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Report of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Association of Pediatric Surgeons



The 57th annual meeting of the Pacific Association of Pediatric Surgeons was held from April 28th to May 2nd, 2024, at the Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriot Hotel in Hong Kong SAR, China. This year marks the first time that the PAPS Meeting was held in conjunction with the 27th Congress of the Asian Association of Pediatric Surgeons (AAPS) Meeting and the regional meeting of the World Federation of Associations of Pediatric Surgeons (WOFAPS). There were over 500 participants from 27 countries attending the meeting including travelers from India, Iran, Kuwait, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. This resulted in a conference defined by diverse opinions, shared learning, and networking.

Dr Kenneth KY Wong was the Chairman of the local organizing committee. We are most grateful to Dr Wong and his team for the kind hospitality as well as the excellent arrangements that ensured that the meeting ran smoothly while being exciting and engaging. On the day before the opening of PAPS meeting, a workshop on thoracoscopic repair of esophageal atresia was held at the Faculty of Medicine, HKU. Expert surgeons including Dr Steve Rothenberg, Dr John Meehan, Dr Spencer Beasley, Dr Sameh Shehata, and Dr Manuel Lopez were invited to deliver lectures that focused on tips and tricks during thoracoscopic repair of esophageal atresia. In addition, the participants were able to get hands-on experience using an innovative EA-TOF model specifically developed for a thoracoscopic approach while under the guidance of experts. It was truly a fantastic learning experience for this rare but complicated surgery. Dr Kenneth Wong has reassured us that this workshop will be held again in the future.

The welcome reception was held on the Sunday evening at an outdoor restaurant inside the Ocean Park Resort. At the reception, guests were able to appreciate the beautiful atmosphere of the park with an exciting light show while enjoying delicious food and fine wine. It was a wonderful occasion to mingle with old and new friends.

The main scientific sessions began on Monday. Prior to the meeting, we received a total of 386 abstract submissions. After careful selection by the Scientific Committee led by Dr Paul Chang and Dr Carol Wong, 46 full oral papers, 83 Quickshots, and 9 Videos were chosen for podium presentation. The PAPS prize was awarded to Dr Krysta Sutyak who presented her team's work, "Safety evaluation of the use of povidine-iodine irrigation for perforated appendicitis", and Dr Yujie Ma, who presented the work of her team, "CAMK2G promotes neuronal differentiation and Inhibits migration in neuroblastoma". We offer our congratulations to both winners and look forward to more high-quality research works from them.

Dr Gabriel Villa from Cebu South Medical Center, Philippines, was the Global Alliance Partnership (GAP) fellow this year. During his lecture, he talked about the practice of paediatric surgery in his home country and discussed how to overcome some of the difficulties encountered in systems with limited resources. After the meeting, he stayed for two more weeks to visit the Queen Mary Hospital, HK, as a travelling fellow, during which time he observed a number of advanced minimally invasive operations. Special thanks to the GAP committee, led by Dr Arturo Aranda and Dr Grace Nicksa, for selecting this outstanding fellow from the many excellent applicants. This year, the Coe Medal was awarded to Dr Hiroaki Kitagawa for his outstanding contributions to our community and his stalwart support of PAPS. We offer our heartfelt gratitude to Dr Kitagawa for what he has done for our organization.

Another highlight of the PAPS meeting was the GANS lecture, delivered this year by Dr Donald Tsang, the former Hong Kong Chief Executive. He spoke about his 30-year experience as a civil servant in Hong Kong government through eras of change and growth, and in particular his intervention in Hong Kong's stock to maintain the strength of the Hong Kong currency during the Asian financial crisis in 1997. The Journal of Pediatric Surgery lecture was delivered by Dr Atsuyuki Yamataka and the title of his lecture was "Pediatric surgery: It's my life". This lecture allowed us to hear how through his efforts and achievements, Dr. Yamataka carved out his career pathway and established himself as one of PAP's most influential surgeons.

The PAPS tour took place at Yim Tin Tsai Island, a 300-year history island famous for its salt pans. Our members were able to also visit Kau Sai Chau, a timeless fishing village with rich marine life. This visit allowed us to explore one of the culture heritages in Asia often missed by tourists.

Lastly, the signature event of PAPS, the Congress banquet, was held at the Hong Kong Palace Museum, a magnificent public museum in the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong. The Museum exhibits artefacts from the national Palace Museum at the Forbidden City in Beijing. Traditional Chinese cuisine was served, and it was our pleasure to have two special guests, Tang Monk (by Dr Rajendra Kumar) and Monkey King (by Dr John Meehan), from a popular Chinese fiction 'The Journey to the West' to be our Masters of Ceremony. Led by these two legends, participants from different countries/regions took turns to sing a song (and dance!). At the end, all the trainees went up to the stage and sang "It's a small world" to conclude this enjoyable evening.

The next PAPS meeting will be held in April 2025 in Melbourne. We are fully confident that it will be another exciting Congress, and we look forward to seeing all of you very soon!

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