

APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

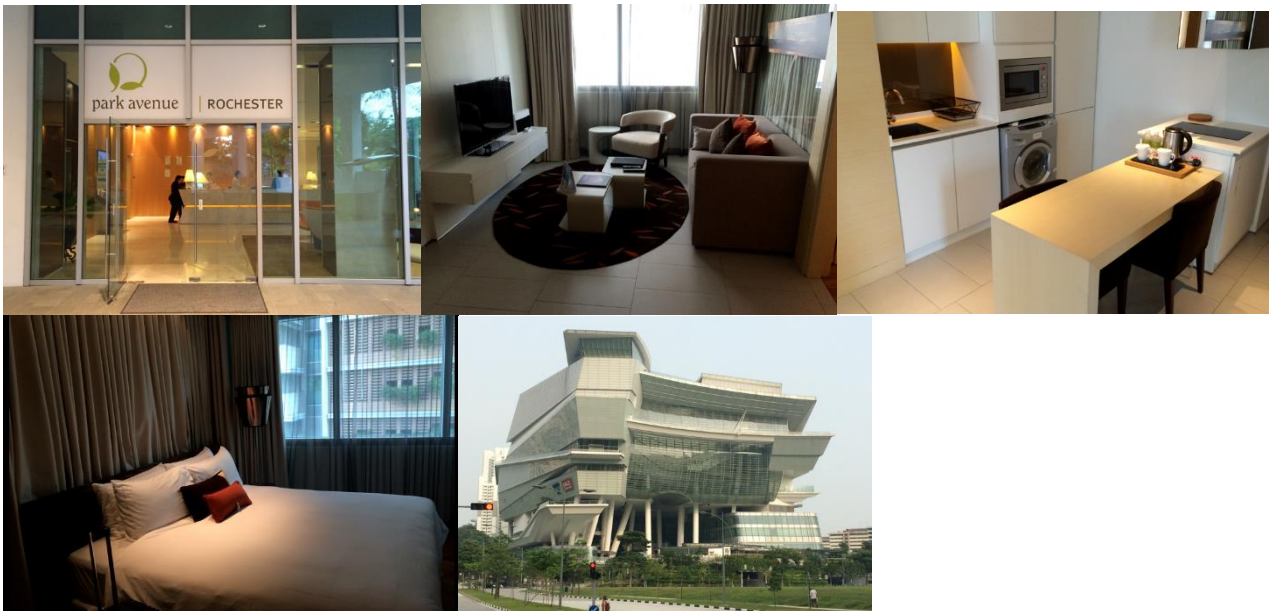
Singapore

(26 October – 1 November 2014)

Arrival - Day 0

(Sun, 26th October 2014)

We arrived in Singapore on a Sunday. The airport transfer was right on time although we were not informed about the arrangement. We were brought to the Park Royal hotel where we stayed the week. This hotel is located in a strategic location in the north region and only a 10 minutes drive from NUH. The neighbouring Rochester Mall sited next to the lush greenery of Rochester Park, provided an exceptional dining experience. It is also located next to the huge Star Vista shopping mall and also the Buona Vista Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), which is only 2 stops away from the NUH MRT station. It's a brand new hotel. We were placed in a twin sharing room initially, but upgraded to a lovely suite with 2 separate rooms from Tuesday onwards. It was unfortunate that even upon arrival, the programme for the rest of the week was not made available to us for reference.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

