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International Society for Applied
Research in Aging (SARA)

Clinical Interventions in Aging and SARA

An organizational meeting of the International Society for Applied Research in Aging (SARA) was held in Tampa, FL, USA on October 28 – 30, 2005. The new society was created by and for practitioners of longevity medicine who seek evidence-based information on clinical methods for improving and extending health, vitality and quality of life during aging. Through application of these methods, onset of intrinsic diseases associated with senescence can be delayed and possibly prevented instead of being treated after they occur. In support of this goal, the newly organized society sponsored a scientific symposium entitled, *Clinical Interventions in Aging (CIA)*, to coincide with its organizational meeting. The title of the first Symposium was chosen to be the same as this Journal, which is SARA's official publication. Speakers were experts in their respective fields, having published their work in peer-reviewed medical and professional journals. Because it was the first annual SARA meeting, the program was specifically designed to provide a broad-brush approach to the field of anti-aging medicine. It began with a historical perspective of research data that originally provided clues as to how life may be extended, and also how those insights eventually reached clinical application. Methods with the potential to maintain homeostasis were discussed. These focused primarily upon age-related decay of neurotransmitter dynamics, neuroendocrine dysfunction, and the positive effects of caloric restriction. Philosophical issues such as whether aging is a disease or a process were also debated. Subsequent sessions extended the earlier research findings into present day anti-aging applications including such diverse subjects as nutrition, exercise, lifestyle and behavior, cosmetic surgery, dermatology, and even chelation. Although most of the information conveyed was essentially a review of previously published data, new findings were also presented as "hot topics" from investigators with studies either in progress or recently finished but unpublished.

Because anti-aging medicine is not yet recognized as an established field of practice by the traditional medical community, a session of the SARA symposium was devoted to current controversies, especially involving ethical and legal aspects of certain popular interventions such as human growth hormone replacement therapy (hGHRT). Coincidentally, an article critical of using hGH as an intervention in aging was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* just before the meeting. Fortunately, one of the authors of the article was an invited speaker at the Symposium. His presence ensured lively and informed debate in which both sides of the issue were well represented. Although consensus was not achieved, it was possible for those present to acknowledge that specific federal guidelines restrict hGH use to only a few indications, while also recognizing that it is possible to comply with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) covering hGH use within the context of longevity medicine.

After conclusion of the educational program, a business meeting of the founding SARA membership was held. It was agreed that because of the inevitable growth of anti-aging medicine, an effort should be made to develop affiliate memberships with similarly minded organizations around the world. Initially, Dr. Fiorenzo Angehrn, one of SARA's founding members and President of a Swiss anti-aging society announced that many of his local members expressed such a desire. Since the meeting,

affiliation meetings have been held with Drs. Tsubota, Marotta, and Naim, who are presidents of their own anti-aging groups in Japan, Italy, and Switzerland, respectively. As with Dr. Angehrn, they pledged to promote affiliation of their membership with SARA and two of them have accepted positions on the *CIA* editorial board in support of the effort. In recognition of these affiliate memberships, the publisher

has agreed to designate *CIA* as the official, English-language journal for each society. Thus, the result of our efforts to organize an international, ethical, and relevant society for anti-aging practitioners was encouraging. With continued support of the membership, SARA should grow and flourish as a model for good clinical practice through education and service in the coming months and years.