

Introduction

For the occasion of the Sixth Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine held in Göteborg, Sweden, in June 1979, the Volvo Group of industries extended to the organization the challenge of sponsoring a competition in which original studies that contributed new and useful ideas directed toward solving the low-back pain problem would be considered for awards from the Volvo Group. The organization accepted the task and sponsored the desired competition. Forty-one manuscripts were submitted from all over the world, and a special Awards Committee directed its energies toward selecting the leading manuscript in each of the fields of Basic Science, Bioengineering, and Clinical Sciences. An award was given for what was considered to be the best study in each of the categories.

This issue of SPINE presents the winning papers for the 1979 Volvo Competition along with a selection of the more significant studies from the overall group submitted, as determined by the Awards Committee.

The Editors of SPINE join with the membership of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine in extending a sincere statement of congratulations to the Volvo Group for their unique and ingenious concept of provoking original thought in this most difficult of medical and social problems, and appreciation for the generosity exhibited by the sponsorship of the awards.

All involved acknowledge the very special concerns of Mr. Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, the gentleman primarily responsible for the generation of the Volvo Competition. His efforts in behalf of the literally thousands of workers for whom he assumes a personal responsibility have established him as a leading figure among the world's humanistic industrialists.

Born in Göteborg, Sweden, Mr. Gyllenhammar pursued his formal and advanced education in Sweden, Great Britain, the United States, and Switzerland. His career has embraced broad executive experiences in a variety of settings. He assumed the post of President and Chief Executive Officer of the Volvo Group in 1971. His stewardship has been notable not only for technologic progress but also for his dedication to the improvement of the quality of human life.

At the event of the presentation of the 1979 awards Mr. Gyllenhammar favored the membership of the International Society for the Study of the Lumbar Spine with a cogent and pertinent address, and the Editors of SPINE gratefully acknowledge the permission of the Volvo Group to publish his remarks both as a statement of position from an industrialist concerned about low-back pain and as a general introduction to the works specifically collected at his behest.