

## Bone and Joint Decade Extended

The Bone and Joint Decade which reached completion in September 2010 was deemed to be a great success and of such vital importance that it has been extended for another decade. The Bone and Joint Decade was founded and directed by Professor Lars Lidgren from the University of Lund in Sweden; initially it was launched with the backing of the United Nations and the World Health Organisation as a defined period (2000 to 2010) in which to focus on the plight of patients suffering afflictions such as joint disease, osteoporosis, spinal disorders, severe trauma to extremities, and crippling childhood disorders (1). The original goals of the Bone and Joint Decade were the following:

1. Raise awareness of the growing burden of musculoskeletal disorders on society,
2. Empower patients to participate in their own care,
3. Promote cost-effective prevention and treatment,
4. Advance understanding of musculoskeletal disorders through research to improve prevention and treatment.

The organising committee of the Bone and Joint Decade built up an extensive international network of societies and organisations concerned with musculoskeletal problems; they lobbied funding agencies to support musculoskeletal research, and held events that supported these goals. I have just re-read my copy of 'Great Circle: The World Eastbound' written by Professor Stephan Perren, who is one of our board members and a senior scientific advisor to the AO Research Institute in Davos, Switzerland, and his son Nicolas Perren (2). This book, replete with breathtaking aerial photography, is a fascinating account of personal commitment to the goal of improving musculoskeletal health care. In 2005 Professor Perren made a journey in his single engine Mooney aircraft with his son Nicolas from Zurich to Sydney, and then home by circling the globe. The purpose of the journey was to raise

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awareness in medical communities about the problem of osteoporotic fractures and the challenges of their management. At each stop to refuel, Professor Perren met with colleagues and lectured about these problems and their potential management solutions.

Some of the statistics about the magnitude of musculoskeletal problems of people are quite horrendous (1). For example joint diseases account for half of all chronic disease in people 65 years and older, and back pain is the second leading cause of sick leave. Furthermore, 40% of women over 50 will suffer an osteoporotic fracture, and in the developing nations one quarter of the health care budget was spent on trauma related care. Traumatic injury of people is on the rise; motor vehicle accidents, domestic violence, war, political unrest, volcano, earthquake, and tsunami being daily events in our world. Paradoxically, in companion animals inherited musculoskeletal diseases seem to have become more important than traumatic injuries.

To my knowledge the Bone and Joint Decade was not officially embraced by the veterinary profession. Notwithstanding, veterinarians maintain a crucial role in research on human musculoskeletal problems, especially when it comes to the use and humane treatment of research animal models. Since one goal of our Journal is to further the comparative aspects of orthopaedics and traumatology, we welcome papers concerned with comparative studies of musculoskeletal disease in all species, including humans. We are planning to publish several such papers in the Journal in forthcoming issues. We hope that you find them to be of interest.

Best wishes to all our readers and contributors for the New Year.

Sincerely,



**Kenneth A. Johnson**  
Editor-in-Chief



**Kenneth A. Johnson**

### References

1. Bone and Joint Decade's Musculoskeletal Portal [Homepage on the internet]. [cited 2010 December 19]. Available from: <http://www.bjdonline.org>.
2. Perren S, Perren N. Great Circle: The World Eastbound. 1st edition. Davos, Switzerland: BUDAG; 2008.