

Chapter Connection

14th Issue [Revised] - April 2011

Chapter Board 2010-2011 - Dr I. Swaminathan, A/Prof Cheah Wei Keat, Dr Chia Kok Hoong, Dr Vijayan Appasamy, Dr Chan Hsiang Sui, Prof Pierce Chow, Dr Foo Chek Siang, A/Prof Jimmy So and Dr Tan Kok Yang

Chapter Connection is a newsletter specially brought to you by the Chapter of General Surgeons under the purview of the College of Surgeons, Singapore. The Board of the Chapter of General Surgeons is well represented with members from different institutions and this would mean that you could find the latest happenings of the general surgery community of these institutions in this newsletter. This newsletter is published quarterly and will be distributed to the Members of the Chapter of General Surgeons. On the goodwill of the Chapter Board, this quarterly newsletter will also be distributed at no cost to the Trainees and Fellows of General Surgery in various public hospitals.

Message from Chapter Chairman

Dear fellow surgeons and surgeons-in-waiting,

Chapter Connection appeared in electronic form in January 2011 and appears to have been well received. Please do provide input and feedback, and help us make it better. We have always tried to raise awareness of our Chapter and its activities. In this regard, I am pleased to announce our participation as nominal sponsors and co-organisers in several upcoming meetings.

Firstly, we will sponsor the best paper and best poster prizes for the Singapore Trauma Conference 2011 organized by Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Those who were there last year can testify to the excellent series of lectures by world-renowned trauma specialists.

The Chapter is pleased to be the co-organiser for the 13th Congress of the Asian Association of Endocrine Surgeons that will be held in 2012. We are also pleased to support the 10th Asia Pacific Congress of Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgery which will take place from 11-13 August 2011 at Suntec Singapore.

Please support your Chapter by attending these excellent surgical meetings.

Warm regards,

Dr Swaminathan I.

**Chairman, Chapter of General Surgeons
College of Surgeons, Singapore**



**Wishing everyone
Happy Holidays on:**

**22 Apr 2011 (Fri) – Good Friday
1-2 May 2011 (Sun-Mon) – Labour Day &
“Labour Day” observed**



News/Articles Contribution & Enquiries:

**College Secretariat
College of Surgeons, Singapore
81 Kim Keat Road, #11-00 NKF Centre
Singapore 328836**

Tel: 65-65937807 Fax: 65-65937860

Email: css@ams.edu.sg Website: www.css.edu.sg

**Contribution of any interesting news & articles from Chapter
Members are welcome for consideration to publish in
Chapter Connection.**



News to share with your
peers in the Gen. Surg.
community? Share it in
"Chapter Connection"!
Email your news to
css@ams.edu.sg now!



**NEWS
FLASH!**

45th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine – 21 to 23 July 2011

The Academies of Medicine Singapore and Malaysia are jointly organising the **45th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine** from 21-23 July 2011 at Suntec Singapore. The Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine (SMCM) is a biennial meeting bringing together academicians, specialists and medical professionals from Singapore, Malaysia and around the region, to address important and major healthcare issues and trends, debate on emerging challenges, share clinical experiences, and establish vibrant network for research collaboration in the interest of advancing the art and science of medicine. **The theme of the 45th SMCM is Integration, Innovation & Holistic Care.** Highlights of the congress as follows:

- **The Gordon Arthur Ransome Oration by Dr York Chow, Secretary for Food and Health of Hong Kong**
- **Runme Shaw Lecture on "Liver Transplant: Yesterday's Dream, Today's Reality, Tomorrow's Platform Towards Excellent Patient Care" by Professor Chen Chao-Long from Chang Gung Memorial Hospital-Kaohsiung Medical Center**
- **Galloway Memorial Lecture on "What Ails the Populace: The Singapore Mental Health Study" by A/Prof Chong Siow Ann, Vice-Chairman of the Medical Board (Research) at Institute of Mental Health**
- **Scientific tracks on Thyroid Eye Disease, Wound Care in Diabetic Patient, Innovate, Integrate & Incubate: Infectious Disease Updates, Facial Aesthetics in Dentistry and many more.**

Please access the congress website at www.smcm-ams.com for more information.

