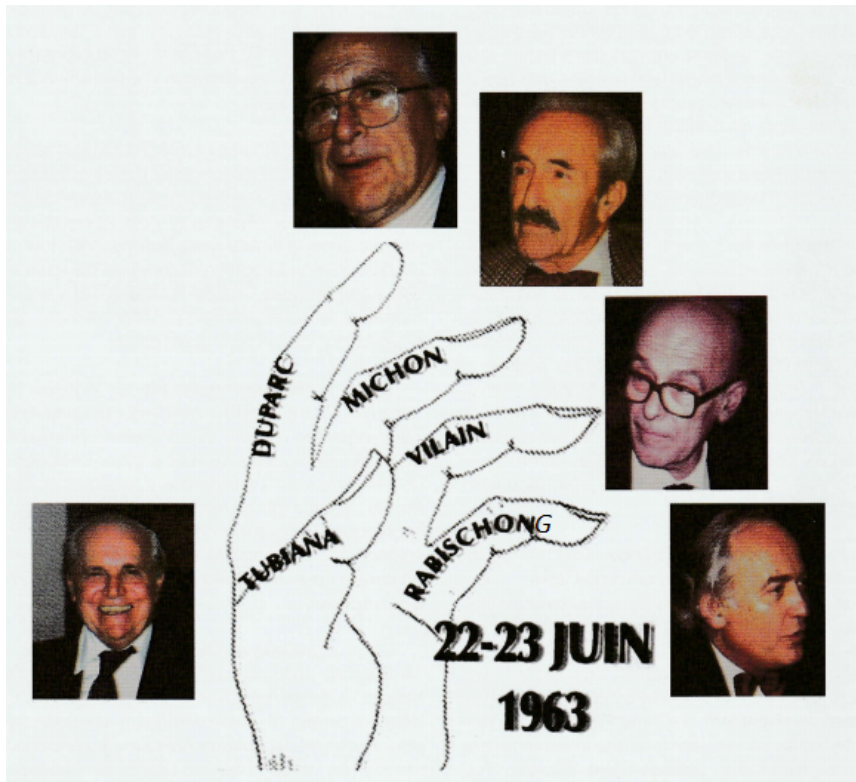




French Society for Surgery of the Hand Société Française de la Chirurgie de la Main

Hand surgery was individualized as a surgical specialty in 1960. Articles and a book on the specific techniques of hand surgery were published at that time. In 1963, five people created a group to investigate hand surgery. This group was called the "Groupe d'Etude de la Main" or GEM (meaning Hand Study Group) and was composed of three plastic surgeons: Raoul Tubiana, Raymond Vilain and Jacques Michon; one orthopaedic surgeon, Jacques Duparc, and one professor of anatomy and biomechanics, Pierre Rabischong. They met on a regular, informal basis until an association with by-laws was created.



AN ANATOMIST IN THE WORLD OF SURGEONS: AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR RABISCHONG

“It was Raoul Tubiana who had the idea of setting up the GEM. The condition of the hand was a theme that had been strongly developed at Cochin, and TUBIANA’S tutor, MERLE-D’AUBIGNÉ, had sent him to STRLING-BUNNEL for training for training. Upon his return, MERLE-D’AUBIGNÉ entrusted the hand surgery department to him and Raoul’s aim became to make hand surgery as well-known as other kinds of surgery.

Inspired by the example of the British Hand Club, Raoul TUBIANA had the idea of creating a discussion group, so he suggested the idea to Jacques DUPARC who ws working with him at Cochin at that time. Then he spoke to Jacques MICHON, who introduced us, Raymond VILIAN and myself, to the project. VILAIN and MICHON were already connected and had been working together on hand surgery for a long time.

For my part, I’d met Jacques MICHON when I was an extern at Nancy in the department where he was working with CHALNOT. Afterwards I had several discussions with him about hand surgery. In fact, I was on my way back from Switzerland where I’d been working for two years with WINCKLER in Lausanne, on the anatomy of the hand main among other things. After arriving in Montpellier in 1961 when the group had been formed, I continued to work on the hand which I really enjoyed, especially hand prostheses and splinting. This is why MUCHON thought of me for the GEM project.”

