

32ND ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF THAILAND & THE ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS FROM 27-30 JULY 2007 AT PATTAYA, THAILAND

Trip Funded by:	College of Surgeons Travelling Fellowship Fund
Attended by:	Dr Swaminathan Ikshuvanam
Reported by:	Dr Swaminathan Ikshuvanam
<u>Trip Report</u>	
I was fortunate to be able to represent the College of Surgeons, Singapore at this, the largest annual scientific meeting of surgeons in Thailand. It was held in conjunction with the Joint Scientific Meeting between the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The meeting itself was also part of a larger, year-long celebration, that of the 80th Birthday of His Majesty the King of Thailand. It was well attended, with over 1,500 delegates and several hundred accompanying persons and exhibitors. Including family and relatives, the overall attendance was well over 5,000 people. The theme of the meeting was “Surgery in the Future”. Being the largest annual gathering of Surgeons in Thailand, it involved all the major specialties, including General Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Upper GI Surgery, Colorectal Surgery, Hepato-biliary Surgery, Trauma Surgery, Paediatric Surgery, Surgical Oncology and Urology. Thus, concurrent sessions were held every day for each specialty, rather like our old Annual Combined Surgical Meeting, which seems to have faded out of the picture locally. This made it very difficult to choose which sessions to attend, since there was such a wealth of topics covered. Judicious listening and quick lateral movement was the order of the day for me. Pre-Congress Post-graduate courses were also organized, a total of seven in all. I did not attend these as they were aimed at their advanced surgical trainees. The scientific programme was varied and interesting, as I mentioned earlier. Each day began with special lectures on different specialties, followed by a plenary lecture. Then there were the concurrent sessions, which were specialty specific. There were eight to eleven of these at any one time, which gives an idea of the vast scope of the congress. As I mentioned, I was selective in attending these. I found the colorectal sessions interesting, as there was a good mix of local and overseas speakers. Of note were Dr.Larry Sasaki from the USA and Dr.Yoshihiro Moriya from Japan and Dr.Theerapol Angkoolpakdeekul from Thailand, who presented excellent papers on Laparoscopic colorectal surgery. Unfortunately, this meant I had to miss an excellent session on Trauma and Emergency Surgery by Dr.William Schwab from University of Pennsylvania, which I gather was excellent stuff for the trainees. I have taken the initiative of obtaining his contact so that we can invite him over for a session in Singapore, which he has yet to visit. The hepato-biliary sessions were very useful, especially that on post-surgical iatrogenic injuries. It was a good multi-disciplinary exercise and overran its time as the Q & A was very active! The opening Ceremony was held in the grand Hall A of the congress venue, and I represented our College as a sister college. Also on stage were members from the respective surgical colleges from Australia, Hong Kong, Philippines and Malaysia. The Opening Ceremony was a grand affair, with lots of fanfare befitting a college of this stature. After the customary speeches and introductions, the latest batch of fellows were conferred their memberships and took oaths of professionalism. This was confined to general surgeons, since each chapter holds its own examinations, courses and graduation ceremony. Following this, the prestigious Udom Poshakrisna lecture was delivered by Dr.Vithaya Vathanophas, the outgoing President of the RCST. It was well received and raised many questions concerning surgical training and ethics.	

The participation of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons added further merit to the meeting. Dr. Russel Stiltz was conferred an honorary fellowship and spoke on surgical training and its intricacies during the RACS Lecture.

The Official Banquet dinner was held on the night of 27 July. It was a good example of how a congress dinner should be- no time wasting, food served at good pace, not too many courses, and, best of all, food served correctly, according to individual requests, and without a mix-up. Speeches were brief, and social interaction good. I presented a plaque from our Academy, and was given an official T-shirt to commemorate the King of Thailand's 80th birthday.

The Family night two days later was open to spouses and children, and was very entertaining. The Australian College put up their own item, on Waltzing Matilda, with good stage effects! There were also traditional Thai dances, drum beating and a magic show put up by the children.

Again, we could take a leaf from the Thais here. They feel that surgeons are too busy to spend time with their children, so that a congress should involve the whole family. In fact the exhibition was very crowded, almost carnival-like.

Take-home messages were aplenty, according to each specialty, and would be too many to repeat here. However, I feel that some were too brief or over-simplified.

Usefulness of Event to Self & College of Surgeons

All in all, the 32nd Annual Scientific Meeting of the RCST and Joint Meeting with the RACS was hugely successful, and enhanced my basic surgical as well as advanced knowledge and training. We should perhaps encourage local surgeons and trainees to attend such regional meetings in larger numbers.

PICTURES TO SHARE



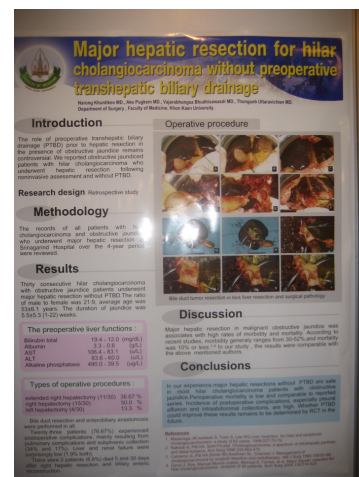
With the new President of the RCST and his wife



Just one tower of the five towers at Ambassador City Hotel. It has 4,210 rooms – still not enough for the congress!



The Opening Ceremony



A free paper on liver resection



Family Night – the RACS in full swing



The Congress Exhibition