

Antwerp, Leuven, 28/9/2020

Letter from the past and new president

Dear BASS members,

Since the previous 'Letter from the president' there was some silence from our part, but this does not mean that the BASS was in hibernation. Last year we organized many different successful meetings.

As yearly, the BASS participated as full partner in the International Sleep Medicine Course, which was hosted by the BSS in Cardiff on February 4-7, and which was extremely well attended. In May, we had our Spring meeting dedicated to sleep disordered breathing ("Muscles from Brussels"), organized by Sonia De Weerd in the Museum of Natural Sciences in Brussels. That meeting was attended by a huge number of colleagues. By tradition we had the parallel Joint sessions on basic sleep research and clinical sleep medicine during the International SleepUpdate Kempenhaeghe, that was exceptionally organized on June 19th. Finally, on November 8, we had the yearly Autumn meeting on "Beyond the ICSD: New health concepts in sleep medicine". The meeting took place in Ghent in the Augustinian Monastery and was organized by An Mariman, Dirk Vogelaers and Dirk Pevernagie. Young researchers also got the opportunity to contest for the two Andre Kahn Sleep Awards. The winners of these awards were Anna Peiffer (ULB) with her presentation on "The developmental advantage of sleep: children outplay adults in sleep-dependent memory consolidation processes at equal learning performance", and Jan Van Erum (UA) on "Sleep architecture and EEG spectral analysis of the Tau58/4 mouse model of tauopathy". All lectures and Communications were of high quality. In March this year, the BASS published in collaboration with the NSWO a new textbook called "Sleep and sleep disorders. A practical handbook", with a volume of 864 pages at an affordable cost of 120 €. The book can be ordered online via www.acco.be/sleep. Unfortunately, due to the covid pandemic, we had to cancel our planned meetings during Spring this year (ISMC in Blankenberge, Spring meeting in Leuven).

During our recent General Assembly meeting on August 25, a new BASS board with 8 members was elected for the next 4 years (2020-2024), and we welcome our new board members: Prof Maarten Van Den Bossche, and Dr. Mélanie Strauss. It is a great pleasure and honour to announce the appointment of Dries Testelmans as new president of the BASS in succession to Johan Verbraecken. By tradition, we have a vice-president (Prof. Marie Bruyneel), a secretary (Dr. Sonia Scaillet), and a treasurer (Prof Maarten Van Den Bossche).



Specific committees within the board will be manned by:

- Educational committee (ISMC, CGTi): An Mariman, Johan Verbraecken
- European affairs and accreditation: Bertien Buyse, Dries Testelmans
- Communication and press: Johan Verbraecken
- Research network: Dries Testelmans, Bertien Buyse
- National delegate Early Career Network ESRS: Mélanie Strauss

Johan Verbraecken, past BASS president: Please allow me to say thank you. It was a great honor and experience to lead this outstanding organization during the past 8 years, with the aid of leading experts in the board. This couldn't have been accomplished without the unlimited support from the different BASS Board members. Also my gratefulness for your confidence in my person to give me this opportunity.

Dries Testelmans, new BASS president: First, I would like to express huge gratitude and thanks to our outgoing president, prof. Johan Verbraecken, and other outgoing members of the BASS board: Dr. Alain Volckaert, Dr. Ilse De Volder and Dr. Julien Fanielle. Ilse and Alain served the BASS during the past 20 years! Over the last years, the BASS has been a growing society with an increasing number of members and participants to our meetings. The BASS also played a role on the political level with important contributions to the realization of the latest OSA convention. On the educational level, first steps for the development of a subtitle in Sleep Medicine have been made.

Due to the COVID storm, 2020 has brought us many challenges and we still face a lot of uncertainties for the near future. Nevertheless, the new board members are highly motivated and convinced to continue the important work and efforts of the previous board.

As it was and still is not possible to organize a physical BASS meeting, the board has decided to switch the format of the autumn meeting on the 6th of November to a full virtual meeting. The program and the modalities for registration will be sent around within the next weeks. We believe we have a very comprehensive program with several excellent speakers, so please reserve the date!

Besides our continued efforts to organize our BASS meetings, we will also not neglect our role in the political and educational aspects of the future organization of Sleep Medicine in Belgium. As you all know, recently, a KCE report regarding the "Organization and treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome" was published with some "challenging" recommendations. Together with Dirk Pevernagie, a rebuttal letter was composed with Marie Bruyneel, Johan Verbraecken, and Julien Fanielle to express our concerns and disagreement on the final report. This letter will be placed on the website of the BASS, once the reply of KCE is received. The BASS fully endorses the concerns of the experts-validators (JV and JF served as external experts in the first round, DP and MB served as validators in the second round).

Another point of attention for the next years is the development of a subtitle in Sleep medicine. A proposal for this subtitle was launched by the previous board together with representatives of other involved parties. As we believe this subtitle is very important for our field, we are eager to await initial comments and continue the process.

It is my pleasure to lead the BASS for the next years in these important tasks.
Hoping to see you online at the next autumn meeting!



Johan Verbraecken
Past president



Dries Testelmans
New president of the BASS

On behalf of the BASS board
www.belsleep.org