

## A short history of the *International Traffic Medicine Association (ITMA)*

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16 July 2010

The organization that is now the *International Traffic Medicine Association* was born in San Remo, Italy, in December 1960. This occurred at the first meeting of the Italian *Traffic Medicine Association*, an organization formed two years earlier. Although those attending were mainly from Italy, professionals from ten other countries were also present. The conference chair was the President of the Italian Association, Prof. Cesare Gerin. He invited the foreign guests to lunch on 10 December 1960, where he proposed the creation an international organization. Those present agreed to form such an organization with Prof. Gerin as its founding President. Other officers and board members were selected from the foreign guests present, and an inaugural meeting was planned.

This inaugural meeting took place in Rome in 1963, where it was agreed that the name of the new organization would be the *International Association for Accident and Traffic Medicine (IAATM)*.

The earliest pioneers in what was called *traffic medicine* were mainly physicians. From its founding, IAATM's focus included preventing crashes, and reducing deaths and injuries when they occurred. This required the involvement of experts from many fields, including members of the WHO and other organs of the UN. Thus many disciplines were involved even though the majority of members were from the medical profession.

IAATM has always been richly international, holding its World Congresses at venues covering much of the world (Table 1). This has brought together many professionals from countries far separated by geography who, without IAATM, would never have met. The result has been exchanges of data, collaborations in new projects, joint authorships of scientific papers, not to mention many enduring friendships.

For some of the Congresses proceedings were printed. These are available from the library of the *University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute* in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

IAATM never had the resources to support an office in a permanent location. All work was voluntary. Accordingly, records tended to move with the changing Presidents or other officers who had offered to take care of such matters. There have been 11 Presidents in the organization's 50 years – typically a new one every 4 or 5 years (Table 2).

At the 4th World Congress in Paris in 1972, Prof. Keith Mant (UK) was chosen as the 4th President, a post he held for 11 years. He provided outstanding leadership and left a generous bequest to IAATM in his will.

Prof. Mant worked effectively with Secretary General Dr. Rune Andréasson (Sweden), who attended the founding meeting and devoted much dedicated effort to IAATM. Dr. Andréasson initiated contact with the World Health Organization (WHO).

*The Journal of Traffic Medicine* started publication in 1973 as an IAATM newsletter edited by Dr. Andréasson. It contained information about IAATM activities and personnel, including many photographs, as well as technical articles. Much of the present article is based on the many contributions in the journal written by Dr. Andréasson. These provide far more detailed information than can be included in this brief history.

The 5th Congress in London adopted the IAATM logo shown in Figure 1. This incorporates symbolism for the world in the globe grid lines, a traffic light, and the healing power of the snake long established as a symbol for medicine. This logo thus wonderfully captured "International", "Traffic" and "Medicine", and was a most fitting emblem for IAATM. The creators were Dr. Rune Andréasson together with Prof. Georges Hoffmann (Belgium) and Prof. Keith A. Mant.

*The Journal of Traffic Medicine* evolved into more of a technical journal and less of a newsletter. The aim was to publish 4 issues per year. It was sent to people who had attended ITMA congresses and others known to be interested. Although there was a subscription fee, not all of those receiving the journal paid. This placed the journal in an ongoing precarious financial situation.

In mid 1995 IAATM President Prof. Jarmo Pikkarainen (Finland) suffered a massive heart attack and sadly died on 7 October 1995. Most of IAATM's documents, such as membership lists, were in his computer in Helsinki. Nobody could produce the password necessary to retrieve these, leaving IAATM in a very difficult position.

In August 1995, at the 14th World Congress in Singapore, Prof. Ridvan Ege (Turkey) became President. The IAATM bylaws required that changes in personnel (or the bylaws) could be made only by the General Assembly, a gathering open to all members at a World Congress. Even this process had problems as there was no definition of *member*.

In May 2000, at the 17th World Congress in Stockholm, Dr. Leonard Evans (USA) became president and immediately began making major changes in the organization.

