

Swiss Society of ambulatory surgery

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The Swiss Society of ambulatory surgery (SSAS) was founded by Prof. Marc-Claude Marti, who unfortunately passed away suddenly on 26 September 2001. This was a great loss for us and the society had some difficulties in re-organizing itself. Since this time the new board of directors consists of:

President	PD Dr. Bruno Roche
Vice President	Dr. Eduard Eicher
Secretary	Dr. Henri Vuilleumier
Treasurer	Mrs. Christine Robin

The SSAS consists of 196 members.

We organized one conference last year in June 2002 in conjunction with the Union of the Swiss Surgical Society. The society has strived to develop and encourage widespread application of ambulatory surgery in Switzerland. However, as in many other countries, we are currently facing political roadblocks.

The Swiss government has proposed new legislations that will make it unfavourable for doctors to perform ambulatory surgery. As a society, we find these proposals to be unrealistic difficult to put into practice. These proposals are unfair for both doctors and patients.

If passed, the new legislation will impose regulations based on time in hospital and post operative care. It categorizes surgical admissions as follows:

1. Ambulatory surgery:

- Discharge before midnight same day.
- No time spent in post-operative recovery room.
- No follow-up visit the next day.

2. Semi or half hospitalisation:

- Discharge within 24 h.

3. Hospitalisation:

- More than 24 h of hospital stay.

Based on current health insurance policies, ambulatory surgery is also unfavourable for both the surgeons and the patients.

1. Financial re-imburement for surgeons is more advantageous if patients are hospitalised for 24 h or more.
2. If ambulatory surgery is performed, the patients are obligated to pay 10% of the total fee as opposed to full coverage by the health insurance for a normal hospitalisation.

Because of these financial incentives, hospitalisation is often chosen over ambulatory surgery, leading to the slow acceptance and development of ambulatory surgery in our country.

Currently, we have prepared a list of all existing ambulatory surgery clinics nation-wide, which have been accepted and accredited for re-imburement by all insurance companies in Switzerland.

Our goal for the future is to try to modify the current re-imburement situation and to fight against the newly proposed legislations by the government. Hopefully this will create a greater acceptance by the surgeons and patients for ambulatory surgery. With greater use of ambulatory techniques, the newly trained surgeons will see the benefits of less hospitalisation and make ambulatory surgery a commonly accepted practice in Switzerland.

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