

40 years of the Hellenic Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (HSOG): 1974 - 2014, from the first year of Greece's transition to democracy to the current years of economic crisis



Vrachnis Nikolaos¹,
Messinis Ioannis²,
Tarlantzis Vasileios³

¹ 2nd Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Medicine, Aretaieio hospital, Athens, Greece

² Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Thessaly, Medical School, Larissa, Greece

³ 1st Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Papageorgiou Hospital, Greece

Correspondence

Vrachnis Nikolaos, 2nd Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Medicine, Aretaieio hospital, Athens, Greece

E - mail: nvrachnis@hjog.org

The Hellenic Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology (HSOG), one of the oldest medical societies in Greece, is celebrating this year 4 decades of active presence. On the occasion of this anniversary, we present a brief historical flashback, focusing on HSOG and the preceding Greek obstetrical - gynecological societies.

The first Greek medical scientific society, the Athens Medical Society, was founded in Athens in 1835. One of its founders, N. Kostis, who was the first professor of obstetrics in the National University of Athens, also served as the first secretary of the society and was subsequently elected as the society's president. In 1931 N. Petsalis, the professor of obstetrics - gynecology in the National University of Athens, called upon by letter all obstetricians - gynecologists in the area of Athens and Piraeus to participate in the setting up of the organization and thereby officially founded "The Athens obstetrics and gynecology society". Initially assembled by 76 obstetricians - gynecologists, the society formed a committee for the drawing up of a statute. This was adopted six months later, launching the first ever Greek Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In the same year on November, professor Petsalis was elected as the first president of the society and the first scientific meeting took place a month later during December, beginning the regular publication of the society's journal, continuing until 1971 when the society's function was suspended.

In 1974, on the initiative of professor D. Kaskarelis, the Hellenic Society of obstetrics and gynecology (HSOG) was founded in Athens. This society is a scientific, non - profit making organization whose purpose is to improve the training of Greek obstetricians - gynecologists while also boost the development and reinforcement of research in our specialty, the support of the clinical work conducted by obstetricians - gynecologists and, most importantly, the provision of information to the public on vital issues concerning women's health. The founding members of the company were 26 and the first president to be elected was professor D. Kaskarelis. On 20th November 1975, the first general assembly was held, while a few months later, in 1976, the first scientific symposium entitled "Ovarian Cancer" took place.

During the preceding 40 years, HSOG has organized 12 National Con-

gresses with the participation of international invited speakers and 23 special topic congresses in several cities of Greece and Cyprus. These events, the proceedings of which were published in our society's journal, proved highly successful and have established a benchmark for our Greek obstetrics and gynecology practice. The scientific program of the latest conferences is available in electronic form on the Society's website (www.hsog.gr), set up in 2002, while the presentations of the last conference, that took place in the Olympian land of Kyllini in Peloponnese, we are happy to say, that are now available online for our members and for subscribers to the society's page.

During these past 4 decades, a large number of conferences and workshops have been held throughout Greece under the auspices of HSOG, while there is a close cooperation between the society and all other Greek scientific societies of our specialty, including subspecialties and special interest groups.

Moreover, HSOG frequently cooperates with the Greek ministries of health and of education and other governmental bodies on issues concerning the practice of obstetrics and gynecology. Thanks to this collaboration, considerable strides have been made in improving the educational options for our colleagues as well as the practice of allied health professionals. In 1987, thanks to our close cooperation with the Health Ministry, a decision was taken for the official use of ultrasounds not only by radiologists but also by gynecologists. In 2002, an award system of CME (Continuing Medical Education) points/credits was established.

It is of considerable note that in 1987, HSOG awarded a medal of honor to the obstetrician and gynecologist K. Koliopoulos and in 1992 to professor in obstetrics and gynecology P. Panayiotou. The society also conferred the award on K. Alexandropoulou for most outstanding research paper presented at the annual conferences; so far, 19 research groups have received this award in consecutive years. A prize is also awarded to the best research group at the national HSOG congress held every triennium.

A major achievement of the society has been the

journal's continuous publication since 1988. The editorial of the previous issue described in detail the various phases of the journal's development.

Today, HSOG has more than 1,000 members and is housed in a private apartment in the center of Athens, its remarkable progress running in parallel with that of the notable development of our specialty. HSOG holds a special position internationally, being a distinguished member of FIGO and EBCOG, with a significant presence in international congresses, conferences and working groups. Its first election as a member to the executive board of FIGO took place in 1986.

The fact that HSOG has completed 40 years of highly successful scientific activity, while being a point of immense pride for us all, is also a constant reminder of our obligation to strive for further development and improvement of its services. Of particular importance is our need to pursue our endeavors to ensure that our younger colleagues acquire the necessary skills to constantly upgrade and enhance the practice of obstetrics and gynecology in Greece.

Over the past few decades, the field of obstetrics and gynecology has made huge advances and has expanded substantially, with several new subspecialties now being well established in our practice - and HSOG has remained at the forefront of all these developments. To cite just one example, HSOG has made it its public responsibility to provide guidelines, patient consent forms and information leaflets aiming to raise awareness among professionals and the lay public.

In the first instance, HSOG has recently issued national guidelines in keeping with the steadily increasing need for both international and national guidelines on diagnostic and therapeutic procedures of clinical practice that are based on studies of the highest possible degree of documentation. Regarding national guidelines, there is a growing realization of the huge benefit of each country possessing these so as to furnish much - needed, well - documented recommendations that can vitally help both physicians and patients in decision - making. Meanwhile, HSOG's provision of patient consent forms is also a crucial



Image. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of HSOG, a period that coincidentally comprised a highly significant phase of our country's modern history - Greece's 1974 transition to democracy, her years of prosperity and her current period of economic crisis. Meanwhile, this anniversary year of HSOG, 2014, has also seen the exciting discovery of the magnificent 4th century BC tomb at Amphipolis. In early August, a team of Greek archaeologists unearthed a large monument in northern Greece, in the area of ancient Amphipolis, dating from the time of Alexander the Great. Among other findings was a representation of Macedonian rosette, a royal symbol that was widely used throughout the Macedonian Empire. We are thus incorporating the Macedonian rosette in our 40 year HSOG anniversary logo both to commemorate this historical archeological discovery and to memorialize HSOG's very notable progress and achievements of the past 40 years

step in permitting the patient to be fully informed about any particular medical issue before being requested to provide written consent, obviously a prerequisite prior to operations. Finally, HSOG has been active in issuing all - important patient leaflets: these enable patients to be officially and thus reliably informed with regard to major issues relating to women's health, thereby saving them from any form of deception or misinformation.

A significant move recently made is the publication of our journal in English, a move which will undoubtedly increase the impact of HSOG and, as we believe,

will firmly establish this worthy scientific publication as a staple in international libraries and search engines.

As a closure to this 40 - year anniversary editorial, we warmly invite all obstetricians and gynecologists as well as other health professionals who are engaged in obstetrics and gynecology to submit any important research and idea to our society for publication to our Journal while we extend our sincere thanks to you for your vital support as information users. We sincerely trust that you will continue to find in HSOG a significant source of both information and inspiration. ■