Transacting business only every three or so years at World Congresses precluded fast and effective decision-making. Dr. Evans moved the organization into the electronic age by instigating meetings by email. In these, Board Members and regular members voted on major changes after a period of 10 days to ponder and to discuss by email. Such email meetings were also used to make major organizational changes in a timely fashion that still allowed extended deliberation. Special Meetings could be called with 24 hour notice to take care of such matters as filling vacant board positions.

The word *accident* had been increasingly rejected for professional and popular discussions of traffic safety since the 1980s. This made the organization's original name no longer acceptable. Dr. Evans proposed the name *International Traffic Medicine Association (ITMA)* because it did not contain *accident*, it was shorter (4 words compared to 7), and the acronym could be pronounced easily (*it – ma*). The board, and later the general membership, approved this name change, which became official with the adoption of ITMA Bylaws on 3 November 2000.

The Bylaws and other aspects of the structure of ITMA were created in close collaboration with "Community Consulting Associates" of East Lansing, Michigan. The \$1,500 fee ITMA paid this organization was probably the best value ITMA ever received. The Bylaws have served, and continue to serve, ITMA very well.

The Bylaws created the new position of President-Elect. When a current president's term ended, the President-Elect would automatically assume the role of President. This aimed at assuring a more orderly transition in which the President could become familiar with the duties before assuming them. The Bylaws specified that the goal of ITMA was simply *to reduce harm from traffic crashes*.

The new organization required a new logo, leading to official adoption of the one in Figure 2. ITMA established official relations with the WHO in 2001. Another major step into the electronic era was that ITMA started a website, [www.trafficmedicine.org](http://www.trafficmedicine.org) with Dr. Evans as webmaster. This was hosted at no charge by the *Injury Prevention Web*, with much thanks to Dr. David Lawrence (USA).

When Dr. Evans was invited to become President he accepted on condition that no administrative work would be involved. The new Executive Director, Dr. Moise Seid (Brazil) offered to take care of administration from his office in São Paulo, Brazil. However, after six months trying, it turned out to be impossible to open a bank account in Brazil. The responsibility reverted to the President, who opened a bank account in Michigan, USA. In order to do this, ITMA had to become legally constituted as a tax-exempt charitable organization (501 c 3) under the laws of the State of Michigan and the laws of the USA. This was finalized on 23 October 2000

In 2000 ITMA became a strict membership organization, making payment of annual dues a condition for membership. In order to recruit members, Dr. Evans sent snail-mail letters to 1,200 prospects. The result of this and other recruiting efforts was that membership climbed to 127.

A main benefit of ITMA membership was receiving the *Journal of Traffic Medicine*. Two issues were produced in São Paulo. However, it was becoming more and more infeasible for ITMA to produce a journal. Volunteers to do administrative and editorial work were in scarce supply. Subscriptions fell well short of ever-increasing production costs, and ITMA was running out of money. These problems were resolved by the creation of a new journal *Traffic Injury Prevention*. The first issue is dated 2002, but because it replaced an earlier short-lived journal (*Crash Prevention and Injury Control*) by the same publisher, the first issue is labeled Volume 3. ITMA members have received *Traffic Injury Prevention* since 2002.

*Traffic Injury Prevention* is produced by a commercial publisher. It is the official publication of ITMA and three other organizations. ITMA's financial obligation is limited to purchasing a minimum of 100 subscriptions annually.

In October 2004 Prof. Wiebo Brouwer (the Netherlands) moved from President-Elect to President. His leadership placed greater emphasis on fitness to drive and rehabilitation to being fit to drive. This broadened the goal of ITMA and scope of traffic medicine to include more than just reducing harm in traffic. While preserving the same [www.trafficmedicine.org](http://www.trafficmedicine.org) link, Prof. Brouwer transferred the ITMA web to a server in the Netherlands.

Reflecting the broader approach to traffic medicine, the theme of 21st Congress in the Hague (the Netherlands) from 26-29 April 2009, was *Safe Mobility for Young and Old*. This was organized and chaired by Prof. Brouwer. At this meeting Dr. Lars Englund (Sweden) moved from President-Elect to President, thus becoming ITMA's 11th president. At an email board meeting in July 2010, Prof. Dr. Zheng-guo Wang (China) was elected President-Elect.

