



# APSS NEWS

News From Your Regional Spine Society

Issue 6 / Jul 2018  
www.apssonline.org

## President's Message



Dear Colleagues,

The year is zooming by and we have entered the second half of 2018. APSS is off to a great start this year with an operative course held in Dhaka in March and followed by a basic spine course held in Singapore in May. APSS participated in the 20th APOA Congress in Antalya, Turkey where APSS was involved in holding several Instructional Course Lectures. Four of the executive committee members of APSS were present at the Global Spine Congress in Singapore from May 2 to 5 to conduct a video presentation symposium.

In the first half of the year, 15 successful applicants completed four fellowship programmes at the selected APSS prestigious spine centres of excellence. Our fellowship programmes are highly sought by many young surgeons. For the 2019 fellowship programmes, call for applicants will be opened in October 2018. Members are encouraged to submit their applications early. To find out more of the APSS fellowship experiences, read up the highlights of our fellows who completed their fellowship in SICOT spine centres of excellence in Europe last year, as well as a fellow who was recently attached to The University of Hong Kong.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the spine consultants in the Asia Pacific region who had allowed the young spine fellows to be attached and trained in their centres. A special thanks to Prof S Rajasekaran for sponsoring two spine fellows annually to be trained in his centre, Ganga Hospital. I would also like to thank Medtronic and DePuy Synthes for sponsoring the Spine Fellowship Programmes.

On another note, I am pleased to report that the Society's first Annual Meeting in Taiwan in June 2018 was, overall, a great success. Some 295 delegates from 24 countries attended the meeting. We all benefited from the pre-congress cadaveric workshop, seven symposia consisting of 70 high quality lectures given by spine experts in the region, 14 free paper sessions consisting of 236 podium presentations, 2 best paper sessions, an oration given by Former President, Prof Po-Quang Chen, and a fellowship sharing session. The large number of free paper presentations by young and promising presenters are especially important because it signifies the vital involvements of junior members who are on their way to becoming the enduring component of our Society. I, in particular, applaud their efforts and those of their mentors who provide the highest quality of education and research that, in turn, can enable us to help provide the best in care for spine patients of all ages through knowledge sharing at this meeting. The full report will be available in the next issue.

With the completion of the annual meeting in June, we are already busy preparing for the APSS-APPOS 2019 12th Combined Meeting of APSS and APPOS from April 4 to 6 in Incheon, Korea. I would like to encourage you to submit your abstracts which is open from now until November 30 this year. We also look forward to seeing you at many of our activities organised around the region in the months to come. You may have a glimpse of our upcoming activities in the Diary of Events on the back cover.

Yours sincerely,  
**DATO' DR K S SIVANANTHAN**

## BE AN ACTIVE APSS MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

**ASIA PACIFIC SPINE SOCIETY  
MEMBERS-EXCLUSIVE  
PRIVILEGES!**

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- Chances to observe live surgeries
- Bi-annual Newsletter and bi-weekly E-newsletter
- Email Updates from Asian Spine Journal

### APSS MEMBERSHIP FEE

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MEMBERSHIP**

*(Applicable for Members of  
National Orthopaedic Associations)*

### APSS ANNUAL MEMBER

**US\$ 50**

PER YEAR

### APSS LIFE MEMBER

**US\$ 500**

ONE-TIME PAYMENT

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## IN THIS ISSUE

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| APSS Dhaka Operative Course              | 2     |
| APSS-SSS-NUH Basic Spine Course 2018     | 3     |
| 2017 APSS Medtronic Fellow's Testimonial | 5     |
| 2017 APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship         | 6 & 7 |

# APSS Dhaka Operative Course 13—15 March 2018



The APSS, Bangladesh Orthopaedic Association (BOA) and Bangladesh Spine Society (BSS) collaboratively hosted the APSS Dhaka Operative Course at the National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) from March 13 to 15, 2018. This course gathered about 78 registered local delegates. The national host, BOA and BSS welcomed the group of 6 international faculty comprised of spine experts from India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Singapore.

Faculty members and course delegates enthusiastically debated and evaluated risks and procedures required for a total of seven (7) cases presented by the national organising team. Patients of selected cases were also present for interaction and physical examination during the pre-operative case discussion session.

