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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Advancing Pilonidal Sinus Care Through Structured International Collaboration: The PiloNERDs Project

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Dear Editor,

Pilonidal sinus disease (PSD) remains one of the most common benign surgical disorders affecting adolescents and young adults worldwide. Although particularly prevalent throughout Europe, its clinical and socioeconomic burden extends across North America and many regions of Asia. Despite its frequency, considerable variation persists in surgical management, outcome assessment, and long-term follow-up.

Europe occupies a unique position in advancing PSD research. Dedicated scientific meetings held in Istanbul and Aarhus, together with the forthcoming congress in St. Gallen, illustrate the increasing commitment of European surgeons to improving patient care. Nevertheless, despite this encouraging scientific activity, harmonization of methodology, standardized outcome definitions, and collaborative data collection remain limited.

For a disease with such high prevalence, fragmented evidence can no longer adequately support optimal clinical decision-making. Differences in operative techniques, inconsistent definitions of recurrence and healing, and heterogeneous follow-up protocols continue to hinder meaningful comparison between published studies. Consequently, establishing internationally accepted standards should become a priority for the surgical community.

Scientific meetings and individual publications undoubtedly contribute to progress; however, sustainable advancement requires structured international collaboration. Shared registries, standardized terminology, harmonized outcome reporting, consensus regarding clinically meaningful long-term follow-up, multicentre studies, and transparent methodological exchange represent essential components of future research.

In response to these needs, **PiloNERDs International (Pilonidal Network for Expertise, Research and Development)** was established as a clinician-led collaborative initiative dedicated exclusively to pilonidal disease. The network aims to harmonize definitions, promote high-quality multicentre research, encourage rigorous long-term outcome assessment, facilitate educational initiatives, and strengthen methodological transparency across institutions and countries.

Europe, with its extensive clinical experience and active academic community, is ideally positioned to lead this collaborative effort. Rather than replacing regional expertise, international cooperation enhances scientific quality, improves comparability of evidence, and accelerates innovation. Ultimately, these efforts translate into better care for the predominantly young patients affected by PSD.

The time has come to move beyond isolated excellence toward coordinated scientific progress. Rigorous methodology, transparent collaboration, and international partnerships should become the foundation of future advances in pilonidal disease research and clinical practice.

Clinicians and researchers are warmly invited to participate in **PiloNERDs International**, contribute clinical data, engage in collaborative projects, refine consensus definitions, and help establish the scientific standards that will guide the next generation of pilonidal surgery.

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Conflict of Interest
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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