

History of the North American Hyperthermia Society

Although the beneficial effects of hyperthermia were first noted in tumor-bearing patients with high fevers in the mid-1800's, serious, experimental, well-controlled studies were not begun until the 1960's. The first mammalian cell hyperthermia experiment in the United States to gain wide attention was published by A. Westra and W.C. Dewey in 1971. This paper stimulated many radiation biologists to investigate the effects of hyperthermia and hyperthermia-induced radiosensitization and chemosensitization in cells and tissues.

Results at the cellular, experimental tumor, and clinical levels indicated a promising role for hyperthermia in oncology, and stimulated J. Eugene Robinson to organize an "International Symposium on Cancer Therapy by Hyperthermia and Radiation" in Washington, D.C. in 1975. This meeting attracted over 100 participants. Interest in hyperthermic oncology continued to grow and another international symposium was held in Essen, Germany in 1977, and a third in Fort Collins, Colorado in 1980. Since then, an International Symposium on Hyperthermic Oncology has been held every four years. In the United States and Canada, results of hyperthermia research were, for the most part, reported at the annual scientific meetings of the Radiation Research Society.

The North American Hyperthermia Society was founded in 1981 by those who shared the opinion that hyperthermia continued to show promise as a therapeutic modality, and that the growing numbers of investigators and the amount of data produced required a separate forum for discussion of results and planning future directions of research and application. The idea for a new society was conceived during the meeting of the American Society of Therapeutic Radiology in Dallas, Texas in 1980 and led to an organizational meeting at the winter meeting of the Radiation Therapy Oncology Society in San Diego on Coronado Island, January of 1981. D.B. Leeper was elected chairman of the Organizing Committee and served in that capacity for four years. The first of what became annual meetings was held on May 31, 1981, in Minneapolis in association with the annual meeting of the Radiation Research Society. The close association between the North American Hyperthermia Society and the Radiation Research Society continues to this day. In 1986 a constitution and bylaws were adopted, and the North American Hyperthermia Society was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a tax-exempt scientific organization for hyperthermia research. The first elected president of the newly constituted society was M.W. Dewhirst.

In 1985 the North American Hyperthermia Society, together with the European Society for Hyperthermic Oncology and the Japanese Society of Hyperthermic Oncology cooperatively founded the *"International Journal of Hyperthermia"* and adopted it as their official journal.