The first formal meeting was organized in 1963 under the leadership of Robert Merle d'Aubigné, a leading French Orthopedic surgeon who was the first President of the GEM. He was the head of an Orthopedics department which consisted of several units, and Raoul Tubiana was in charge of the Hand Unit. In 1966, there were 24 members.

Subsequent meetings were held on an annual basis and the presidents succeeding Robert Merle d'Aubigné, Jean Gosset and Marc Iselin had all been involved in hand surgery. Attendance at these meetings continued to grow and by 1968 the society numbered approximately 50 members.

The papers presented by the society were published in the Journal of Surgery. Beginning in 1974, one issue a year was dedicated to the Hand in the journal "Annales de Chirurgie". In 1982, the Hand Society’s own journal, "Annales de Chirurgie de la Main", was created and it published four issues a year. The journal’s title changed first to "La Main" and then "Chirurgie

de la main" and published six issues a year. Since 2016, the journal is now known as "Hand Surgery and Rehabilitation" with all its publications in English! This journal is also the journal of French-speaking Swiss and Belgian societies. The Society has grown in terms of members and attendees and its name has now changed to "Soci te Franaise de Chirurgie de la Main (French Society for Surgery of the Hand)" with new statutes. A board of directors was created consisting of a President, two vice-Presidents, a General Secretary and an assistant General Secretary, a Treasurer, one representative from the IFSSH, one from the FESSH and three members at large who are all elected during the annual general Assembly.

Over the years, the Society has steadily grown and now has 76 honorary members (3), 183 full members (5), 261 associate members (24), 31 corresponding members (14) and 113 junior members (1) (including foreign members). The status of "junior member" has existed since 2015.

FROM SOS MAIN TO THE FESUM

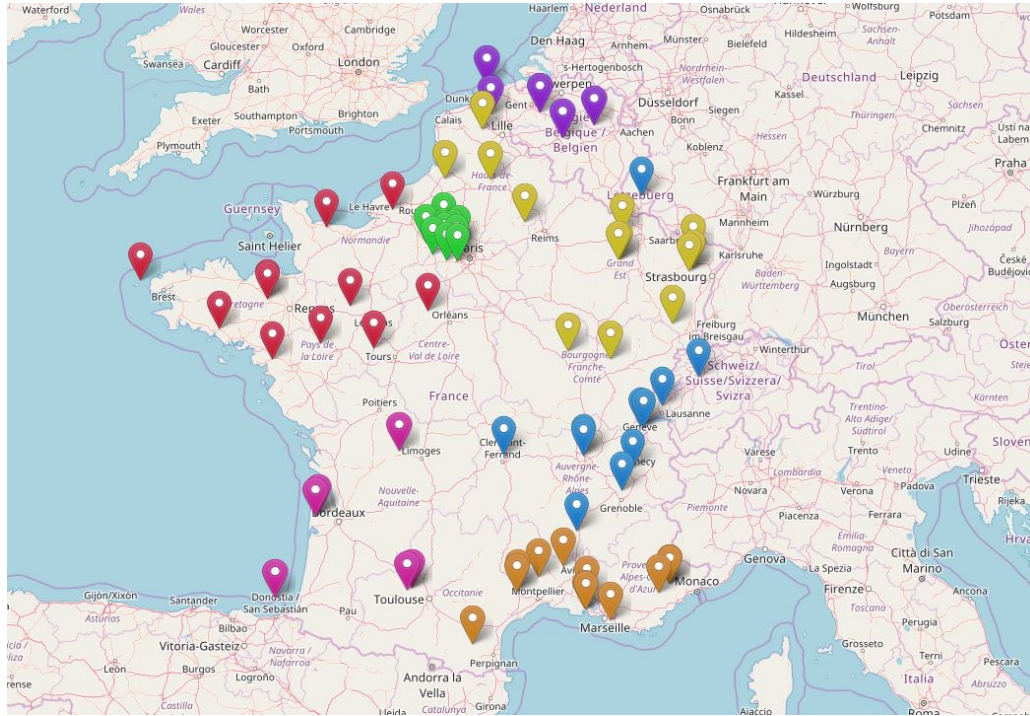
In 1972 Raymond Vilain had the idea of setting up a telephonic advisory service called SOS MAIN for practitioners faced with emergencies involving the hand. SOS MAIN quickly became a 24-hour service for receiving those with hand injuries. It was quickly followed by other centres. France was the first country to possess a network of SOS MAIN services.

