

Editorial

The society of family planning

On *Contraception's* cover now stands the Society of Family Planning (SFP) as one of the two organizations [the other one being the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)] using the venerable “Orange Journal” as “official publication.” Does *Contraception*, after 30 years of chronicling research in family planning require another sponsoring organization, and do we, family planners, need one after an equally long and productive association with ARHP?

This month, the first president of the SFP and the president and chief operating officer of ARHP write this editorial to define the mission of SFP and to show how these organizations are complementary and how, together, they can accomplish for reproductive health what others currently do not.

SFP was conceived when Leon Speroff, one of the world's leading writers on reproductive endocrinology and contraception, observed that there was no proper forum for American researchers in family planning to share project ideas, form collaborations, review works in progress and critique assumptions and conclusions. Many other organizations welcome the science of family planning in their meetings and publications, but their interests and missions are much broader than contraception or abortion. Speroff opined that contraception “special interest” groups had not attracted much attention at large meetings of other organizations and that presentations of scholarly work in family planning rarely brought together a “critical mass” of listeners who were focused on and knowledgeable about the science of family planning. We, founding members of SFP who are listed below, were prompted to review the success of unique organizations such as the ARHP and the European Society of Contraception (ESC) in presenting research in family planning to sizeable audiences of critical reviewers. Clearly, both focus on contraception. ARHP's special responsibilities are continuing medical education, medical school curriculum development, multidisciplinary education and training, advocacy for evidence-based science and professional education, and improvement of clinical services. ESC, perhaps our best model, meets only in Europe every 2 years and, while not excluding Americans, it does not solicit their active participation. In

addition, the Fellowships in Family Planning for both obstetrician gynecologists and family physicians, the Ellertson Postdoctoral Social Science Fellowships and researchers from other disciplines provide a rapidly increasing group of young researchers who desire an agenda that features their work and attracts an audience of like-minded professionals to deliberate it.

The founders believed that we needed an American forum like ESC, where young investigators would feel encouraged to present their work, including work in progress, to an audience of experienced family planning researchers and thought leaders. Many of us are members and regular attendees at meetings of the SGI, the ASRM and the ACOG and know that their busy agenda do not permit in-depth consideration of research in family planning that would propel our “subspecialty” to even better scholarship — the foundation of which is peer review and open fora for collegial interchange of ideas. Those of us who are not obstetrician gynecologists are unlikely to join these groups or attend their meetings. ARHP and SFP are uniquely capable of identifying the concerns of the professionals in our field, such as family planning curriculum reform and politicization of reproductive health science.

In addition to scientific interchange, the society offers its members a subscription to *Contraception*, discounted registration fees for the annual scientific meeting [to be held this year with ARHP in La Jolla (San Diego), September 8–9, 2006] and the opportunities and burdens of board and committee memberships. We hope that our board and its committees will help set the standards for reproductive health care through “evidence-based” application of research in family planning. The criteria for society fellowship are meant to encourage scholarship; they include publication of five articles about family planning in peer-reviewed journals, presentation of a research paper at a society meeting and sponsorship by two members. Post-residency fellows and postdoctoral scholars can join as junior fellows. For more information, visit the web site at www.societyfp.org.

On behalf of the founders, we give special thanks to our charter members, whose generous donations got us started,

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