The Bone and Joint Decade 2000–2010

In April of this year, a number of scientists and clinicians across the field of musculo-skeletal disease proposed, at the first multi-disciplinary congress of its kind, that the years 2000–2010 should be declared as the “Bone and Joint Decade”. As the majority of the readers probably knows, we are now living in the decade of the brain. There were representatives from about 50 patient and clinical organisations, medical journals, research societies and the World Health Organisation gathered in this consensus meeting held in Lund, Sweden, that intended to launch a campaign committed to “improving quality of life of people with bone and joint disease and injury throughout the world”. The group of experts discussed various ways to solve health problems associated with musculo-skeletal conditions in four specific fields: joint disease, spinal disorders and low back pain, osteoporosis,

and severe trauma to the extremities. In the final consensus document it was concluded that musculo-skeletal disease and injury are estimated to account for one fifth of all disabilities and are one of the most common causes for long-term pain and physical disability for hundreds of millions of people across the world. For instance: – joint disease accounts for 50% of all chronic conditions in persons aged 65 and older; – back pain is the second leading cause of sick leave; – it is estimated that 40% of all women over 50 will suffer from a fragility fracture.

It is my hope that the “Bone and Joint Decade” will increase the awareness of the suffering and costs to society associated with musculo-skeletal disorders, as well as increasing the interest for research into these topics that may be of direct benefit for a significant number of patients.

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