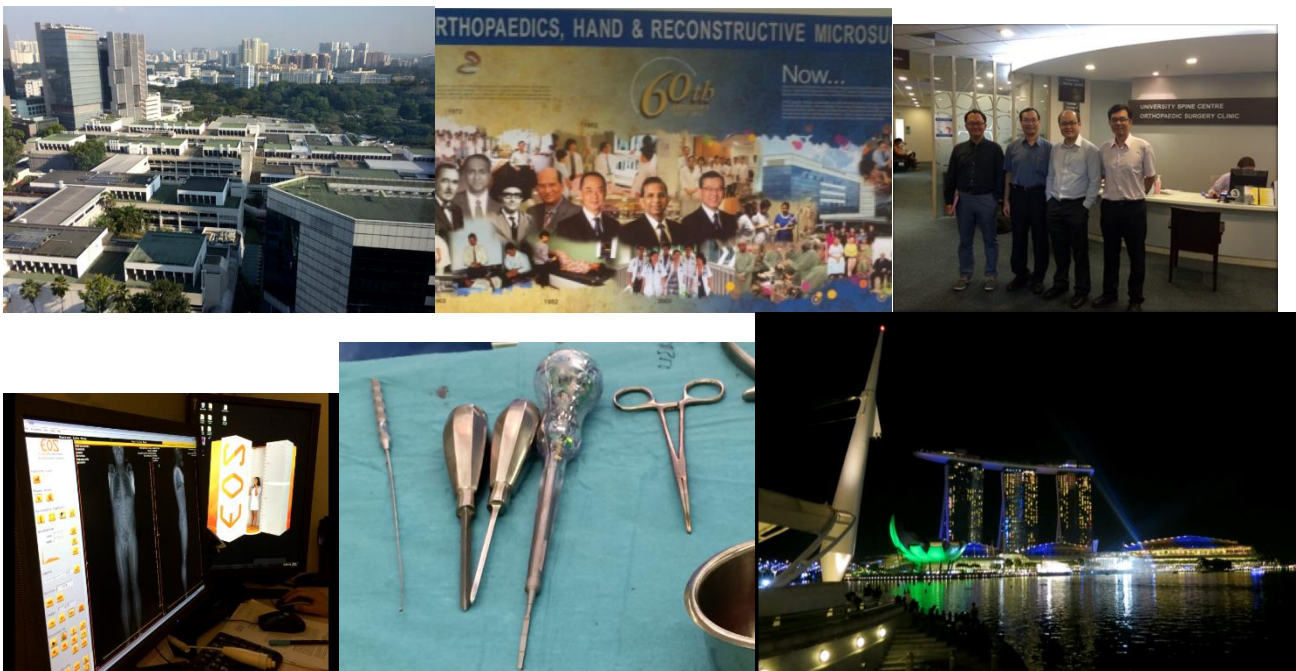
Day 1

(Mon, 27th October)

On our first day, as we were unaware of the programme for the day, we arrived late to the National University of Singapore Hospital. Due our delayed arrival, our scheduled presentations were postponed to the following day. However, we were greeted warmly by Prof HK Wong, A/Prof Gabriel Liu, A/Prof KS Naresh and the rest of the Orthopaedic department staff. We were given a brief tour around the orthopaedic facilities in NUH. We were impressed by the University Spine Centre and Orthopaedic Clinic which houses a EOS imaging system which provides 2D and 3D imaging with low dose radiation. This is especially useful in spinal deformity assessment.

We proceeded to join Prof HK Wong in the operation theatre. He performed a posterior spinal fusion on a 15-year-old boy with Lenke 5 idiopathic scoliosis. Dr Hsieh was given the opportunity to scrub in to assist this surgery. The use of the pedigard pedicle finder for pedicle screw insertion was shown to us. We managed to observe another surgery performed by A/Prof Gabriel Liu. He did a MIS TLIF surgery combined with navigation technique for the pedicle screws. The navigation technique was aimed to reduce the radiation during pedicle screws insertion.

After the surgeries, we were treated to the signature curry crab at the famous 'No Signboard Seafood Restaurant' together with the whole spine unit. After the scrumptious dinner, we had the opportunity to enjoy the stunning water front scenery next to the restaurant.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 2

(Tue, 28th October)

On our second day, Dr Kim YH presented his topic in ‘Research and Updates in Studies of the Spinal Cord Injuries’. It was followed by Dr Tzeng ST’s presentation, ‘Stage Posterior Correction in the Treatment of Severe Rigid Scoliosis or Kyphosis’. We joined Prof HK Wong later in the operation theatre where he performed an anterior scoliosis surgery for a Lenke 5 curve combining the conventional open technique (for lumbar levels) with the thoracoscopic surgery (for the thoracic levels). Dr. Kim YH scrubbed in. The second surgery was an ACDF for cervical spinal stenosis performed by Dr Hey. In the operation theatre complex, Prof Wong HK managed to share his experience, tricks and pearls for his renowned thoracoscopic scoliosis surgery.