Any history of ITMA should note a parallel organization founded in 1957 in the USA with the name *American Association for Automotive Medicine (AAAM)*. Its mission has much in common with that of ITMA's (The author is the only person who has

been President of both organizations). In 1983 AAAM changed its name (just as IAATM did in 2000) to the *Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine* (still AAAM). The change reflected increasing international involvement. There are key differences between the organizations. As its name suggests, AAAM places more emphasis on automobiles. Its membership fees are far higher than those of ITMA. This, combined with other sources of income, enables it to support paid staff, while all ITMA's work is voluntary. Although AAAM is international, its scope is more focused on countries in advanced states of motorization, whereas ITMA, as so clearly illustrated in its World Congresses, covers the world.

This short history of ITMA has focused on presidents of the organization and presidents of the world congresses. Other officer titles and responsibilities have changed over the years, so it is not feasible to present an organized chronology. However, it should be stressed that many individuals whose names do not appear in this short history have made major contributions to the organization's success that enables it to continue into its sixth decade.

### Acknowledgments

Dr. Sang Wan Lee (Korea) kindly provided the author with copies of pages from the pre-1990 issues of the Journal of Traffic Medicine containing many articles written by its editor, Dr. Rune Andréasson, documenting the history of IAATM. Dr. Kurt Johansson (Sweden) provided an illustrated article in Swedish written by Dr. Rune Andréasson in Swedish that documented the history through the mid 1980s, including many photographs of the early founders of the organization. It is hoped that these articles and others will be available at [www.trafficmedicine.org](http://www.trafficmedicine.org). Bob Sweet, Manager of the UMTRI library was extremely helpful in providing some details of early congresses, and for providing a list of congress proceedings available from the UMTRI library. Dr. Sang Wan Lee added to the UMTRI library set of proceedings by contributing one from his personal collection. Helpful comments were received from Dr. Sang Wan Lee, Prof. Wiebo Brouwer, Dr. Kurt Johansson, and Dr. Morris Odell.

**Table 1. IAATM and ITMA World Congresses**

No	Dates	Location	Conference President <sup>1</sup>	Proceedings produced?
1	1963, April 25-30	Rome, Italy	Prof. Cessare Gerin	Yes
2	1966, August 9-12	Stockholm, Sweden	Prof. Helge Wulff	Yes
3	1969, May 29-June 4	New York, USA	Dr. Milton Helpert	Yes
4	1972, Sept. 11-15	Paris, France	Dr. Louis Roche	
5	1975, Sept.	London, UK	Prof. A. Keith Mant	
6	1977, Jan 31 – Feb 4	Melbourne, Australia <sup>2</sup>	Dr. Gordon Trinca	Yes
7	1978, July 10-14	Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA	Dr. Norman E. McSwain	Yes
8	1980, June 10-13	Aarhus, Denmark	Prof. Jørgen B. Dalgaard	Yes
9	1983, Sept.	Mexico City, Mexico	Dr. Ricardo Campos Huutich	
10	1985, May 27-31	Tokyo, Japan	Dr. Shinhachi Nishikawa	Yes
11	1988, May 24-28	Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia	Prof. Ivo Jelcic	Yes
12	1992, June 23-25	Helsinki, Finland	Dr. Jarmo Pikkarainen	Yes
13	1994, May 16-20	São Paulo, Brazil	Dr. Moise Seid	
14	1995, August 20-23	Singapore	Prof. Chao Tzee Cheng	
15	1997, Sept. 27-30	Ankara, Turkey	Prof. Ridvan Ege	
16	1999, May 24-27	Chongqing, China	Prof. Zheng-guo Wang	Abstracts. only
17	2000, May 22-26	Stockholm, Sweden	Dr. Kurt Johansson	
18	2002, Sept. 22-25	Cairo, Egypt <sup>3</sup>	Dr. Abdel Hay Mashhour	
19	2003, Sept. 14-17	Budapest, Hungary	Prof. György A. Nemes	
20	2006, October 18-20	Melbourne, Australia	Dr. Morris Odell	
21	2009, April 26-29	The Hague, the Netherlands	Dr. Wiebo Brouwer	
22	2011, May 13-16	Chongqing, China	Prof. Zheng-guo Wang	

<sup>1</sup> The person organizing and chairing the World Congress was normally designated Congress President. In some cases other titles, such as Congress Organizer, were used.

