"A man alone cannot do anything"

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_The World Federation of Laser Dentistry (WFLD) recently elected a new president. Prof Jean-Paul Rocca will take over the position from Prof Norbert Gutknecht, who has served a two years mandate. Our Editorial Office spoke with Prof Rocca about what he would like to achieve during his term.

Prof Rocca, you were elected as President of the WFLD. Could you tell us some on your person?

I consider myself as a discreet person and your question is awkward. I'm a full time professor in the Nice Sophia Antipolis University and university hospital. I have been the Dean of this Faculty and I'm actually in charge of clinical research unit. I passed two PhD (a long time ago): one in endodontics and one in human biology (bacteriology). I'm also the director for the European Master degree in Oral Laser Applications in Nice and a laboratory so-called laser technology and oral applications. I love my children, I like smiling and I'm crazy about classical music. Is it OK?



WFLD is a well-known scientific society. As new President, what will be your role?

WFLD is the first scientific society in the field of oral laser applications. WFLD being a federation of scientific associations my role, as you say, consists first of all to entertain good relationship with those national scientific associations and enhance their number as WFLD partners. Moreover individual members are welcomed; they join our society because they know perfectly that they will get the opportunity to hear at international opinion leaders' experience in the field of oral lasers' applications and subsequently to improve standards on this technology. I observed, with a non masked satisfaction, that this number is increasing year after year.

The second role consists in opening our society to an increasing number of young clinicians and searchers. As you can imagine, future successes in oral laser medicine and surgery depends on exchanges, advancement and dissemination of basic and clinical research. Subsequently, we have a duty: they have to be considered as our future and they are the key for new progresses.

The third role consists in developing our five divisions (North America, South America, Middle-East-Africa, Asian-Pacific and Europe).

Do you think WFLD can pretend to manage a leadership all over the world?

This question is surprising but the answer could be very short: yes!

I saw in your eyes that "yes" was not sufficient and I will explain why and how.

Once again dissemination pass threw meetings, communications and therefore exchanges. Divisions were created five years ago by Prof. Nammour and it's a nice surprise to see their activities are growing up in a significant mode and cover each two years the whole continents.

Divisions' activities are not in competition with National activities. National scientific associations are also acting seriously and many WFLD members are involved in those diligences too.

Moreover publications serve this objective. I observe that a lot of WFLD members publish high level scientific publications in referenced journals. Lasers in Medical Science and your journal, laser—International Magazine of Laser Dentistry are official journals of our society. One is dedicated to basic research and the second one to clinical observations. Thanks to Prof Gutknecht who was and is so much involved in that great mission. So, yes: WFLD can pretend!

How WFLD could play a role in scientific dissemination?

I think I answered clearly previously. General meetings, Division meetings, National scientific associations activities affiliated with WFLD, publications aim at this objective.

With whom do you collaborate? Is the President a powerful person working alone?

I'm convinced, since a very long period, that a man alone cannot do anything. A team represents a laboratory producing ideas to be discussed and eventually adopted.

WFLD is composed of an executive committee (ExCo) of ten persons. The executive board includes an immediate past-president (Norbert Gutknecht), the president, the president elect (Aldo Brugnera), the secretary (Kenji Yoshida), the treasurer (Carlo Fornaini) and a colleague in charge of the website and newsletter (Mathias Frentzen). Members are represented by the chairpersons of the five divisions (Carlos de Paula Eduardo, Loh Hong Saï, Toni Zeinoun, Georgios Romanos, Adam Stabholz). That means ten persons, nine countries represented. Since March 2010 were joined two co-chairpersons (Norbert Gutknecht and Samir Nammour): their mission consists in controlling the legal comportment of our society.

In those conditions, do you still think the President works alone?

So, you consider WFLD to be a democratic association?

Once again the answer is: yes, without any doubt.

Democracy is strictly observed. The ExCo is elected (general assembly) for a two years long mandate. Re-election of the President is possible but I observe that the tradition is a two years long mandate. I agree with that kind of attitude. Democracy, respecting this turn-over of responsibilities, must be respected even if it's true that a two years long mandate is a very short one. In fact, efficacy is not disturbed due to the role of the past-president acting as a counsellor, if needed. Moreover, responsibilities are moving on also in the five divisions.

Finally, all continents are involved in the decisions and in WFLD Divisions all countries of each continents are, mandate after mandate, represented.

You told that WFLD is a non-profit association. But members have to pay fees. Is there any contradiction?

Of course, no!!!! Annual fees in WFLD are very low: 20 euros for students, 80 euros for members, 150 euros for members with the journal, 250 euros for national associations and it's more than four years we did not ask for increasing amounts!

There are no contradictions in paying dues, each year, and a non-profit scientific society!! Expenses do exist and may I tell you that a financial report is produced and submitted for approval by the ExCo and by members during the general assembly. In any case, if a President forget to present this report, the two legal co-chairmen would, at once, interfere.

What are your next meetings?

May I first congratulate the persons in charge of the last meeting, held in Dubai on March 2010. The Chairman of the congress: Toni Zeinoun as well as Samir Nammour in charge of the excellent scientific programme and Norbert Gutknecht acting as WFLD President.

The future is composed of a general meeting to be held in Barcelona (2012). Next year the ExCo will propose for 2014 (at the moment we have two candidates but it's a secret!!!). Moreover don't forget that we have our five Division meetings each uneven year. You are invited to look at our website (www.wfld.org) and you will get details.

Do you have a wish?

I hope, WFLD to continue on that way: to stimulate the research and coordinate clinical studies.

Due to the fact I'm neither a magician nor a fakir, acting close with the WFLD team, I hope to be able to demonstrate my personal engagement and serve efficiently this scientific association.

Prof Rocca, thank you very much.