In 1979 nine French hand surgeons (Prof. J. Michon and Dr. M. Merle in Nancy, Dr. G. Foucher in Strasbourg, Dr. R. Vilain, Pr. J.P. Lemerie and Dr. P. Saffar in Paris, Prof. H. Bureau and Dr. G. Magalon in Marseille, Prof. Y. Allieu in Montpellier) joined by Prof. G. Lejeune in Brussels created the European confederation of emergency services for the hand.

In 1987, within the framework of the Eurom dicine congress in Montpellier, a session organised by the European Confederation and sponsored by the French Society of Hand Surgery was dedicated to emergency hand surgery.

In 1989, the European Confederation of emergency services for the hand became the FESUM, (F d ration Europ enne des Services d'Urgences Main). France was divided into 6 regions. Considering the disparity of health systems in Europe, only Belgium and Switzerland were integrated along with France into the French-speaking organism, FESUM.

The FESUM, based on its statutes and strict organisation controlling its licensed centres, fulfils its threefold mission of care, teaching and research.



Each December in Paris there is a three-day annual meeting which is a joint meeting with Hand Therapists. Spring meetings take place in a city chosen by the President. Attendance at the December meeting has grown to more than 1000 attendees each year, of which approximately twenty-five per cent are international. The French Society for Surgery of the Hand (SFCM-GEM) played the role of a European Society until the creation of the FESSH (European Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand).

Now, there are 59 centers in France (36 private and 23 public), 7 in Belgium, 5 in Switzerland and 1 in Luxembourg. The members of the various centers gather together for a scientific day once a year. In these units, residents begin to operate under the supervision of a confirmed hand surgeon. About 20 courses or meetings are organized annually in different French cities, sponsored by the Society.

Every year, the “French Society for Surgery of the Hand” grants several scholarships to French surgeons who would like to train abroad for a period of several months, and to young international surgeons wishing to study in France.

CERTIFICATION

"Hand Surgery skills" certification is awarded to surgeons specializing in orthopedics or plastic surgery who have completed two years of hand surgery. To obtain the title of "Hand Surgeon", the diploma of hand surgery must be combined with a diploma of microsurgery and two years in hand units as a resident. Associated with the Society, there is also the "College Francais des Enseignants de Chirurgie de la Main" (French College of hand surgery Teachers) which includes all teachers of hand anatomy, biomechanics, pathologies and treatment.

HAND SURGEONS

Most hand surgeons performing exclusively hand and upper limb surgery come mainly from orthopedic surgery or less frequently from plastic surgery. Very few come from general surgery. Hand surgery is also performed by surgeons who are not specialists in hand surgery.

PIONEERS

Besides the founders of the GEM, other pioneers at that time were Marc Iselin who wrote the first French book on hand surgery and A. Kapandji, an outstanding teacher on hand biomechanics and thumb arthritis. A major contribution was made by Raoul Tubiana and his book of more than a thousand pages on Hand Surgery which was translated into several different languages. A series of monographs (more than 30) dealing with hand topics were edited by the Society. Numerous contributions have been added to the latest edition. The main contributors have been: Yves Allieu on wrist, rheumatoid arthritis and elbow, Jean-Yves Alnot on rheumatoid arthritis, nerves and brachial plexus, Jacques Baudet on plastic surgery for the hand, Jean-Yves De la Caffiniere for his thumb prosthesis, Jean-Jacques Comtet on Dupuytren and wrist, Guy Foucher on microsurgery and congenital deformities, Alain Gilbert on microsurgery and congenital deformities, Julien Glicenstein on hand tumors, Dominique LeViet on sequelae of traumatology and entrapment neuropathies, Michel Mansat on elbow and shoulder, Michel Merle on microsurgery and trauma, Jean Pillet on hand prostheses, Philippe Saffar on wrist and thumb arthritis, and Francois Schernberg on scaphoid and wrist.

THE SOCIETY

The name of the Society is "Société Française de Chirurgie de la Main" founded in 1963. The Society has been a member of the IFSSH ever since the beginning, in 1966. The society hosted the IFSSH in Paris in 1992. The Society is also affiliated to EFSSH whose annual congress was held in Paris in 2014.