The saw bone workshop sponsored by Medtronic was led by Dr Arvind Jayaswal, Dr Kuniyoshi Abumi, Dr KS Sivananthan, and Dr Rohit Pokharel. Delegates were stimulated with up-close and hands-on learning experience under the guidance of international spine instructors. Spinal topics' lectures were delivered, and live surgeries demonstration was broadcasted in the auditorium during the subsequent two days. During the transmission, the international faculty stimulated questions and discussions among the delegates in the auditorium with respective surgeons performing the surgeries. The procedures demonstrated during the live surgeries included posterior decompression by laminectomy, laminectomy & discectomy, and decompression by laminectomy and stabilisation by pedicle screws and rods. All the patients fared well post operations, and were discharged.

The delegates hands-on saw bone workshops and interaction with the experienced surgeons were reported to be most preferred with suggestion to lengthen the duration of the workshops. Dr Khondker Abdul Awal and Dr Md Shah Alam, the National Organising Chairman and Secretary expressed hope that this course will continue to inspire quest for knowledge and advancement in spine surgery techniques among the national delegates.



- (1) The group photo comprising of 6 international faculty from India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Singapore together with the local organising committee during the course dinner.
- (2) Dr Jayaswal and Dr Abumi debating the risks and surgical techniques during the pre-operative case discussion session.
- (3) Dr Sivananthan responding to an enquiry from a course delegate using the saw bone.
- (4) Dr Abdul Awal, the Organising Chairman addressing the floor during his welcoming remarks in the opening ceremony.

## Global Spine Congress 2018, Singapore 2 – 5 May 2018

The Global Spine Congress (GSC) is known to be one of the biggest gatherings for thousands of spine surgeons from all over the world. The congress aimed to provide an outstanding forum to exchange ideas, network with fellow spine professionals, and to learn about the latest research, techniques, and technologies in spine surgery.

The APSS hosted an hour symposium entitled Master Techniques (Video Presentation) and Complications Avoidance with a panel of five experts, namely, Dato' Dr K S Sivananthan, Dr Keith Dip Kei Luk, Dr Kuniyoshi Abumi and Dr Arvind Jayaswal. Approximately 120 participants attended the symposium which was moderated by Dr Gabriel Liu. The open forum session observed constructive sharing and enquiries from the delegates.



*Dr KS Sivananthan presenting his lecture on “Cortical bone trajectory screw fixation: A new option for lumbar fixation” during the symposium.*



*The one-hour symposium was attended by over 120 participants and the other three panel of experts includes Dr Kuniyoshi Abumi, Dr Keith DK Luk and Dr Arvind Jayaswal.*


## APSS-SSS-NUH Basic Spine Course 2018 26 May 2018

Following the successful and well-received basic spine course held in Kuala Lumpur in 2017, the APSS is delighted to collaborate with Singapore Spine Society (SSS) to organise the second basic spine course in Singapore. The one-day course held on May 26, 2018 was supported by the National University Hospital (NUH). The course gathered a total of 47 participants comprised of orthopaedic trainees, junior nursing staff, junior radiographers and fellows. The programme was conceptualised and organised by Associate Professor Gabriel Liu and Dr Leok-Lim Lau, and the faculty consisted of local spine surgeons from the National University of Singapore, as well as Dr Chee-Kidd Chiu and Dr Kenny Kwan from University of Malaya and the University of Hong Kong, respectively.

The course was supported by the industry: Nuvasive, Medtronic, Johnson & Johnson, and Transmedic. Its lecture topics were structured to ensure exposure to the basic surgical techniques required in spine surgery. Lectures topics featured lumbar discectomy, laminectomy and medial facetectomy, posterolateral fusion, bone graft options and harvesting techniques, lumbar pedicle screws, PLIF and TLIF, thoracic pedicle screws - open and MIS, dural repair techniques, cervical anterior discectomy and fusion, cervical lateral mass screws, as well as cervical laminoplasty. The solid schedule was mediated by two saw bone workshops to provide hands-on in spinal instrumentation using saw bone. As such course received good response, similar basic spine courses will be organised in other chapters around the region.