Dinner was a delightful experience where we had the famous traditional Herbal Meat Soup ‘Bakuteh’ hosted by Dr Lau. This delicacy started out as the daily diet of the Chinese labourers at the harbour during the colonial times. After dinner, Dr Lau brought us to the Marina Barrage as well as to the Garden by the Bay. Marina Barrage houses the state of the art water recycling technology and the Garden by the Bay is a huge indoor garden where the world’s largest columnless greenhouse resides.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 3

(Wed, 29th October)

We started day 3 by joining the Singapore General Hospital Spine team's case presentations and discussion. A/Prof Tan Seang Beng, A/Prof Yue Wai Mun and Dr John Chen greeted us warmly. After a short tour of the ward and clinic, we had our breakfast with the spine team at the O'Briens Irish Sandwich Café. After breakfast, A/Prof Yue Wai Mun led us to the SGH Museum. Housed in the Bowyer Block, an architectural landmark in the SGH Campus, the SGH Museum is a repository of artefacts and records, where visitors can trace the long and rich history of the Singapore General Hospital. For dinner, A/Prof Gabriel Liu treated us to an authentic Chinese cuisine meal at the Imperial Treasure Restaurant at Marina Bay Sands. Before entering the restaurant we were able to catch a bird's eye view of the luxurious casino beneath.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 4

(Thurs, 30th October)

We started the day with presentations by Dr Hsieh MK, 'A study in cases treated with MIS TLIF' followed by Dr Khoo EH's presentation, 'Tuberculosis Of The Spine in An 17 Month Old Toddler: A Case Report And Review Of Management in Pediatric Pott's Disease'. A/Prof KS Naresh and Dr GK Lau presented their award winning research and had an interesting case discussion. After lunch, we joined A/Prof Angelo for a tour of the Singapore Institute of Neurotechnology (SINAPSE) and the NUS Tissue Engineering Program Laboratory. We were deeply impressed by the cutting edge technologies presented to us. The following afternoon we took the opportunity to explore the famous tourist attraction at Sentosa Island.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 5 - 6

(Fri-Sat, 31st October- 1st November)

We joined A/Prof Naresh during surgery where we were introduced to the expandable screws from Arthrotech. Dinner was at another Bakuteh restaurant. After dinner we took a stroll down the famous high end shopping street- Orchard Road, which was beautifully decorated with colourful lights and street decorations.

On Saturday, A/Prof Gabriel brought us to the Garden by the Bay. We were awed by the beautiful nature presented here, much more spectacular when seen in broad daylight. We took the 22-seater Garden Cruiser tram and go on a leisurely 25 minutes ride with informative commentary around Bay South Garden. Then we feasted our eyes in Flower Dome and Cloud Forest, a twin giant air-conditioned conservatories with features a variety of flowers and plants around the world. We had our lunch with A/Prof Gabriel at the Supertree Dining by IndoChine, a pretigious yet unique restaurants resides on top of the tallest supertree there. After lunch, we thanked our dearest host for a fruitful week and we bade farewell.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Bangkok

(2nd November – 7th November 2014)

Day 0

(Sunday, 2nd November)

After our arrival at Bangkok airport, we were shocked to find out that the Thai committee, due to some communication breakdown, did not expect our arrival. After contacting the APOA secretariate and 3 hours of emergency arrangements, we were on our way to Golden Tulip hotel.

