

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SURGICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING OF
THE ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS FROM 4-5 MARCH
2008 AT MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**

Trip Funded by:	College of Surgeons Travelling Fellowship Fund
Attended by:	Prof Adrian Leong
Reported by:	Prof Adrian Leong
<u>Trip Report</u>	
The International Conference on Surgical Education and Training is the first event of its kind. The focus of the meeting was to gather surgeons from all over the world to discuss challenges regarding issues of surgical training such as selection for training, curricula and assessment. As the conference progressed, it became apparent that there was remarkable similarity in the issues facing those responsible training globally. The conference commenced with a session on the teaching and learning of anatomy for surgical practice. Internationally, the reduction of course time allocated to the teaching of anatomy has been reduced significantly. A discussion as to whether this impacted surgical training concluded that surgeons felt that there has a decline in standard of anatomical knowledge amongst trainees. Solutions to this problem include the use of multimedia packages as well as defining the level of knowledge required at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The conference also examined the topic of training surgeons in education. Several Masters programs were described as well as short courses in teaching surgeons to teach e.g. RACS's Teaching on the Run. Difficulties with teaching including conflicts in scheduling a busy clinical practice, research on top of having to train the next generation struck a chord among many participants. The highlight of the scientific program was coming to a consensus statement on selection of candidates. 12 principles of selection were presented to and debated on by delegates. This was followed by a detailed exposition on current career paths for surgeons in the UK, USA and Australia. Issues of reduced working hours and the re-examination of work life balance and its impact on training was presented. In particular, proposals in the US for early streaming into surgical programs provoked a lively discussion. The program continued with a discussion of the change from an exam-only basis for qualifying a surgeon to a broader workplace-based assessment. Formats of assessment already occurring in the UK received a great deal of attention. Aiding the trainee who is not performing well was also discussed. In particular, unprofessional behavior was a subject discussed by several speakers. The program concluded with the use of simulation in education and training. The pros and cons of using simulation at the levels of selection, training and assessment were discussed together with the current research and thinking on the subject.	
<u>Usefulness of Event to Self & College of Surgeons</u>	
The conference was an extremely insightful one. It provided a platform for a critical area of surgical practice that unfortunately receives too little attention in surgical conferences. The comprehensive nature of the program was a great aid to consolidating current thinking on Surgical Education and Training. It will provide a great resource as Singapore restructures its own surgical training program.	