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## Letter to Human Genetics Journals

*To the Editor:*

The International Federation of Human Genetics Societies (IFHGS) was founded in 1996. This report was written to inform the international community of human geneticists of the history, purpose, and structure of the organization.

The IFHGS was founded to provide a transparent structure to facilitate communication throughout the international community of human geneticists. The IFHGS, still in its infancy, serves its constituent members—human genetics societies around the world—by providing a platform to share, interactively, information about research, education, and clinical services. The by-laws of the Federation state that “the purpose of The International Federation of Human Genetics Societies (the Federation) is to provide a forum for organized groups dedicated to all aspects of human genetics, including research, clinical practice, and professional and lay education. The Federation will enable communication between its member groups and encourage interaction between workers in genetics fields and in related sciences and will make itself available to promote meetings and publications and other forums which support human genetics research and practice.”

The IFHGS presently has two levels of membership: full members and corresponding members. The three founding multinational societies, which are full members, are The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), The European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG), and The Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA).

As new multinational or regional societies are formed, they may apply to the IFHGS for full-member status. Two regional societies—the Latin American Society and the East-Asian Society—are candidates for full membership. Representatives of full-member societies constitute the Executive Committee. The representatives' costs for participation in IFHGS activities are borne by the societies that they represent, and, as currently organized, the IFHGS does not require a budget or paid administrative staff.

National human genetics societies are eligible to par-

ticipate in the IFHGS as corresponding members. All participating individuals, whether from full- or corresponding-member societies, are elected officers or long-term representative appointees of the constituent human genetics societies. Any geneticist in the world who is a member of an affiliated human genetics society is automatically connected to the IFHGS.

The 34 national human genetics societies that are presently corresponding members of the IFHGS are listed in table 1.

At the Ninth International Congress of Human Genetics in Brazil, representatives of the IFHGS met and decided to undertake the organization and support of future international congresses of human genetics. The IFHGS offered to subsume the annual meetings of full-member societies into these congresses so as to guarantee high attendance by avoiding any competition with other annual meetings. This idea was proposed to the leaders of the Permanent Committee of the International Congresses of Human Genetics, which then selected the European Society of Human Genetics as the host of the Tenth International Congress of Human Genetics, which is to be held in Vienna on May 16–19, 2001. Future

**Table 1**

**Corresponding Members of the International Federation of Human Genetics Societies**

Name of Society	Representative
American College of Medical Genetics	R. Rodney Howell
Argentina Society of Medical Genetics	Susana Turyk
Austrian Society for Human Genetics	Gerd Utermann
Brazilian Clinical Genetics Society	Joao Monteiro de Pina-Neto
British Society for Human Genetics	Andrew Read
Canadian College of Medical Genetics	Jane Evans
Czech Society of Medical Genetics	Jiri Santavy
Finnish Society of Medical Genetics	Minna Poyhonen
French Society of Human Genetics	Roland Berger
German Society for Human Genetics	Jorg Schmidtke
Hellenic Society of Medical Genetics	Micichael Petersen
Hungarian Society of Human Genetics	Gyorgy Kosztolanyi
Indian Society of Human Genetics	Kiran Kucheria
Irish Society of Human Genetics	Nollaig Parfrey
Israeli Society of Medical Geneticists	Zvi Borochowitz
Italian Society of Human Genetics	Bruno Dallapiccola
Japanese Society of Human Genetics	Keiya Tada
Korean Society of Human Genetics	Ho Suk Saw
Latvian Medical Genetics Society	Rita Lugovska
Lithuanian Society of Human Genetics	Vaidutis Kucinskias
Mexican Association of Human Genetics	Jose Maria Cantu
Netherlands Society of Human Genetics	Gerd-Jan van Ommen
Norwegian Society of Medical Genetics	Trond Leren
Polish Society of Human Genetics	Jerzy Nowak
Portuguese Society of Human Genetics	Carolino Monteiro
Romanian Society of Human Genetics	Covic Mircea
Russian Society of Human Genetics	Evgeny Ginter
Serbian Society for Human Genetics	Miroslava Micic
South African Society for Human Genetics	Arnold Christianson
Spanish Association of Human Genetics	Alberto Valiente
Swedish Society of Human Genetics	Ulf Kristoffersson
Swiss Society of Medical Genetics	Daniel Schorderet
Turkish Association of Medical Genetics	Memnune Apak
Genetics Society of Vietnam	Le Dinh Luong

international congresses of human genetics will be held at 5-year intervals, with sponsorship and organizational responsibilities rotating among the full-member societies of the IFHGS. In this manner, the fiscal soundness of the International Congress of Human Genetics is assured, as is its geographic distribution over time.

The IFHGS has established a Website that promises to be a unique and valuable service to the human genetics community. The IFHGS bylaws are posted there. All national societies are invited to link to this site and to post the dates and outcomes of elections of officers, dates and locations of upcoming annual meetings, bylaws and other governance documents, position statements developed by committees, and any reports of interest to other national groups. In this manner, important resources can be easily shared.

The current president of the IFHGS is Segolene Ayme. She will be succeeded in 2000 by Uta Francke, the cur-

rent president of the ASHG, whose term as IFHGS president will run from January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2002.

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#### **Electronic-Database Information**

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