

WIROC Grande 2015: A Landmark in Orthopaedic Academic Tradition

Swapnil M Keny¹, Sandeep Sonone², Ram Chaddha³

Abstract

WIROC Grande 2015, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Bombay Orthopaedic Society, transformed adversity into distinction. With academic excellence as its compass and heritage as its soul, the conference blended tradition with innovation, discipline with imagination, and scholarship with celebration; emerging as a defining moment in Indian orthopaedics and a beacon for future generations.

Keywords: WIROC Grande 2015, Bombay Orthopaedic Society, Orthopaedic conference, Academic leadership, Professional society, Innovation in medical education, Conference planning, Institutional legacy

Introduction

The year 2015 was a defining milestone for the Bombay orthopaedic society (BOS). Celebrating its Golden Jubilee, the Society found itself at a crossroads between honoring a rich heritage and laying the foundation for future growth. What emerged was Western India Regional Orthopaedic Conference (WIROC) Grande 2015, a conference that sought to be more than an annual gathering – it was conceived as a commemorative event blending academic rigor, organizational innovation, and cultural reflection.

This editorial reflects on the planning, execution, and impact of WIROC Grande 2015. While the details are anchored in one particular event, the underlying principles resonate with broader lessons for professional societies engaged in academic pursuits.

From Setback to Vision

The BOS had initially aspired to host IOACON 2015, aligning its Golden Jubilee with the Diamond Jubilee of the Indian Orthopaedic Association. A well-prepared bid was presented at IOACON 2013 in Agra. Despite strong advocacy from the Maharashtra Orthopaedic Association and BOS, the hosting rights went to Jaipur, under the leadership of Prof. R.C. Meena.

The Jaipur IOACON was a success in its own right, but for BOS, this moment of disappointment became a catalyst.

Rather than retreat, the leadership resolved to transform WIROC 2015 into an event of national significance – one that would not only commemorate 50 years of BOS but also assert the strength of Indian orthopaedics on its own terms.

Strategic Planning and Logistical Choices

The decision-making process that followed reflected both pragmatism and vision. Key features included:

- **Duration and Format:** A 3-day program, breaking from the convention of two-and-a-half days, allowed for greater depth and balance between subspecialties.
- **Dates:** Choosing the Christmas weekend was deliberate, despite concerns about limited international participation. The organizers believed that Indian faculty possessed not only the expertise but also the contextual relevance to address the challenges most pertinent to Indian orthopaedic practice.
- **Venue:** After extensive deliberation, the JW Marriott, Sahar, Mumbai, was chosen. Its ability to combine academic facilities with state-of-the-art hospitality made it suitable for a large and diverse delegate pool.
- **Industry engagement:** A dedicated trade area with integrated

¹Department of Orthopaedics, Reliance Foundation Sir H.N.Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India,

²Department of Orthopaedics, King Edward Memorial Hospital & Seth G.S.Medical College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India,

³Department of Orthopaedics, Lilavati Hospital & Research Centre, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

Address of Correspondence

Dr. Swapnil M Keny,

Department of Orthopaedics, Reliance Foundation Sir H.N.Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: peadortho@gmail.com

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Figure 1: “Photograph of the century.”

catering facilities ensured that academic sessions remained undisturbed while still allowing strong interaction between delegates and trade partners.

Technological advances were also central. The audience response system (ARS) was deployed on an unprecedented scale, enhancing interactivity. In addition, a live, continuously updatable conference app provided delegates with schedules, menus, session alerts, and the possibility of engaging directly with faculty, a leap forward from static HTML-based platforms.

The Academic Core

The hallmark of WIROC Grande 2015 was its academic program. The Scientific Committee was committed to offering breadth, depth, and balance:

- While trauma was the central theme, equitable representation was given to arthroplasty, arthroscopy, spine, pediatrics, oncology, and hand surgery.

- Three parallel non-plenary sessions each afternoon allowed delegates to pursue areas of personal interest without diluting the collective quality.

- A deliberate effort was made to ensure that senior faculty led early morning symposia, beginning at 8 a.m., on clinically pressing issues. The enthusiastic response, with halls filled even before the sessions began, underscored that high-quality content delivered with discipline could engage both young trainees and senior practitioners.

