



Editorial

We are delighted that Spinal Cord has, once again, reserved a warm welcome for articles for the French regional issue of spinal cord, from the *French Speaking Regional Society* of I.M.S.O.P. The A.F.I.G.A.P. (*Association Francophone Internationale des Groupes d'Animation de la Paraplégie*) was founded in 1979 on the initiative of Doctor Marc Maury, who was the Association's first Secretary and is now still active as an adviser. The A.F.I.G.A.P. has been steadily gaining momentum in its endeavour to further links established since 1975 between French-speaking spinal lesions treatment centres looking to build up a network of communication and cooperation in this field.

The A.F.I.G.A.P. is an Association of treatment and rehabilitation teams with a common interest in spinal cord therapy and the French language. Every year it hosts an international scientific meeting. Topics are selected by an Administrative Council including medical practitioners and teams of allied professions. These teams come from France, Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, North Africa and other French speaking countries. Such meetings are regularly held outside France. The venue in 1995, for example, was in Athens. The A.F.I.G.A.P. is also proud to be regularly associated with the Annual I.M.S.O.P. scientific meeting, as it was more particularly in Innsbruck in 1997.

The topics under discussion provide a forum for doctors and therapists in the various professions. There is a special focus on diagnostic, therapeutic,

social and psychological aspects, as well as on research related subjects.

Most of the reports presented at these meetings are subsequently published, some in Spinal Cord. However, in order to ensure international circulation, it is our sincere hope that the tradition of regular publication in Spinal Cord will be upheld. As evidenced by some of the articles featured in this issue, the French-speaking regions moreover have an outstanding track record concerning studies on spinal cord lesions, including rehabilitation.

Another important function of the A.F.I.G.A.P. is the organisation of multi-centre studies. Studies of this kind enable evaluation of a broad spectrum of spinal cord injury patients and a comparative assessment of therapeutic programmes. One example of particular interest is the work entitled «Tétrafigap», which encompasses a future oriented review of a number of patients surviving spinal cord injury, and provides insight into the objectives and the resources deployed.

I would like to conclude by thanking Dr Paul Dollfus for his substantial contribution to the success of this special edition, and Mr Philip Harris, editor of 'Spinal Cord'.

Professor André Heilporn,
M.D., A.F.I.G.A.P. President
*C.T.R. (Centre for Traumatology and
Rehabilitation) place A. Van Gehuchten
4-B. 1020 Brussels*