

# Béatrice Cochener, MD

Dr. Cochener is President of the French Ophthalmology Society (SFO). She is also a Professor and Chairman of the Ophthalmology Department at Brest University Hospital, France.

## 1. What have you accomplished during your presidency?

I became president of the SFO 2 years ago. I feel that our society has accomplished quite a lot in the past 5 years.

We increased the demographics of our membership by allowing speakers to present in English or French, with simultaneous translation. We introduced the e-poster format at our meetings and improved our internal connections with members by publishing a newsletter that focuses on breaking news in our profession. We also enhanced our Web site to include news and various links to other societies and the subspecialties.

We introduced joint symposia with participants from European and non-European countries including Chili, Brazil, Marrocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Syria. This year, we are going to enlarge the joint meeting by holding it at the University of Chicago, Illinois. In addition to the official media conference, we will hold an industry-focused news conference that will be moderated by a medical expert who does not have a financial interest in the techniques or treatments presented.

There is still work to be done. I believe we need to improve the support that the SFO provides to non-European francophonic countries, such as those in Africa, especially in terms of educational programs. We should continue to facilitate the participation of doctors from these countries at our congress.

## 2. What are some ways that the SFO promotes interaction among subspecialties?

Subspecialty societies are organized within the national society. At the main meeting, each subspecialty is designated 1 full day to focus on that society's research. We also hold joint meetings of the national and subspecialty societies.

This year, we are introducing a new badge format. Instead of a badge with a barcode, participants will be given a card that contains an electronic device. The card is recognized by scanners set up at entranceways to the various sessions (ie, wet lab, main symposium, free paper session). Our hope is that this format will improve circulation of participants from various subspecialties throughout the congress. The badge will contain the participant's registra-

tion information and will also calculate his continuing medical education (CME) credits.

## 3. What advice do you have for colleagues who want to publish their research but struggle to find time to do so?

Papers issued at SFO meetings are often printed in the *French Journal of Ophthalmology*. These papers are published in French, and the papers are available on Medline. Unfortunately, many people in France do not speak English and this generally prevents scientists and doctors from publishing in peer-reviewed journals in which English is the official language. Additionally, for those who are somewhat familiar with English, writing a paper in English is often a lengthy process. It is truly a pity that data is lost whether it is due to language or time constraints. In the interest of knowledge sharing, publishing one's work is vital.



## 4. What would you like to accomplish over the next 5 years?

We should think in terms of Europe as a whole, not just in terms of one person or each individual country. In my opinion, we should pull together the resources of the national societies to create a European society that conducts large multicenter studies, and defines guidelines for best practices and educational programs. We need to encourage investigators from the subspecialties and national societies throughout Europe to work together on large projects. It would be interesting to see large-scale studies conducted in Europe that could achieve the same scope as those performed in the United States.

## 5. Describe your ideal vacation destination.

It is difficult to feel free to take a vacation because I am always working on one of my missions. As a professional woman and a mother of three children, I need to divide my brain to perform all of the daily tasks required of me. Thanks to latest advancements of the mobile phone, it is much easier for me to take care of many things at the same time. I believe that being busy makes one learn how to set priorities and develop time management skills. When I am able to take a vacation, I take a true vacation. I go as far away as possible with my family and I devote all of my attention to them. ■