

A brief history of the International Patellofemoral Study Group

In 1994, Jean Yves Dupont travelled to Farmington, Connecticut, USA to visit with John Fulkerson. He brought with him a large suitcase full of patellofemoral patient case studies and their knee radiographs including precise, fluoroscopically controlled lateral views. Jean Yves taught John how to interpret these radiographs according to the methods of Maldague and Malhem, who had described the radiographic criteria of trochlear morphology (as described by Henri Dejour) and patella alignment using precise lateral radiographs. John taught Jean Yves about the technique and benefits of anteromedial tibial tubercle transfer for the treatment of “excessive lateral pressure syndrome” as described by Ficat. As a result of the meeting, they recruited Thomas Murray, one of Fulkerson’s residents, to review the radiographs according to the methods of Maldague and Malghem, and correlate the findings with clinical histories. This study was eventually published (Murray, Thomas, Dupont, Jean-Yves, and Fulkerson, John P. Axial and lateral radiographs in evaluating patellofemoral malalignment. *Am. J. Sports Med* 27(5), 1999).

At the time of this visit, Jean Yves stayed at the Fulkerson home and they decided that it would be of great benefit and interest to gather “a group of friends” with proven interest in the academic study of patellofemoral problems, and meet, informally, to gain mutual understanding of the vagaries and intricacies of this often misunderstood part of the knee. The concept was to meet in very attractive places for everyone’s benefit and pleasure, to be academically rigorous, to gather the right friends from “around the globe”, and to keep the group small enough that easy discussion and debate would be possible. Jean Yves and John called or wrote to everyone they knew who met these criteria worldwide.

John served as the first secretary and organizer of the study group and set up an initial meeting in Orlando Florida on February 17, 1995 at the Peabody Hotel. This meeting was funded by Intermedics at Jean Yve’s request. Ron Grelsamer led a lively discussion on the term “subluxation” and Allan Merchant presented his new design for PF replacement. Scott Dye presented his “envelope of load acceptance” to the group.” Jean Yves Dupont offered to host the second meeting.

The second meeting of the IPSG was held near Dupont’s home in beautiful Benodet on the west coast of France in the fall of 1995, where each participant was encouraged to speak on a patellofemoral topic of particular interest and then encourage rigorous discussion, debate, and critique. Jean Yves made sure that everyone was comfortable, providing wonderful lodging and cuisine, a meeting room, two carousels and projectors for slide (!) presentations, and some leisure time on his beloved sailboat. Around this time, Joan and Allan Merchant designed the logo for IPSG.



The enthusiastic group decided to have a gathering at Interlaken, Switzerland, hosted by Hans Uli Staubli, one of the charter members of the group, in September 1996. At that meeting, the wives went boating with Elda Staubli while the IPSPG group discussed the relative merits of proximal and distal patella stabilizing procedures and physical examination. Soon after this, Ron Grelsamer published the first article of IPSPG (Patellofemoral semantics: the tower of Babel. Am J Knee Surg. 10 (2): 92, 1997)

A fourth IPSPG meeting was held in Connecticut at the Boulders Inn, New Preston, Connecticut, USA October 5-8, 1997 organized by Fulkerson and Grelsamer during the fall season. This meeting was notable for several breakout groups and attempts at consensus validation regarding imaging studies, physical examination, and appropriate use of surgical procedures. Wives toured some New England homes, a local covered bridge and the Norman Rockwell museum with Lynn Fulkerson. Everyone tried their hands at carving pumpkins, a New England Halloween tradition. Following this meeting, Ron Grelsamer ran a Patella course on October 5, 1997 at which several members of the IPSPG gave lectures. Bill Post wrote a paper summarizing IPSPG conclusions regarding examination of the patellofemoral joint (Post WR. Clinical evaluation of patients with patellofemoral disorders. Arthroscopy 15(8): 841-851, 1999) crediting IPSPG at the end.

The membership at that time included Paul Aichroth, Andrew Amis, Elizabeth Arendt, Guy Bellier, J Benvenuti, Roland Biedert, Heinz Bereiter, David Buuck, Rick Cautilli, Emile Cohen, Jay Cox, David Dejour, Patrick Dijan, Tom Drobny, Jean-Yves Dupont, Scott Dye, Carlo Fabbriani, Jack Farr, Don Fithian, Nick Friederich, Dan Fritschy, John Fulkerson, Ron Grelsamer, Ron Hoekman, Dieter Kohn, David Marshall, Allan Merchant, Bernard Moyen, Tom Mullner, Otto Muench, Philippe Neyret, Alfredo Panni, Hans Uli Staubli, Bill Post, Neal Thomson, Jacques Valloton, Robert Teitge, and Jacques Overscheide .

The fifth meeting was in Lyon, France hosted by Philippe Neyret, Bernard Moyen, and David Dejour. After discussing the importance of the trochlea and its structure for patella stability, the group dined with the famous French chef Paul Bocuse. Around this time, Fulkerson asked Don Fithian, who had studied in Lyon, to serve as secretary of IPSPG.

Allan Merchant and Scott Dye then took IPSPG to the Napa Valley of California (September 26-29, 1999) for debates on trochlea dysplasia and malalignment of the patellofemoral joint. After vigorous yet friendly discussion, those attending experienced memorable wine tasting at Hess Vineyards and played croquet together!

Otto Muench hosted an IPSPG meeting in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany September 22-24, 2000 following the ESSKA meeting in London. The group delved further into biologic mediators of pain, resurfacing of the patella, PF alignment surgery, and lateral release. A highlight of this meeting was Oktoberfest!

Alfredo Panni organized the IPSPG meeting in Rome, Italy where he took the members and their wives to a very exclusive dinner club where some members learned (the hard way) about appropriate attire! Biologic mediators of anterior knee pain were a central topic at this meeting.

Wayne Leadbetter hosted the IPSPG meeting in Naples, Florida. Outcome studies and patellofemoral resurfacing procedures were key topics there. Wayne also hosted a subsequent meeting on patellofemoral arthroplasty in Washington, D.C.

Bill Post was elected by the group to follow Don Fithian as secretary of IPSPG, which continued as a loosely organized "group of friends with particular interest in the patella." Elizabeth Arendt became membership chairman, and limits were placed on the number of new members to be accepted, further emphasizing the importance of documented academic interest and commitment to problems of the patellofemoral joint. Jack Farr offered to serve IPSPG as treasurer and established a bank account for the group.

Jacques Vallotton hosted a meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland with emphasis on core stability.

A small group of IPSPG members met in Florence Italy in 2007, hosted by DJ Ortho, at which time the IPSPG consensus statement regarding patellofemoral pain (now available on the Patellofemoral Foundation website www.patellofemoral.org) was crafted.

Meetings then followed in Boston (Tony Schepsis), Stellenbosch, South Africa (Spike Erasmus), and London (Andrew Amis) at the time of the volcanic eruption in Iceland, so many members of IPSPG had very interesting experiences getting home, as air traffic from London was shut down for several days!

The Delmar, California (Don and M.E.Fithian) IPSPG meeting in July 2011 was notable for extraordinarily beautiful weather (which the group mostly observed from the lecture room). During this meeting, members and guests travelled to the DJOrtho facility in Vista, California where Drs. Almqvist, Farr, Arendt, Schoettle, and Grelsamer demonstrated their extraordinary surgical talents placing new surfaces on cadaver patellas! At the Delmar meeting, Chris Powers presented some powerful data regarding core stability effects on patella stability and articular loading. Fifty five members and guests attended this meeting.