Timekeeping was treated with utmost seriousness. A strict cutoff policy was put in place for speakers exceeding allotted time, a measure rarely enforced in Indian meetings but vital for maintaining the integrity of the scientific program.

Blending Heritage with Innovation

Beyond academics, WIROC Grande 2015 celebrated the traditions of BOS:



Figure 2: Legends of Indian orthopaedics.



Figure 3: Bombay orthopaedic society past presidents dinner –December 9th, 2015.

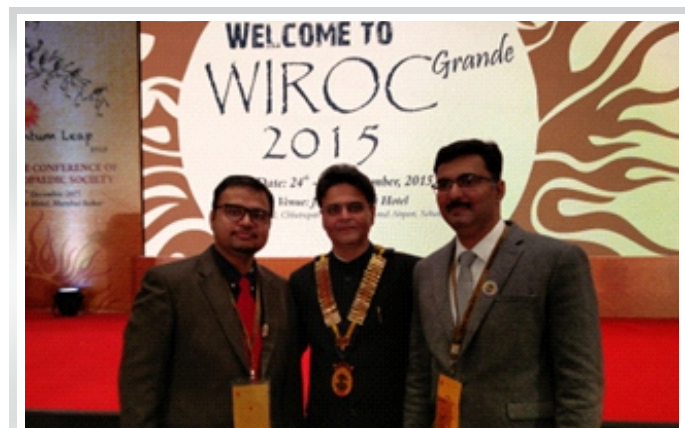


Figure 4: Western India Regional Orthopaedic Conference Grande – The Team.

- The inauguration avoided symbolic rituals and instead placed all living Past Presidents on stage alongside the 2015–2016 Executive Council. This visual statement honored the continuum of leadership
- The release of “Legends and Legacies,” a meticulously compiled coffee-table book chronicling the lives of past presidents, ensured that the society’s institutional memory was preserved for posterity
- A group photograph of past presidents, described as the “Photograph of the Century,” visually captured five decades of commitment.

Complementing this heritage was innovative academic formats:

- The Master’s Cut showcased edited surgical videos by leading BOS surgeons, requiring months of preparation but offering delegates an unparalleled educational resource
- Mind over Matter, an impromptu dialog between radiologists and orthopaedic surgeons, highlighted the power of interdisciplinary exchange
- Prudence and Jurisprudence addressed medico-legal responsibilities in orthopedics, enriched by ARS-driven interactive case scenarios
- Rise and Shine, an unconventional session on grooming, fitness, and communication skills, demonstrated that professional success extends beyond surgical skill
- Art, Science and Commerce of a Successful Surgical Practice explored self-marketing, legacy building, and clinical management – themes rarely addressed in traditional conferences.

The Presidential Guest Lecture, spiritual in tone and profound in delivery, stood apart as a moment of reflection that transcended the usual academic discourse.

Lessons in Teamwork and Leadership

Behind the scenes, WIROC Grande 2015 was as much about process as product. Three categories of contributors were crucial:

1. Young volunteers – energetic, innovative, and willing to experiment
2. Experienced organizers – familiar with the mechanics of conferences and able to anticipate challenges
3. Senior mentors – whose wisdom and steady guidance anchored the event.

The collaboration of these groups created a “chain reaction” that propelled the event forward. This blend of energy, experience, and mentorship remains a valuable model for future conferences.

Reflections and Broader Implications

It is tempting for organizers to measure success in numbers – of delegates, faculty, or trade partners. While WIROC Grande 2015 scored highly on all these metrics, its deeper achievement was more qualitative:

- It demonstrated that Indian orthopaedic faculty is capable of delivering academic excellence without over-reliance on international presence
- It proved that discipline in time and structure enhances scientific credibility
- It reaffirmed that conferences are not just platforms for knowledge transfer but also occasions to celebrate institutional identity and collective history

Conclusion

WIROC Grande 2015 was more than a conference; it was a statement of intent. It showed that the BOS could simultaneously honor its heritage, embrace modernity, and innovate for the future.

In retrospect, three pillars underpinned its success:

1. Youthful enthusiasm,
2. Experienced stewardship, and
3. Guiding mentorship.

These attributes, when combined, transform an event into a movement. As BOS steps beyond its Golden Jubilee, WIROC Grande 2015 will be remembered not only for its academic content but also as a symbol of what professional societies can achieve when vision and teamwork align.

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