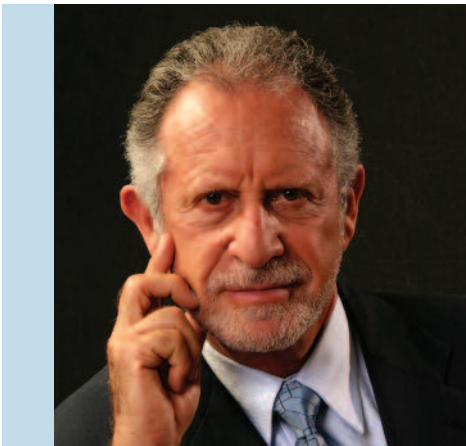


# From the EDITOR



**Dr. Wulf H. Utian**, consultant in women's health and reproductive endocrinology, has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Menopause Management* since its inception in 1988. The Arthur H. Bill Professor Emeritus of Reproductive Biology and Obstetrics and Gynecology, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, he is also Consultant, Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women's Health Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, and Executive Director of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS). He is Chairman of the Advisory Board of Rapid Medical Research, Cleveland. He received his medical degree from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, and his PhD from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and is a Fellow of the Royal and American Colleges of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, as well as the International College of Surgeons. In 2007 he earned the DSc(Med) degree from the University of Cape Town, its highest degree and only awarded 11 times in over 100 years.

A pioneer in Women's Health issues and menopause research, in 1967 he established the Groote Schuur Menopause Research Clinic in Cape Town, the world's first such clinic. He was one of the three original founders of the International Menopause Society in 1976, of which he is Honorary Past President, and founded the North American Menopause Society in 1989.

He is the recipient of numerous national and international awards and research grants, and is still an active investigator with multiple grants. Dr. Utian has written over 200 papers related to the reproductive system in women and has authored five books on menopause and its effects on women. He is editor of *Menopause: The Journal of The North American Menopause Society*.

## NAMS at 20: From Grass-Roots Inception to International Preeminence

Just over 20 years ago I called a lawyer friend of mine, Kenneth Kleinman, and asked the simple question: "How does one start a nonprofit scientific organization?" Fortunately I had called the right person, Ken having a heavy background in Washington DC and health law. My idea was to establish a scientific society that was interdisciplinary and inclusive of all medical and ancillary specialties with an intellectual interest in the subject. I started the conversation with Ken in August of 1988 and, based on the charter of the International Menopause Society (IMS), a preliminary charter was developed. The organization was designed *ab initio* as North American to include Canada and Mexico. NAMS was incorporated as a nonprofit scientific organization on November 29, 1988, with Fredi Kronenberg, PhD, of Columbia University in New York City, Isaac Schiff, MD, of Harvard University in Boston, and myself as the original signatories and founding Trustees. The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) was officially registered on December 13, 1988, and was officially launched at a co-sponsored meeting held under the auspices of the New York Academy of Sciences on September 21–23, 1989, in New York City. The proceedings are historically recorded in a full edition of the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (volume 592, 1990). The story of how I arrived at that point is quite fascinating.

### Development of Menopause-Related Scientific Organizations

Menopause-related research in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a relatively lonely endeavor. There were few investigators worldwide with any interest in the subject, and they concentrated

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that interest on a specific aspect of menopause research, such as osteoporosis or cardiovascular disease. It was therefore serendipitous that I received a letter in April 1973 from one Pieter van Keep, MD, PhD, Director-General of the International Health Foundation (IHF) based in Geneva, Switzerland, expressing interest in my early medical publications, telling me of his early social studies on menopause, and inviting my research collaboration. At that time my research in Cape Town, South Africa, was focused solely on the clinical and metabolic effects of menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). I had heard neither of him nor the IHF, but was delighted to discover another “menopausologist” and intrigued by his early social studies. By coincidence, I was about to travel to Europe the next month; I responded, suggesting we meet in Geneva.

Pieter met me at the Geneva airport, explained that he had a light day at the office, would show me Geneva, and then we would meet Guus, his wife, for dinner. The day turned out uniquely; when the full history of menopausology is written, it will have been a true milestone. The germinal ideas for much of organized menopause-related medicine had its origin on that day in May 1973. It was also the beginning of an instant and remarkable friendship that lasted until Pieter’s premature death in 1991.

We wandered from pub to pub through old Geneva, getting more animated and excited in our conversation as the day wore on—and also, perhaps, less than fully sober. During the course of that brainstorming day we conceptualized the idea of a “menopause club”, a friendly organization that would draw together the few people worldwide interested in the subject to a series of meetings we planned to be held in Geneva under the auspices of the IHF. This club was later to become the International Menopause Society (IMS). We also felt there was a need for some sort of newsletter or journal to act as a vehicle for news and new findings; this was the original concept that was later to become *Maturitas*, the first medical journal devoted to menopause, and

of which we were destined to become the first medical editors.