Day 1

(Monday, 3rd November)

The first stop was the department of orthopaedic at Chulalongkorn hospital. We were greeted warmly by Prof. Aree Tanavalee, the head of department. We were brought to the operation theatre after a brief introduction of the Department. In the theater, we managed to witness Prof. Wicharn Yingsakmongkol performed two surgeries. The first one is a 60 years old male with cervical spondylotic myelopathy, treated with ACDF with C4-7 plate. We were impressed by the short duration of surgery. In between the cases, Prof Wicharn shared with us about his clinical researches with some slides. The other operation was for L2/3 instability and he performed an L2/3 fusion with an XLIF cage with plate-screw fixation, in an all-anterior approach.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 2

(Monday, 4th November)

We visit Department of orthopaedic Faculty of medicine Siriraj Hospital (Mahidol university) and joined their routine morning conference. After I presented my slides, a few complex cases were discussed among the Department members and us. Prof. Cheron Chotigavanich (APOA president) shared with us his series of osteoporotic compression fracture patients treated with minimal invasive method. In the afternoon, colleges of Professor Saranatra Waikakul guided us to Grand Palace for a detail tour to realize the history of Thailand. In the evening, Prof. Cheron Chotigavanich bring us to a nice Thailand food restaurant near Chaophya river.



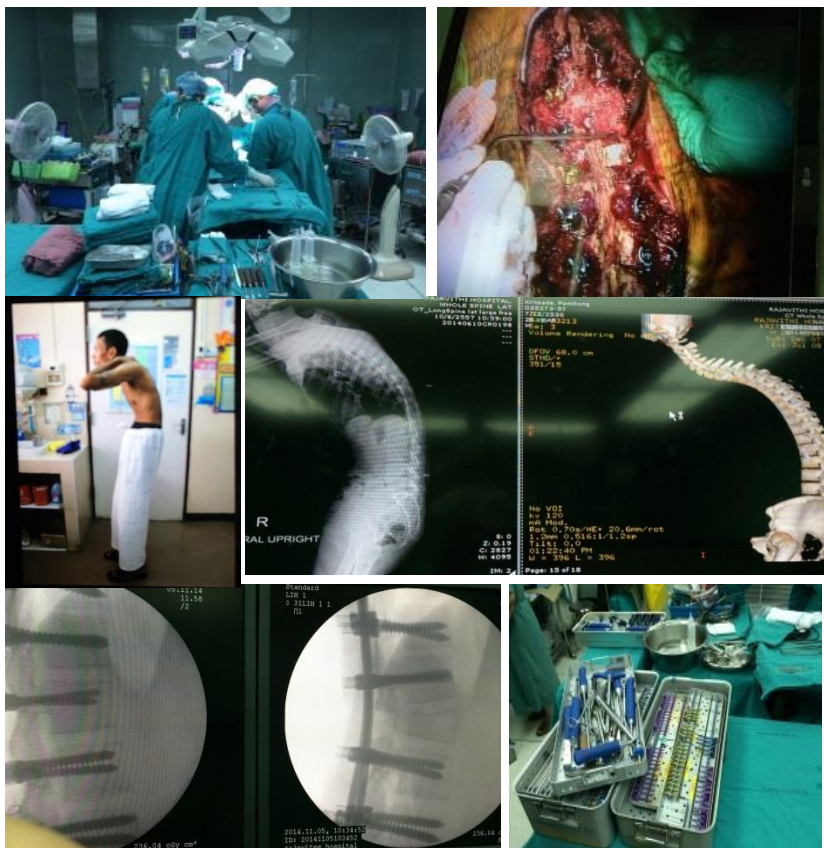
APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 3

(Monday, 5th November)

Today we visited Rajvithi Hospital, which was another public hospital in Bangkok. Dr. Athikom Methathien shared with us his techniques of spinal osteotomy and fracture fixation. In the theater, I managed to assist him for a pedicle subtraction osteotomy with long segment instrumentation on a 30 years old ankylosing spondylitis male patient.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 4

(Thursday, 6th November)

In the morning, we visited Samitivej Hospital, one of the prestigious private hospital in Bangkok. Professor Cheron Chotigavanich gave us an introduction about the hospital and took us for a tour around the hospital. The Samitivej hospital acquired JCI certification for 4 years ago and was undergoing mock survey during our visit.