*The series of photos above comprising of 2 international faculty, Dr Chee Kidd Chiu (Malaysia) and Dr Kenny Kwan (Hong Kong) and local faculty, Dr Gabriel Liu and Dr Dennis Hey during the sawbones workshop held as part of the course.*



[www.apss-appos2019.org](http://www.apss-appos2019.org)

# APSS APPOS 2019

12<sup>th</sup> Combined Meeting of Asia Pacific Spine Society  
& Asia Pacific Paediatric Orthopaedic Society

**April 4-6, 2019**

Songdo Convensia, Incheon, Korea

***Chairmen***

Ki-Tack Kim (APSS), Tae-Joon Cho (APPOS)

***Secretary General***

Kyu-Jung Cho



## 2017 APSS Medtronic Fellow's Testimonial

**Dr Asrafi Rizki Gatam** is an Orthopaedic spine surgeon from Indonesia. He is currently working in Fatmawati General Hospital in Jakarta, Indonesia and has been practising spine since 2016. Dr Gatam does basic spine procedure from cervical to lumbar but mostly does endoscopic spine procedures, percutaneous transforaminal lumbar discectomy, percutaneous interlaminar lumbar discectomy and percutaneous interlaminar lumbar decompression for stenosis. He became an APSS member after attending the APSS Surabaya Operative Course in 2017 and came to know about the fellowship programme from APSS bi-weekly e-newsletter. He submitted the application for the fellowship after strong recommendation from his senior colleague.

Dr Gatam completed the APSS Medtronic Fellowship between November 1, 2017 and January 30, 2018 and is pleased to share his experience at the Department of Orthopaedic and Traumatology, The University of Hong Kong.



(1) Dr Gatam (fourth from left) with host team from The University of Hong Kong.  
(2) Dr Gatam with host, Dr Yat-Wa Wong and his team making morning rounds at the hospital.

**Q: How would you describe your fellowship experience at the centre and what do you like best about the APSS Medtronic Fellowship that you have completed?**

The experience was flawless! I had the opportunity to be involved in morning rounds, pre and post operation reporting, clinics and surgery. The morning rounds as well as the pre and post operation reporting in Hong Kong were very useful. It was during these sessions that the deep discussion was carried out on diagnosis, treatments, plan for surgery, surgery technique, and post-operative care. The hours in clinic allowed me to learn to think from the perspective of a spine consultant. The spine clinic in Hong Kong is divided into General Spine, Paediatric Spine and Adult Spine, thus providing a variety range of cases to study. When observing surgeries, there were many discussions on the procedures and techniques applied. I learned a lot about spine deformity especially anterior surgical correction for scoliosis because this procedure is not a routine in my centre back in Indonesia.

**Q: Would you recommend your peers to apply for APSS fellowship? Why?**

I would recommend the fellowship to my colleagues because I am now connected to other spine surgeons in the region and gained new insight in spine surgery from the host. The host was very hospitable and open to receive opinion and always ready for discussion. I also appreciate the arrangement for the fellowship that was well taken care of by APSS.



(3) Dr Gatam with Dr Keith DK Luk at the Operation Theatre pre-surgery.  
(4) Dr Gatam posing in front of the entrance of the Duchess of Kent Children Hospital, Sandy Bay Road, Hong Kong.  
(5) Dr Gatam enjoyed dinner together with Dr Yat-Wa Wong and wife as well as his fellow host colleagues.

Visit [www.apssonline.org](http://www.apssonline.org) to read the full reports of Dr Gatam's APSS Medtronic Fellowship experience.

## 2017 APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship

The APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship continues into the second year of cohort following the successful collaboration between APSS and SICOT in 2016. In 2017, APSS and SICOT offered two spots which is one (1) additional intake as compared to the previous year. It is an exchange programme whereby top two (2) APSS applicants, who were screened and selected by the APSS Board, and were offered the opportunity to exchange with two fellows from SICOT, who joined the APSS Travelling Fellowship. Each fellow spent three (3) weeks in a spine centre of excellence of SICOT.

