History of surgery in Belgium
Belgium has a long history in surgery. Most famous is Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), who described human anatomy in his masterpiece *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* that was published in 1543. More recently, Albin Lambotte (1866–1955) was the godfather of osteosynthesis. In his book *Chirurgie opératoire des fractures* that was published in 1920, he described the development of bone surgery based on the principles of asepsis, anatomic reduction and rigid stabilization.

Belgian Hand Group
The bylaws of the BHG are:

- to stimulate the knowledge and development of the scientific disciplines involved in hand surgery
- to improve the research in hand surgery from a scientific, clinical and social point of view
- to improve the quality of the care of hand injuries and hand handicaps in the entire country
- to stimulate the collaboration between various specialists, doctors and surgeons interested in the issues related to the hand
- to stimulate the collaboration between the various institutions involved in prevention, treatment and re-education of patients with a hand handicap.

Presidents of the Belgian Hand Group:
1972 – 76 : A. de Coninck
1976 – 78 : G. Calberg
1978 – 80 : G. Matton
1980 – 82 : H. Evrard
1982 – 84 : M. Lejour
1984 – 86 : G. Lejeune
1986 – 88 : H. De Frenne
1988 – 90 : P. Van Wetter
1990 – 92 : P. Wylock
1992 – 94 : A. Carlier
1994 – 96 : L. Kinnen
1996 – 98 : J.P. Moermans
1998 – 00 : L. De Smet
2000 – 02 : F. Schuind
2002 – 04 : D. Vanden Berghe
2004 – 06 : F. Van Innis
2006 – 08 : R. Van Damme
2008 – 10 : O. Barbier
2010 – 12 : J. Goubau
2012 – 14 : J. Bahm
2014 – 16 : N. Hollevoet
2016 – 18 : L. Van Overstraeten
2019- present: F. Verstreken

The BHG is a member of Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand (FESSH) and International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH).

On June 18, 2001 the website of the Belgian Hand Group was launched: www.belgianhandgroup.be

Scientific work
The BHG organized the first congress of FESSH in Brussels from 26–29 May 1993 and this congress again in Antwerp from 21–23 June 2012. Presently, the BHG has five honorary, 62 effective and 96 associated members, which represent the organization caring for patients with hand diseases and injuries in Belgium. The BHG organizes a half-day specialty session at the yearly Orthopaedica Belgica Congress, organized by the Belgian Society for Orthopaedic Surgery and Traumatology. Since 1992 Brussels Hand and Upper Limb International Symposium has been organized yearly. Since 2015, a yearly BHG Cadaver Course is organized at Antwerp University. The BHG cooperates with the Acta Orthopaedica Belgica and Hand Surgery & Rehabilitation journals for the publication of original articles.

Hand therapy
The Belgian hand therapists have their own professional organization, the Belgian Hand Therapists. They can be found online at www.belgianhandtherapists.be.