In the afternoon, Prof. Cheron Chotigavanich brought us to another private hospital, the Chaophya Hospital. In the evening, we had the rare opportunity to experience the 'lantern floating' for the Loy Kratong festival beside the Chaophya River.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 5

(Friday, November 7, 2014)

Today destination was Ramathibodi Hospital, one of the affiliated teaching hospitals of Mahidol University. We were greeted by Dr. Gun Keorochana, he is Dr Tzeng's old friend during their fellowship in the UCLA. We took a guide tour around the hospital. After that, we visited the operation theatre to see two surgeries. One is ACDF for multi-level cervical spondylotic myelopathy; the second one is posterior decompression and instrumented fusion using RAMA plate for a patient with L4/5 spondylolisthesis. During the interval between the two surgeries, we present our four topics to the members of the spine team. We had brief discussions among the team members after each presentation. In the evening, we were treated by Dr Gun, A/Prof Pongsathorn, the fellows and residents in the spine team at a famous Thai food restaurant. We enjoyed the famous frozen beer along with a huge variety of sumptuous Thai food.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 6-7

(Saturday - Sunday, November 8-9, 2014)

On the weekend we joined a local tour to the Dammnoen Saduak Floating Market. The colourfully clad merchants at these lively markets paddle along congested canals in sturdy canoes laden with fresh fruit and vegetables to sell to shoppers on the banks. We have some local food there, namely the fried banana, coconut icecream and the mango with sticky rice. On the way to and fro, we visited a local coconut sugar home factory as well as a woodcarving center where we were exposed to the fine art of Siamese woodcarving. After a fruitful and inspiring trip in Thailand, we moved to our last stop - Kuching, Malaysia on Sunday.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Kuching

(10th November – 15th November 2014)

Day 0

(Mon, 9th November)

To our dismay, our last destination of the fellowship has been changed at the very last minutes. Beijing had not been able to host us. Luckily Sarawak General Hospital had been able to accommodate us instead. We were placed at the Grand Margherita Hotel seated just beside the Sarawak River. Situated along the backyard is the 1.7km stretch of scenic Kuching Waterfront where fitness enthusiasts enjoy their morning jogs and evening strolls. In the first evening in Kuching, we had our dinner in a Korean restaurant, to satiate Dr Kim's deprivation of Korean food and Soju.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 1

(Mon, 10th November)

On our first day to the Sarawak General Hospital, we were greeted warmly by Prof. Wong Chung Chek and the Orthopaedic departmental members. After our brief introduction, we followed Prof. Wong to the ward to see his patients. After that, we proceeded to join Prof. Wong in the operation theatre. He performed a posterior decompression and fusion with supplement T8 PSO on a patient with thoracic OPLL. Dr. Tzeng and Dr. Kim were given the privilege to scrub in to join this surgery. Prof. Wong showed us how to insert thoracic pedicle screws by using the “funnel technique”. After surgery, we have dinner with the spine team members at a famous seafood restaurant.

APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014



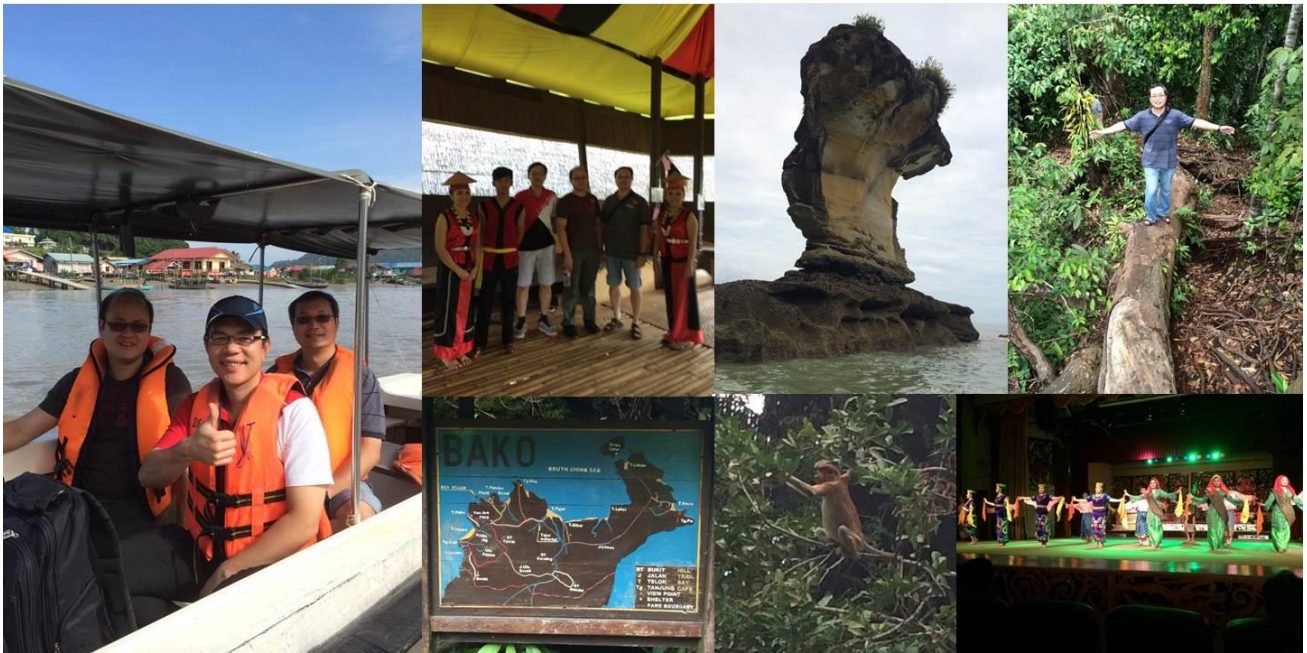
APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 2

(Tue, 11th November)

The second day in Kuching was leisure one. We joined a local tour to the Bako National Park. We enjoyed the rainforest, abundant wildlife, jungle streams and interesting plant. Bako National park was famous for it's secluded beaches, bizarre rock formations and trekking trails. We visited Sarawak Cultural Village in the afternoon. The village residents provide information on their various traditional cultures and lifestyles. We visited buildings that represent every major ethnic group in Sarawak; longhouses of the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu, a Melanau tall-house and a Chinese farm house among others. The visit ended with a theatre with multicultural dance performances.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 3 and 4

(Wed, 12th -13th November)

We had our presentations with the members of the orthopaedic department. Mr Wong led the session and given us some intriguing views on the topics we presented. After the presentations, we were treated in Dyak, a local restaurant which served authentic local tribal food. We paid a visit to the state museum after lunch to have a better understanding of the culture and history of the various local tribes.

On Thursday, we were managed to participate in an anterior corrective surgery for an adolescent idiopathic scoliosis patient, Lenke Type V. We were impressed by the meticulous exposure through the anterior approach by Mr Wong as well as the thorough discectomy technique demonstrated.



APOA-Depuy Spine Travelling Fellowship

26 October – 15 November 2014

Day 5

(Friday, 14th November)

We join the local tour again for a kayaking adventure in Upper Sarawak River or locally known as Semadang River. Through the beautiful southern part of Kuching, we explored the pristine wilderness of the Borneo rainforest and encounter wildlife that share our beautiful southern tropical jungle. After the unique and memorable experience in Kuching, we reached the finale of our 3 weeks long traveling fellowship.



Last Day & Farewell

(Fri, 14th November 2014)

These three weeks has been a precious life experience to me. Besides learning about spinal surgeries and knowing wonderful friends from our host centers, more importantly to us is to achieve a friendship that evolved from mere acquaintances, through the moments that we have experienced together.