

APSS Depuy Synthes Spine Travelling Fellowship 2013

24th March – 13th April 2013

Singapore

(24th March – 30th March 2013)

Arrival - Day 0

(Sun, 24th March)

We arrive at Singapore on Sunday. We were brought to the Santa Grand Hotel East Coast hotel where we will be staying for the week. This hotel is located in the East Coast area nestled at the heart of Katong, which is well known for its Peranakan heritage and culture. The hotel is also within the larger Joo Chiat area, which was designated as the national heritage conservation area by the Singapore Government with the intention of preserving its rich history, culture and architecture. This Peranakan themed boutique hotel aims to introduce Singapore's unique culture and tradition to visitors.



Day 1

(Mon, 25th March)

On our first day to the National University of Singapore Hospital, we were greeted warmly by Prof. HK Wong, A/Prof. Gabriel Liu, A/Prof. KS Naresh and the Orthopaedic departmental members. After our brief introduction, Dr. Ryoji Tauchi started his presentation on the “Treatment of Refractory Atlanto-axial Rotatory Fixation using a Halovest”. This was followed by Dr. CK Chiu’s presentation on “The Safety of Percutaneous Pedicle Screw”.

We proceeded to join Prof. HK Wong in the operation theatre. He performed a posterior spinal fusion on a 21-year-old girl with Lenke 2 idiopathic scoliosis. Dr. Ryoji Tauchi was given the privilege to scrub in to join this surgery. We also observed another surgery performed by A/Prof. Gabriel Liu. He did a lengthening of the distraction rods on a 12-year-old girl with juvenile scoliosis.

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After the surgeries, we were given a short tour of the National University of Singapore hospital, the National University of Singapore Medical Faculty and the research facilities. For dinner, with the pleasant company of A/Prof. Gabriel Liu, we were treated with authentic Chinese cuisines in the Imperial Treasure Restaurant at Marina Bay Sands.



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Day 2

(Tue, 26th March)

On our second day, we joined Prof. HK Wong in the operation theatre. He did a posterior lateral fusion (PLF) and transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion (TLIF) surgery for a 60-year-old man with degenerative scoliosis. Dr. CK Chiu scrubbed in. The second surgery was done by A/Prof. KS Naresh. The patient was a 46-year-old lady with spondylolisthesis L5/S1. A/Prof. Naresh did a minimally invasive TLIF (MIS-TLIF).



Dinner was a pleasant surprise as we were invited by A/Prof. Naresh to his residency for a delicious home cooked Indian meal prepared by his wife.



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Day 3

(Wed, 27th March)

We started our 3rd day with presentations from Dr. V Tubaki and Dr. S Patil on “A Prospective Randomised Control Study comparing Lumbar Spinous Process Splitting Decompression and Conventional Midline Decompression for Degenerative Lumbar Canal Stenosis” and “Surgical Patterns in Osteoporotic Vertebral Compression Fractures”. After the presentations, we joined A/Prof Gabriel Liu for a cervical laminoplasty and plating surgery. We felt that the plating system is user friendly and impressed by the meticulous dissection and bloodless operative field.



With some free time after the surgery, we took the opportunity to drop by the Long Bar in the Raffles hotel for a late afternoon drink. The Long Bar in the Raffles hotel is well known for their “peanut skin floor littering culture” and the famous “Singapore Sling”. For dinner, we were invited by the local host for a dinner in The Halia in the Botanical Garden. Here their food is a “marriage of European Traditions and a light Asian flourishes, modern yet classical, adventurous yet familiar.”



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Day 4 - 6

(Thurs, 28th – Sat, 30th March)

Today, we started the day with case presentations from the junior doctors. Post-operative and pre-operative cases were discussed. They also presented interesting cases for discussion. We had a very informative and educational session. After case discussions, A/Prof. KS Naresh and Dr. GK Lau presented on their current research. For lunch, we had the kind company of A/Prof.

The scientific content of these discussions will help me in making decisions while treating similar patients in India. – Dr Sangnagouda Patil, (India).

I am impressed with the anterior thoracoscopic fusion surgery used for idiopathic scoliosis; it has many advantages including reducing fusion segments. – Dr Vijay Tubaki (India).

SB Tan in the Tang Lin clubhouse. He then brought us to Singapore General Hospital and gave us a tour to the clinical facilities in the hospital. We then managed to observe two surgeries in SGH, a microdiscectomy by A/Prof. WM Yue and a MIS-TLIF by Dr. CM Guo. For dinner, we joined the NUS Orthopaedic department for a buffet in the Straits Kitchen, Grand Hyatt Hotel.

On the weekend we had some time to visit the Changi Point Boardwalk, the Marina Barrage and the Gardens by the Bay. The Changi Point Boardwalk is a place for people to escape the hustle and bustle of city life to a more quiet and serene environment. It is also a popular spot for fishing. The Marina Barrage is one of Singapore's technological prides of a method of water conservation and recycling. The Gardens by the Bay is the newest recreation and tourist spot in Singapore. Here it houses two large greenhouses. Saturday, the 30th March was our final day in Singapore and will fly to Taiwan.