4th Exit Examination Preparatory Course – 28 June to 2 July 2011

The Chapter will continue its effort in organising the **4th exit examination preparatory course** for the benefit of the ASTs in preparing for their exit examination. The 4th preparatory course will be streamlined to be more compact and precise by conducting all lectures in "case study review" mode and all clinical teachings to be bedside teachings. ASTs can expect more case studies and clinical case discussions that would help to evaluate their level of knowledge and skills and find out deficiency. The course brochure will be available on the College of Surgeons' website at www.css.edu.sg under "CME Activities" - "General Surgery" from April 2011.

10th Asia Pacific Congress of Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgery – 11 to 13 August 2011

The above congress is organized by ELSA with the theme of "So Radical Today, So Obvious Tomorrow" and the Congress President is Dr Kum Cheng Kiong. Topical highlights that will be discussed at this congress are:

- New approaches like NOTES, NOTUS and SILS will be scrutinized under an 'academic microscope' and issues of safety, feasibility and outcome.
- Consensus on who should do it and who to train for Robotic Surgery.
- Cost effectiveness and patient selection in view that longer term results of using the laparoscopic approach for cancer (stomach, colon, liver, kidney, prostate, uterus, etc) should be made available.
- The possibility of combining novel Stem Cell therapies with the minimally invasive approach.
- The prospect of Metabolic Surgery in managing weight and as a way of 'curing' diabetes mellitus.

This congress also sees the participation of the following societies:

- Gastroenterological Society of Singapore
- Obstetrical & Gynaecological Society of Singapore
- Society of Colorectal Surgeons
- Singapore Urology Association

Please access the event website at www.elsa2011singapore.com for more information.

13th Congress of the Asian Association of Endocrine Surgeons – 19 to 21 March 2012

The 12th Congress of the Asian Association of Endocrine Surgeons was successfully held in Tokyo, Japan from 23-24 March 2010. Singapore is proud to host the next congress in 2012 and details will be announced when available.

Phase III Multi-Centre Open-Label Randomized Controlled Trial of Selective Internal Radiation Therapy (SIRT) Versus Sorafenib in Locally Advanced Hepatocellular Carcinoma Opens for Recruitment after Successful Completion of Phase II Trial

The majority of patients with hepatocellular carcinoma present in the advanced stages; only one-fifth are diagnosed at a sufficiently early stage to benefit from potentially curative therapies such as surgical resection, liver transplantation and radio-frequency ablation (RFA). For inoperable HCC without metastases, RFA, transarterial chemoembolism (TACE) or selective internal radiation therapy (SIRT) are usually employed. In advanced disease with metastases or when local therapy is contraindicated, sorafenib is the treatment of choice.

The Asia-Pacific Hepatocellular Carcinoma Trials Group carried out a prospective study (AHCC05) to assess tumour response and overall survival of patients with advanced HCC treated with a combination of two therapies namely, SIRT (shown to significantly regress loco-regional tumours) and sorafenib (an efficacious systemic therapy) in inoperable HCC.

This investigator-initiated AHCC05 trial headed by Prof Pierce Chow of Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore, ran between June 2008 and June 2009 and recruited 35 patients from four countries (Singapore, South Korea, Myanmar and Malaysia). The sequential combination therapy SIRT-sorafenib conferred a significant tumour response rate of 35.5% with four cases of complete regression (CR) (12%) and 8 cases of partial regression (PR) (23.5%), 15 cases of stable disease (SD) (44%) and 7 cases of progressive disease (PD) (79.5%), giving rise to a disease control rate of 79.5%. The results were presented at ASCO 2010.

Notably, the AHCC05 trial included patients who were Child-Pugh liver function class B, with major vascular invasion and extra-hepatic spread, and more than half of patients were BCLC stage C. Patients classified as BCLC stage B at baseline achieved a median survival of 73 weeks, while patients with more advanced disease (BCLC stage C) had a median survival of 35 weeks. Overall, patients had a median survival of 11.75 months, superior to outcomes with either SIRT or sorafenib therapy alone.

As a result of this successful study, Prof Chow and his colleagues managed to secure additional funding for the AHCC trials group. In June 2010 they launched a head-to-head phase III trial comparing these two efficacious therapies for locally advanced hepatocellular carcinoma.

The AHCC06 SirVeNib trial addresses patients with locally advanced, non-metastatic HCC comparing sorafenib versus SIRspheres. The aim is to determine which of these 2 effective therapies should be first-line therapy in this group of patients. The Singapore General Hospital & National Cancer Centre Singapore opened recruitment on 9th July 2010. The first patient was recruited on 12th July 2010. Currently, 8 sites have been initiated and are currently recruiting: Singapore General Hospital, National Cancer Centre Singapore, National University Hospital, Yangon & GI Centre, Auckland City Hospital, Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital, the National Cancer Centre Mongolia and Changi General Hospital. The remainder of the 22 centers in the trial are expected to begin recruitment by June 2011.