We spoke of holding gatherings in exotic places such as the Bahamas, Sri Lanka, or Hawaii; the meetings ultimately were to be the IMS congresses. Above all, my basic and clinical science research approach melded well with

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Pieter’s psychosocial interests. We spoke of a new concept of healthy women care, an idea for enhanced quality years for women by primary preventive health care, utilizing menopause as a positive entry point. By the evening we had run out of ideas, and of soberness, and in great convivial mood joined Guus for dinner. She was not impressed, but eventually she too was caught up in our excitement, even though I was “from South Africa.”

Over the next 3 years we conducted three closed workshops in Geneva. Many ideas were discussed and, as interest increased, the small, closed workshop concept was expanded to the open International Menopause Congress, and the establishment of an “International Society for the Study of the Climacteric and Postmenopause.” Those 3 years were difficult ones for me and my personal career. An adversarial event with the apartheid South African government had prompted several people to advise me that my continuing academic career in South Africa was jeopardized, and in 1976, just before the Soweto riots, I relocated with my family to the United States.

In June 1976, 165 professionals of varying disciplines and backgrounds, but all with the common interest of menopause, gathered in the resort town of LaGrande Motte in France to attend the First International Congress on the Menopause. The year 1976 also coincided with the development of a major controversy regarding hormone treatment after menopause. The “estrogen forever” attitude of the late 1960s and

early 1970s had been transformed into a fear of uterine cancer after publications in late 1975. The research world was also confused, and this was evidenced at the conference. It was clear to all attendees that better information and forums for presenting data were necessary, and that an International Menopause Society was essential.

*By the time of the Fifth International Congress in 1987 in Sorrento, Italy, I was repeatedly being asked by non-North-American friends about the large organization we presumably had in the United States. In fact, we had none.*

We therefore worked aggressively over the subsequent 2 years, and the IMS was formally launched in November 1978 after the Second International Menopause Congress in Jerusalem in June 1978.

In retrospect, it seems remarkable to me that so much could have happened in the short space of time between 1973 and 1978—notably, the founding of the IMS, the launch of *Maturitas*, the impetus for national menopause societies, and the recognition and development of meaningful menopause-related research—all being progress that Pieter and I could barely have hoped for at that fateful meeting back in 1973.

### Establishment of National and Regional Societies

During the following years, interest in national menopause societies escalated, and I was privileged to be involved in the planning or launch of almost 30 national societies worldwide. Following the launch of the IMS and the successful first world meetings in 1976 and 1978, I was invited by colleagues with interests in their own countries to help in the development of their own national organizations.

In reality, NAMS was established as a result of my own personal embarrassment. By the time of the Fifth International Congress in 1987 in Sorrento, Italy, I was repeatedly being asked by non-North-American friends about the large organization we presumably had in the United

States. In fact, we had none. So, finding no one else interested in starting a North American menopause organization, I bit the bullet and started NAMS in November 1988.

### The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) at 20

The growth and success of this organization has been phenomenal, and a detailed description of every aspect of the Society and its programs can be accessed at [www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org). Today, NAMS is an extremely large organization, based in Cleveland, Ohio, with more than 2,000 members in 50 countries, and is responsible for major scientific meetings, peer-reviewed medical journals (*Menopause*, *The Journal of The North American Menopause Society*, and *Menopause Management*), a Web site that gets over 5 million hits per month, a national competency certification exam in menopause medicine, and multiple professional and consumer educational activities reaching literally hundreds of thousands of healthcare providers around the world. Some examples of its milestones, accomplishments and activities follow:

- Today, NAMS is North America's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting women's health and quality of life through an understanding of menopause. NAMS organizes meetings and congresses, and advances the interchange of research plans and experience between individual members of the Society. Its multidisciplinary membership of leaders in the field—including clinical and basic science experts from medicine, nursing, sociology, psychology, anthropology, pharmacy, epidemiology, nutrition and education—enables NAMS to be the preeminent resource on all aspects of menopause to both healthcare providers and the public.
- The annual scientific meetings confirm our diversity, with members drawn from the basic and clinical sciences, physicians, nurses and all the others listed above. By avoiding concurrent sessions, the annual meetings have been extraordinarily successful in fostering increased collaboration and elevating knowledge. The scientific

programs are attended by thought leaders from over 50 countries.

