



### **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**

On May 30, 1972 the Belgian Hand Group (BHG) was founded in Brussels by Albert de Coninck, Guido Matton, Edouard Vander Elst, Georges Calberg, Pierre Van Wetter and Jean-Jacques Rombouts.

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](http://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](http://www.belgianhandtherapists.be).