

Hand Surgery in Chile: A Brief History

The development of systematic hand surgery in Chile can be traced back to the early 1950s when the Chilean Orthopedic and Traumatology Society (SCHOT) established itself alongside the enactment of the worker's compensation law and the creation of the Traumatologic Institute. At this time, notable pioneers in the field were Dr. Walterio Ihl and Dr. Victor Mouat, who played a significant role in advancing and disseminating knowledge and interest in hand surgery.

In the 1970s, the Hospital del Trabajador (Worker's Hospital) was established to provide specialized treatment for work-related injuries. Dr. Victor Mouat served as its first director, turning it into a leading institution for orthopedic surgery and attracting various orthopedic specialists in Chile. Under the guidance of Dr. Luis Rossel, the first Hand Surgery Team was formed, and similar institutions dedicated to the treatment of work-related injuries also emerged. Notable hand surgeons such as Dr. Robinson Gonzales and Dr. Juan Carlso Uribe contributed to the development and enhancement of hand surgery in these institutions.

Many of these early hand surgery teams produced a new generation of hand surgeons who later spread their expertise to other hospitals throughout Chile. In the early 1990s, the South American Hand Surgery Federation played a vital role in fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange by organizing meetings where Chilean surgeons had the opportunity to connect with renowned hand surgeons from South America and around the world. Visits from distinguished surgeons like Drs. Eduardo A. Zancolli, Arlindo Pardini, Eduardo R. Zancolli, Walter Manna Albertoni, Jose Maria Rotella, Rames Mattar, and Mario Rodriguez Sammartino, among others, prompted the formation of the Chilean Society for Surgery of the Hand. This society became an active member of both the South American and International Federation for Hand Surgery.

In the early 2000s, under the leadership of Dr. Alberto Perez as the head of Hand Surgery at the Hospital del Trabajador, the exposure to international experts led young surgeons to pursue further training in microsurgery, arthroscopy, and other advanced techniques. Collaborations with renowned institutions worldwide, including those in Nancy, Paris, the Kleinert Institute, the Mass General, the Mayo Clinic, the HSS, Barcelona, Madrid, the EWAS, Sydney, and many others, significantly enhanced knowledge, interest, and participation in both local and international meetings.

Today, the Chilean Society for Surgery of the Hand and Microsurgery is a vibrant and growing society with over 300 members actively participating in monthly meetings and annual congresses. The society has hosted the South American Federation Congress in 2001 and 2015, under the leadership of two esteemed hand surgeons, Dr. Alberto Perez and Dr. Jorge Vergara.

Our society is a proud and active member of Federacion Latinoamericana de Cirugia de la Mano since its beginnings and the IFSSH since 2012.

The Chilean Society for Surgery of the Hand and Microsurgery

Email socimanochile@gmail.com



This picture was taken during de IFSSH congress in Buenos Aires.



Chilean delegation during the IFSSH Congress in Berlin



Chilean delegation during the IFSSH Congress in London



Chilean Society Logo

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Sebastian von Unger, IFSSH Delegate