

Neurosurgery History in Europe

Modern [Neurosurgery](#) did not start until the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Before World War II neurosurgery was not generally recognized as an independent medical [specialty](#), in particular not in [Europe](#). This was different from the [United States](#) where such independence had developed in a progressive way already.

In Europe, neurosurgery was mostly submitted to the hegemony of neurologists and sometimes also of general surgeons in that period.

The continuous dominating attitude of the neurologists towards the growing self-respect of the neurosurgeons led irrevocably to a growing need for emancipation of neurosurgery as a separate specialty. The delayed development in Europe showed its reflection within the Organization of the International Congresses of Neurology.

At the first post-war International Congress of Neurology in [Paris, 1949](#), [Alfonso Asenjo Gómez](#), from [Chile](#), arranged for a meeting with a group of neurosurgeons in order to discuss how neurosurgery might present itself at international congresses in the future. In the end of a deliberate discussion it was decided to participate as a separate group.

Some years later, at the preparatory meeting prior to the Neurological Congress in [Lisbon](#), it was proposed that one of the official scientific topics should regard neurosurgery. This proposal met only partial acceptance by the neurologists. Although the Lisbon Congress became successful, a growing discontent developed among the neurosurgical and other “splintergroups” as they were called by Sir Francis Walshe, one of the leading neurologists.

The next meeting implicated the beginning of the divorce of neurosurgery from the neurological international organization. Although ambivalent feelings and hesitations still lingered among Europeans. The Americans unanimously considered the time to be ripe for autonomy of neurosurgery.

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