Editor’s Page

Congratulations to the International Corneal Laser Society and ISRK Upon Their Amalgamation

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On April 29, 1990, the International Corneal Laser Society (ICLS) voted to become a formal part of the International Society of Refractive Keratoplasty (ISRK). The group is now called the International Corneal Laser Section (still ICLS) of ISRK and functions within the organization in the same way that the 13 scientific sessions function within the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO). Although the International Corneal Laser Section functions as a distinctive group within ISRK, the individual members and the group as a whole are subject to the administrative structure and by-laws of the Society. Nonophthalmologists, such as laser physicists, optical engineers, and representatives of industry have played an active role in ICLS; mechanisms that encourage their continued participation will be defined in accordance with the guidelines of the American Academy of Ophthalmology for societies that are members of the AAO council.

The advantages of this amalgamation include:

1. ICLS can utilize the administrative structure of ISRK, preventing wasteful and costly duplication.
2. The two societies can more easily meet together and parsimony prevails since many individuals have interests in laser corneal surgery as well as in refractive surgery in general. Attendance at yet another separate meeting with another set of dues, officers, and obligations is unnecessary.
3. There is more likely to be cross-fertilization among refractive surgeons: the laser surgeons talking to the keratotomy surgeons talking to the keratomileusis surgeons.
4. The special interests of laser corneal surgeons can be represented, not only in ICLS symposia and workshops, but also within the context of refractive surgery in general.

The overall structure of the amalgamation is patterned after the Scientific Sessions of ARVO. Membership in ICLS results from an indication on the ISRK annual dues form that the individual wishes to join the section. Membership should be limited to individuals demonstrating a serious interest in or making significant contributions to laser corneal surgery. The section is run by a three-member Steering Committee, the senior member being the Chairperson of the committee. Each year at the fall meeting, the Chairperson rotates off and a new committee member is elected for 3 years. The Steering Committee organizes and plans the ICLS meetings, including solicitation and selection of papers and structuring the form of the meetings. Every 2 years, a member of ICLS is elected by the section to serve on the Board of Directors of ISRK, where that person will represent the special interests of the section.

ICLS meetings will be held in conjunction with ISRK, either as a laser symposium, as part of the general meeting, or as a satellite meeting that might take the familiar workshop format of “5 minutes and 5 slides” for each presentation. Of course, the section may meet independently, as ISRK has for the past few years during the ARVO meeting or other national meetings.

Since ICLS members will receive Refractive and Corneal Surgery as part of their membership in ISRK, it is hoped that vigorous contributions to the Journal will be forthcoming from the laser section.

At a time when the proliferation of subspecialty societies and groups continues, I think the wisdom shown in merging ICLS and ISRK will prove itself by increasing strength and representation of this new field of refractive surgery.