabilitation Session and/or Workshop, supported by Cochrane Rehabilitation but mainly driven by the ISCoS members subject to the acceptance of the abstract as per the designated ISCoS review process.
- Cochrane Rehabilitation will support the evidence based medicine actions and educational activities of ISCoS (in collaboration with the CR educational committee).
- ISCoS will support the dissemination of information, such as flyers and newsletters, and scientific activities among their members, including a "link" to the Cochrane Rehabilitation website inside the homepage and using social media (in collaboration with the CR communication committee).
- ISCoS will be mentioned on the website of Cochrane Rehabilitation as a partner organisation and vice-versa.
- ISCoS will publish Cochrane corners in its journal (in collaboration with the CR publication committee),
- Cochrane Rehabilitation will liaise and collaborate with ISCoS External Relations Committee and Education Committee to identify and agree on specific areas of collaboration where shared expertise, resources and a complementary approach will promote, advance and facilitate educational activities globally. This may include engaging with key organisations, such as the WHO and other international bodies, professional societies and associations, governments and other partners.

b. Dr Anthony F DiMarco Foundation

ISCoS received a letter from Dr Anthony DiMarco Foundation which mentions to gift ISCoS 35000\$ to support a lectureship dedicated exclusively to respiratory conditions in Spinal Cord Medicines & Rehabilitation. After lots of deliberations ISCoS Executive has signed the agreement with Dr Anthony DiMarco Foundation.

Now ISCoS has been donated funds by the Anthony F DiMarco Foundation for Spinal Cord Injury to fund an Anthony DiMarco Lecture at our Annual Scientific Meetings. This lecture will be dedicated exclusively to Respiratory Conditions in Spinal Cord Medicine & Rehabilitation.

N. Funding for ISCoS Initiatives

In addition to funds for expenses on routine functioning of ISCoS, funds would be required for implementation of the initiatives of the Strategic Plan. Thus, a business plan would need to be finalized over the next few months after the Virtual ASM in consultation with the Standing Committees & SIGS. ISCoS could then look for funding from relevant sources. This would need to be a combined effort of the Executive, Strategic Management Committee, Standing Committees/SIGs and the Administrators. The possibility of recruiting a professional company in this regard could also be explored

O. Team work : Need of the Hour

If ISCoS has to further consolidate on its activities and emerge strongly as the leading international society involved with SCI care, team work would be the key. All concerned officials of ISCoS have to deliver with regard to their roles and responsibilities and everyone should be able to work together as a cohesive team. The essence of team work can be identified through various advantages for ISCoS. It is imperative that this culture is imbibed in each and every individual/member of the society. Though the strategic plan is the first step where whole ISCoS worked toward the common goal, other activities should also involve equal participation. The advantages of Team work for ISCoS could be (but not limited to) as follows:

1. Team work triggers creativity

When all the members of a team operate at an equal level, people tend to be more open about their ideas. If a member feels a sense of connection with his teammates, he would confidently share his opinions and thoughts without fear of judgment, it will give a leap to one's creativity as well as the overall success of the team.

2. Teamwork shall make members happier

Happy members will always be instrumental in bringing success as compared to sad and dejected ones. When a team behaves like a family, then work no more seems to be a burden.

3. Teamwork leads to learning

Every individual has his own set of skills and strengths. When the whole team works as one unit, people can always avail opportunities to learn from others. This process leads to resource building

4. Work pace improves with teamwork

One person working on a project is always going to take longer as compared to the collaborated effort of many. But teamwork and team are two different terms. Teamwork might be missing in a team of people. Projects can be delivered well in time only if a team puts a joint effort in the right spirit. When work is divided into a team as per the specializations of people, responsibilities get shared and every task is performed effectively as per the individual specializations, thus boosting performance and output.

5. Teamwork contributes to revenue generation

When there is a proper division of responsibilities, every person does his bit so that the burden does not go on a single resource. Also, in the hour of need, everyone comes up with ideas and solutions. As a result of which, projects can be delivered on time.

6. Teamwork cultivates strong work relationships

Teamwork can be effective in building great work relationships. By work relationships, I don't mean that people have to be the best of friends. Rather, developing the right frame of mind where you respect and listen to other people's opinions and collaborate positively is what we call a good work relationship.

7. Teams can self-monitor

In a good team, people will spot any loopholes in each other's work at the team level only. Also, if one team member gets diverted from the work, others can help him align back to his work and finish it on time.

8. Brings a sense of accomplishment

While working as a team on a common goal, team members encourage and support one another.

When a team works on a project as one unit, the sense of accomplishment also becomes greater on finishing the task. It brings a sense of confidence and fulfillment in the entire team.

9. Teamwork induces accountability

When working in a team, you experience a better sense of responsibility and accountability. You feel that anything you do will affect others. Your carelessness can create trouble for others and your good work can benefit the whole team.

10. Teamwork increases the Bus Factor for a project

Teamwork certainly increases your Bus Factor as people collaborating on a project can take one another's responsibilities in case of an emergency.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”

-Helen Keller

“if everyone is moving forward together then success takes care of itself”

- Henry Ford

“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful”

- Mother Teresa

Let's contribute to a progressive change towards a dynamic organization

Let's accelerate the movement to serve our constituency

Lets' rise up together to the challenge posed by Spinal Injuries.

P. Expression of Gratitude

I am grateful to all of you for having bestowed faith in me and giving me the opportunity to serve as the President. It has been a great experience and I am thankful for your wholehearted support, co-operation and participation. I hope I have been able to live up to your expectations. I am indebted to Dr Douglas Brown, Mr W S El Masri, Dr Fin Biering Sorensen, Dr William Donovan and Dr JJ Wyndaele, all past Presidents who have been my mentors in my journey. I am obligated also to my Executive colleagues, Ruth, Susie and Ellen, for bearing with me, responding regularly to my mails and being available at odd hours (inevitable due to the time zones) for online meetings. I am grateful to the members of the Board and the Chairs of Special Interest Groups for the wonderful work they have been doing. All those mentioned so far have been members of Strategic Management Committee and have contributed wholeheartedly to the Strategic Plan. I am thankful to all members of Standing Committees and Special Interest Groups without whom we wouldn't be able to transform our Vision into reality. Of course, I have relied on the support and advise of Marianne, who preserves the history of ISCoS in her mind. I must acknowledge the great work being done by BCD and would especially want to mention the names of Susan and Daisy. Similarly, our association with Springer Nature has been very fruitful and Pooja as well as Virginia have been a great help. I am also obliged to the team at Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Gaurav, Shakti, Nidhi, Priyanka and special mention of Shashi who have been helping me meet my commitments at ISCoS.