

SPARTAN *News*

SPONDYLOARTHRITIS RESEARCH AND TREATMENT NETWORK

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A Letter From the Chair

by John D. Reveille MD



This 2013 SPARTAN Annual Meeting commemorates the 10th Anniversary of the Spondyloarthritis Research and Treatment Network (SPARTAN). Some of the people attending this meeting were present at the first SPARTAN meeting in Salt Lake City in August, 2003. It was at that meeting that the term "SPARTAN" was given to our group, the first formal meeting of the Steering Committee was held, and officers appointed.

The concept of SPARTAN, ironically, was born at the Assessment of Spondyloarthritis International Society (ASAS) meeting in January, 2003 in Berlin when the first ASAS anti-TNF guidelines were formulated. At the end of the meeting Desiree van der Heijde bade the ASAS members to take the guidelines back to their National SpA Groups and adapt them to their own political, medical and funding realities. I discussed this with Paul Peloso and Daniel Clegg over the next few days, and on February 17, 2003 emailed John Davis, then the Secretary of ASAS and Jane Bruckel, then the Director of the Spondylitis Association of America (SAA) to get their assistance in founding what would soon become SPARTAN.

We have met yearly since, with a growth in attendance and in development of an agenda focused on both research and education. The Epidemiology of Spondyloarthritis was defined as an early priority, and the involvement in and support of the 2009-2010 NHANES effort stands on one of SPARTAN's greatest accomplishments to date. The second focus has been, in partnership with the SAA, the establishment of a national AS Registry, which is still growing. The third and most recent priority has been the ACR/SPARTAN/SAA Treatment Guidelines, on which many members of SPARTAN are currently engaged. This effort will further establish SPARTAN as the U.S. spokesman for SpA related issues, and has been an informative and wonderfully engaging process. In the educational arena, we early on decided to limit our outreach to the rheumatology community, where we determined that the interest in and knowledge of SpA needed work. The number of publications emanating from the annual meeting has been remarkable, and the recent partnership with the Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis (GRAPPA) in the series of SPARTAN/GRAPPA symposia nationwide has been a noteworthy success. Our participation with our Pan American League of Associations for Rheumatology (PANLAR) colleagues has also been noteworthy, and we hope this effort and collaboration will continue to grow.

SPARTAN has matured and evolved. By design, most of the original SPARTAN Steering Committee has been rotated off in order to bring in new blood, a turnover which will be complete in the next few years. After years of using the SAA as our fiduciary agent, we are now establishing SPARTAN as an independent 501c3 nonprofit tax exempt organization, a move that will allow us to move in new and exciting directions. It has been an honor to have been involved with this organization from its inception, and I look forward to its continued growth and development long after I have move on. I deeply appreciate all the help and support of the SPARTAN membership over these exciting years.

SPARTAN would like to thank our generous 2013 supporter and SAA for their continued support.