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Tainan, Taiwan

(30th March – 6th April 2013)

Day 7

(Sun, 31st March)

We will be spending one week in our new home in Tayih Landis Hotel. This Hotel is located in the hearth of Tainan city. It is the one of the largest hotel in Tainan city with the capacity of 315 rooms. It has many facilities like a full-sized gymnasium, swimming pool, hot spa and sauna.



Day 8 & 9

(Mon, 1st – Tue, 2nd April)

On Monday, we managed to observe two operations by Prof. RM Lin. The first operation was an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion on a 71 year-old lady with C5/6 disc prolapse. The second surgery was a mini-open anterior spinal fusion on a 74 year-old lady with non-union of T12 osteoporotic fracture. After the surgery we had the opportunity to have dinner with the Spine team in a Japanese restaurant. We gave our presentations to the Orthopaedic department on Tuesday morning.



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Day 10 -13

(Wed, 3rd – Sat, 6th April)

Today, we have the opportunity to join A/Prof. Henry Huang for two surgeries. The first was a two level TLIF for spondylolisthesis L3/4 and L4/5 and the second was a posterior spinal decompression and fusion for a 72 year-old man with degenerative scoliosis. For dinner, we went for the popular local Indian restaurant for some Indian food.

I enjoyed the learning, discussions and surgeries we had with the senior surgeons and departmental staffs. I plan to share it with my colleagues back home. – Dr Ryoji Tauchi (Japan).



During our free time, we took the opportunity to visit several popular spots in Tainan. Our first destination was the Tainan Confucius temple. The temple, also called the Scholarly Temple was built in 1665 is now a popular place for tourists and visitors. We then proceeded to Chihkan Tower which is a Tainan landmark. It was, in 1663 built by the Dutch as a fort during their colonization of Taiwan. We also went to the AnPing Canal. Here, we had the opportunity to experience the local fisherman's life. Dr. S Patil was our representative to pull up a large fishing net to harvest the catch for today.



On Saturday, we took the high speed train to the Taoyuan Airport where we will be flying to our next destination, Seoul, Korea.

Seoul, Korea

(6th April – 12th April 2013)

Day 14

(Sun, 7th April)

Sunday was a free day for us. We took a short trip to the town and walked around in the shopping district of Myeong-Dong and Apgujeong. We had the opportunity to rest and freshened up for the last week of our fellowship in The-K hotel in Seoul.



Day 15

(Mon, 8th April)

Our first working day in Korea, we had the opportunity to join Prof. KS Suk for 4 cervical surgery in the Kyung Hee University Hospital. The first case was a 74 year-old man with Ossification of Posterior Longitudinal Ligament (OPLL) and Ossification of Ligamentum Flavum (OLF). He performed a laminectomy and fusion from C3-T1 for him. The next patient was a 63 year-old lady with multilevel prolapsed intervertebral disc in which a laminoplasty was done. The next two patients have prolapsed intervertebral disc and an anterior cervical discectomy and fusion (ACDF) was done. After the surgeries, we had the privilege to join the company of Prof. Suk and his team for a cosy Chinese Korean dinner.

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Within a short span of three weeks, I had received knowledge, conception, craftsmanship, motivation, wisdom and friendship from Chee-Kidd, Chiu (Malaysia).

Day 16 & 17

(Tues, 9th – Wed, 10th April)

We joined Prof. KT Kim for two surgeries. The first surgery was TLIF for a 78 year-old lady who has spondylolisthesis L4/5. The second surgery was C5/6 and C6/7 ACDF for a 70 year-old man who has cervical disc prolapse with myelopathy. After the surgeries, we were invited for a Chinese Korean dinner with the department of Orthopaedics of Kyung Hee Hospital at Gangdong.

On Wednesday, we observed two more surgeries by Prof. Kim, a posterior subtraction osteotomy (PSO) for an ankylosing spondylitis patient and a TLIF and extradural tumour resection for a patient with L2/3 disc prolapse and a L1/2 Schwannoma. For dinner, we had authentic Korean cuisine with Prof. Kim and the spine team.



Day 18 & 19

(Thurs, 11th – Fri, 12th April)

We had to wake up early on Thursday morning for the morning department meeting. Here, all of us gave our presentations to the Orthopaedic department. Following that, we got the chance to visit one of Korean's implant manufacturers, the U&I corporation. Here in their factory, they produce various Orthopaedic implant including spinal implants and instruments.

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We were extremely fortunate to be able to join the Cervical Spine Research Society (Asia Pacific) annual general meeting. Here we were able to meet experienced cervical surgeon like Prof. Suk Se-II, Prof. Kuniyoshi Abumi, Prof. Dan Riew, Prof. Atul Goel, Prof. Chung Jae-Yoon, Dato' Dr. KS Sivanathan and others. We also had the opportunity to attend the scientific talks.



Last Day & Farewell

(Sat, 13th April 2013)

In three weeks, each of us had fostered a memorable friendship through pleasant and worrisome situations, confident and insecure occasions, and fearful and funny moments. Despite having to say goodbye, our fostered friendship will continue indefinitely.

2013 APSS Depuy Synthes Spine Travelling Fellows:

Ryoji Tauchi (Japan)

Vijay R Tubaki (India)

Sanganagouda Patil (India)

Chee-Kidd Chiu (Malaysia)



Chee-Kidd, Sangana, Vijay, Ryoji

Chee-Kidd, Ryoji, Sangana, Vijay