Please refer to the following websites for more information:

Websites: <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT01135056>
<http://sirvenib.com/>

😊 *A Note of Thanks to Prof Pierce Chow for contributing this article.*

Contribution of any interesting news & articles from Chapter Members are welcome for consideration to publish in this quarterly newsletter. Please send it to the College Secretariat at css@ams.edu.sg.

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TRAINEES' CORNER

Surgeons-In-Training Committee (w.e.f. January 2011):

Advisor - Dr Vijayan Appasamy | co-Advisor - Dr Ranjiv Sivanandan | Chairperson - Dr Claramae Chia (SGH) | Vice-Chairperson - Dr Terence Huey (TTSH) | Secretary - Dr Sharon Koh (NUH) | Members - Dr Ramesh Wijaya (CGH), Dr Desmond Ooi (KTPH), Dr Vishal Shelat (TTSH), Dr Tan Wee Boon (NUH), Dr Veronique Tan (SGH) & Dr Germaine Xu (KTPH)

The Surgeons-In-Training (SIT) Committee was formed under the Chapter of General Surgeons, College of Surgeons, Singapore on 27 April 2010. Only Basic Surgical Trainees (BSTs) and Advanced Surgical Trainees (ASTs) and/or Residents are eligible to sit in this committee. Some of the objectives of forming the SIT Committee are:

- To allow a higher level of involvement of trainees who are non-FAMS to participate and contribute to Chapter activities.
- To act as a voice of feedback towards surgical training (current and new system of training).
- To foster greater interaction between general surgical trainees and between trainees and surgeons in public and private practice.

From this issue onwards, a page in the newsletter will be dedicated to the SIT Committee to share their thoughts and views with the general surgery community by contributing writings to the Chapter newsletter.

A Note of Thanks to Dr Ramesh Wijaya for contributing the below article.

In the previous issue of the "Chapter Connection", the SIT committee as of 1st January 2011 was announced. This newly formed committee by the Chapter of General Surgeons is the first of its kind under the College of Surgeons, Singapore (CSS). The purpose of which was to better develop the education and training role of the College. This has been successfully done in other specialist societies, for example the Singapore Urological Association. Our simple aim as members in training is to cohesively work towards developing academic and social activities, especially among the younger surgeons in training.

The SIT committee comprises mainly of ASTs who are being nominated from the various public hospitals for a term of one year. The elected chair for the 1st SIT committee is Dr Claramae Chia who is currently a 2nd year AST in Singapore General Hospital and the elected Vice-Chairman is Dr Terence Huey, a 2nd year AST in Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

In line with the future of the specialty taking a bigger role in academic surgery, one of our first projects is to create a new preparatory course focused on both clinical and system based knowledge. This is targeted for young surgical trainees who will be embarking on post-graduate examinations. We are currently looking into designing and preparing a structured syllabus for this course. Our intention is to organise the first instalment of this course towards the end of this year.

Please do keep a look out for the details! We look forward to your support and suggestions in this endeavour and subsequent projects!

Apology

The author (member of the SIT Committee) who contributed the above article is Dr Ramesh Wijaya and not Dr Rakesh Bhasin. We apologised for the error.

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What should we do with this extra part?

News Bulletin

CHAPTER CONNECTION AS THE COMMUNICATION MEDIUM

Have academic events and activities that you would like to invite the participation of your fellow peers and colleagues who are also members of the Chapter of General Surgeons? Have news on the latest happenings in the general surgery community to share with fellow surgeons? The Chapter Connection would be the ideal medium to transmit news and information on your behalf, since it is being circulated to all Chapter members and trainees / residents, including Fellows and Registrars.

Please submit your event announcements in MS Word, MS Powerpoint or JPEG format to the College Secretariat at css@ams.edu.sg if you are interested to share them in this newsletter.

CHAPTER SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

The Chapter welcomes any event proposals that call for the support of the Chapter either as a nominal sponsor or as an event organiser. The Chapter is happy to collaborate with any Chapter members and/or industry sponsors to work on the proposed event. Event proposal(s) can be submitted to the College Secretariat at css@ams.edu.sg for the Board of the Chapter of General Surgeons' review and discussion.