- *Menopause* was launched in 1994 under the stewardship of Isaac Schiff, MD, and me as a journal to serve as a vehicle for transmitting peer-reviewed scientific information that would be helpful to the NAMS membership, the healthcare profession and society in general. *Menopause* is now ranked in the top three of OB/GYN journals listed by the Library of Congress, as measured by Science Citation Index, and is universally accepted as *the* scientific journal on the subject.
- *Menopause Management* is a practical, peer-reviewed clinical publication, mailed bimonthly throughout North America and internationally, with a circulation of just under 35,000. The evidence-based, clinically relevant and practical articles have resulted in the wide acceptance and popularity of this publication. I have been the Editor in Chief since the debut of publication in the fall of 1988. NAMS has provided peer review since 1992.
- NAMS provides guidance for healthcare providers through its development of position statements on key clinical issues, printed and Web-based educational programs, and its popular textbook *Menopause Practice: A Clinician's Guide*. Members also receive expert advice through our quarterly *Menopause e-Consult* e-newsletter. Many of these programs allow participants to earn continuing medical education credits from NAMS, an ACCME-accredited organization.
- The abrupt pronouncements on the termination of the estrogen/progestin arm of the WHI study in July 2002 caused real confusion for women and health providers. But it contributed to the phenomenal success of our highly acclaimed *First to Know*<sup>®</sup> monthly e-newsletter, in which experts cull the current and about-to-be-released literature for important news. The best are summarized and e-mailed to members with expert commentary. The file is then posted on the NAMS Web site for open access.
- NAMS established multiple awards for significant accomplishments in scientific

## SPECIAL INVITATION TO OUR READERS

### 2009 is My Final Year as Editor-in-Chief

**Write me a memory of NAMS or Menopause Management • Send a clinical pearl, a new idea...**

Since the fall of 1988, I have written 118 editorials as Editor-in-Chief of *Menopause Management*. Sometimes, the response has been less than a ripple from a pebble dropped into the middle of Lake Erie; other times, the response has been like Niagara Falls! Now, as my time runs out, I want to hear from you.

In my final year I invite you to e-mail me a 400–500-word pearl of wisdom, thought, new idea, comment on any impact NAMS and/or *Menopause Management* has had on you or your career, an interesting patient care vignette...

Send your contributions to me at [Utian@menopause.org](mailto:Utian@menopause.org). I promise to give whatever you send as much space as possible in the columns of this magazine throughout 2009. It should certainly make for an interesting year.

My best wishes to you and yours over the holiday season, and may 2009 be one of health, happiness and true progress for you and your loved ones.

Wulf Utian, MD, PhD, DSc(Med)

research, clinical care, teaching, and consumer information and education.

- We recognized the need to set essential standards for health providers, thereby assuring high-quality care for women. To meet this need the Society, in 2000, developed an opportunity for licensed healthcare providers from multiple disciplines to demonstrate their expertise by passing a 100-question multiple-choice competency examination and becoming credentialed as a NAMS Menopause Practitioner. Currently, healthcare providers throughout the world hold this prestigious 3-year credential.

Those who pass the examination receive a certificate suitable for framing, plus suggestions on how to promote the accomplishment within the community. NAMS assists in announcing this accomplishment by posting all Menopause Practitioners' names on the Society's Web site. In turn, this provides women searching the NAMS Web site for a competent local practitioner with the names of those who have received the credential.

- A decade ago, recognizing our strengths and the demand for reliable information for the public, NAMS added consumer education to its broader mission. Major accomplishments in this arena include:
  - The award-winning NAMS Web site ([www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org)), currently drawing an excess of 5 million hits per month to both consumer and health provider pages;
  - Two primary print resources, the *Menopause Guidebook* and the *Early Menopause Guidebook*, providing factual information to hundreds of thousands of women;
  - Now in its fourth year, *Menopause Flashes*, a complimentary monthly e-newsletter for women that translates the most current scientific information into consumer-friendly language; and
  - Launched in 2006 with an initial print run of 1 million is *Changes*, the NAMS-endorsed magazine distributed to patients through US physicians' offices.

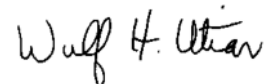
### The NAMS Foundation

Developing NAMS programs and activities is costly in time, effort and money. The NAMS Foundation was therefore launched in September 2006 as a support organization of NAMS, charged with the challenge of raising significant financing for greatly enhanced objectives. With financial support from the Foundation, the Society will be able to continue its ambitious agenda for development of its initiatives, and will be well positioned for even more growth in the years to come. But what exactly are those programs and what will be their structure?

### The Future for NAMS

The NAMS Board, multiple committees and Central Office staff are focused on the future. This will require keeping ahead of the information curve with state-of-the-art computer platforms geared to interactive education, communication, project accomplishment and strategic planning.

These are exciting times, and the population we serve is only growing in number. The complexity of social and medical challenges and demand for factual and trustworthy information are, therefore, only going to increase. There has never been a better time for health professionals with a stake in this future to join NAMS, become active on one of the committees, attend the annual meetings and enhance the quality of life for all women through menopause and beyond.



Wulf H. Utian, MD, PhD, DSc(Med)  
Executive Director and Honorary Founding President  
The North American Menopause Society