<sup>2</sup> Devoted to seat belt and restraint systems

<sup>3</sup> First World Congress with new name *International Traffic Medicine Association (ITMA)*  
The Proceedings that were produced are available from the *University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI)* library.

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In addition there were two special international conferences held in collaboration with other international organizations including the WHO with special reference to the issue of "First Aid" in Oslo, Norway 1979 and another "International Conference on Traffic Safety -- The Vulnerable Road User", New Delhi, India, 27-30 January 1991.

**Table 2. Presidents of IAATM and ITMA**

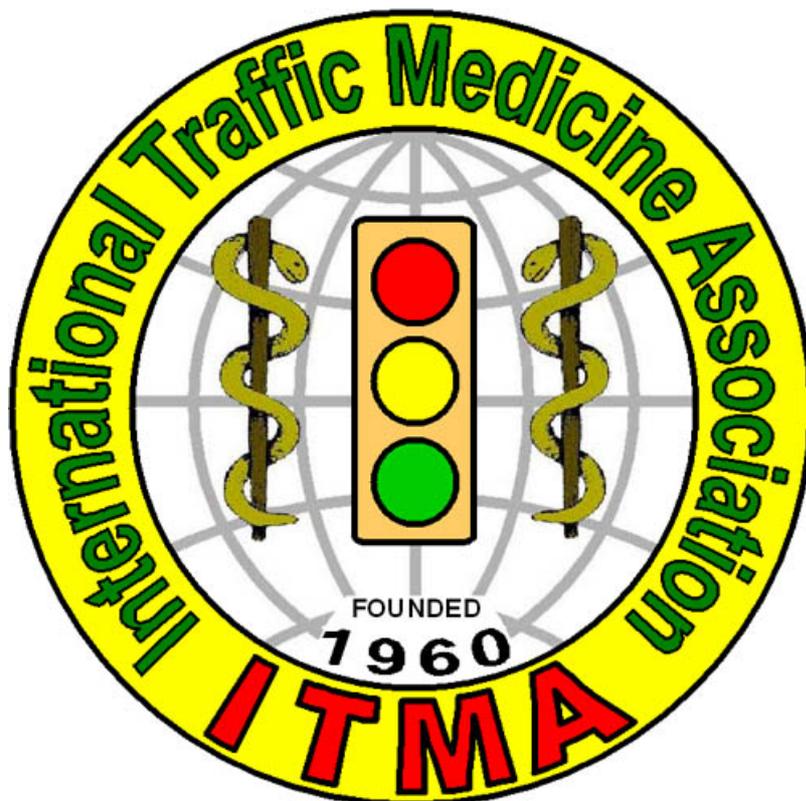
<u>No</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Country</u>
1	December 1960	August 1966	Prof. Cesare Gerin	Italy
2	August 1966	June 1969	Dr. Milton Helpern	USA
3	June 1969	September 1972	Prof. André Sicard	France
4	September 1972	September 1983	Prof. A. Keith Mant	UK
5	September 1983	May 1985	Dr. Rune Andréasson	Sweden
6	May 1985	May 1988	Prof. Hans-Joachim Wagner	West Germany
7	May 1988	August 1995*	Prof. Jarmo Pikkarainen	Finland
8	August 1995	May 2000	Prof. Ridvan Ege	Turkey
9	May 2000	October 2004	Dr. Leonard Evans	USA
10	October 2004	April 2009	Dr. Wiebo Brouwer	the Netherlands
11	April 2009		Dr. Lars Englund	Sweden

\*Became incapacitated in summer of 1995 office and died on October 7, 1995

**Figure 1. Logo (or emblem) of IAATM adopted in 1975. Created by Dr. Rune Andréasson together with Prof. Georges Hoffmann and Prof. Keith A. Mant**



Figure 2. Logo of ITMA adopted in 2000. Created by Dr. Leonard Evans



B&W version