In 2017, the fellowship was awarded to Dr Hideki Shigematsu from Japan and Dr Dennis Hwee Weng Hey from Singapore. This is a unique opportunity to interact with and learn from renowned spine surgeons in Europe. The following are summaries from respective individual experiences and knowledge gained during the fellowship.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Fellow Name</b>       | <b>: Dr Hideki Shigematsu (Japan)</b>  |
| <b>Host</b>              | <b>: Professor Cody Bünger in Department of Orthopaedics E, Aarhus University Hospital, Aarhus, Denmark.</b> |
| <b>Attachment Period</b> | <b>: September 10, 2017— October 1, 2017</b>   |

**Dr Hideki Shigematsu** is a spine surgeon in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery of the Nara Medical University. Upon graduation from Nara Medical University in the year 2000, he found interest in Scoliosis treatment and further his study on treatment of scoliosis cases in Hong Kong University under the mentorship of Dr Keith DK Luk, Dr Kenneth MC Cheung and Dr Yat-Wa Wong from the year 2011 to 2012. The spine team treats mainly degenerative spine disease such as cervical canal stenosis, lumbar spinal canal stenosis as well as metastatic spinal tumor cases.

Dr Shigematsu is keen to learn about the medical system in another region and wished to establish his network in a different continent. He was encouraged to submit the application for the fellowship by his fellow spine surgeon and also one of the previous recipient of APSS Fellowship, Dr Keiji Nagata from Wakayama Medical University. Having completed the fellowship between September 10—October 1, 2017, Dr Shigematsu is pleased to share with us his experience in Aarhus University Hospital.

**Q: How would you describe your fellowship experience at the centre and what do you like best about the APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship that you have completed?**

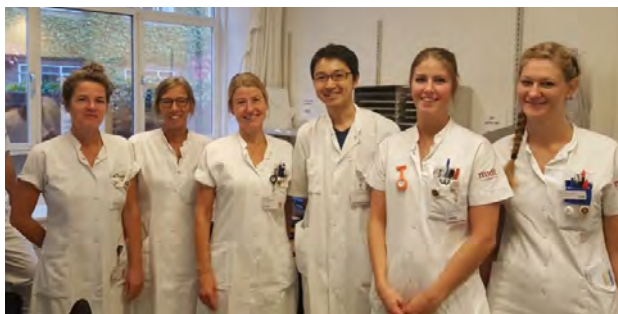
I was attached to Aarhus University Hospital for three (3) weeks and fortunate to be able to participate in a spine conference and assisted in 18 spine surgeries throughout the fellowship. There were opportunities to assist on interesting cases ranging from simple cervical spinal stenosis cases to more complex revision of deformity cases. It provided me with good opportunity to learn surgical treatment for several kinds of spine diseases. The Aarhus University Hospital is equipped with O-arm navigation system and I considered myself very lucky to be able to witness the usage of this system to insert pedicle screw precisely. This assured me that the system will work for such cases.

**Q: Would you recommend your peers to apply for APSS fellowship? Why?**

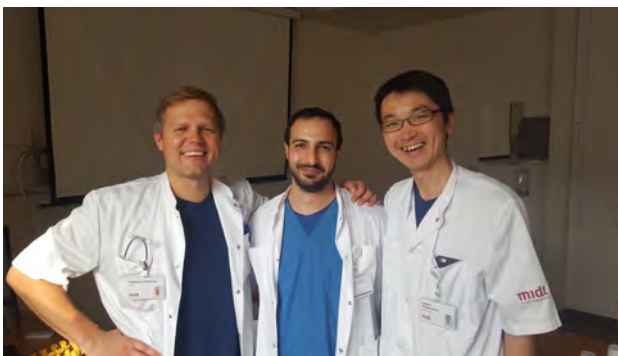
I would strongly recommend my peers to apply for the fellowship because it has been an amazing experience for me and I wished they will also have the chance to experience the same if not better. Throughout this fellowship, I have not only obtained valuable knowledge but also established valuable friendship with fellow spine surgeons in a different continent.



*Dr Shigematsu with members of spine team in Aarhus University. (from left: Dr Kristian Hoy, Dr Peter Helmig, Dr Shigematsu, Dr Cody Bünger, Dr Li HaiSheng, Dr Kestutis Valancius, and Dr Anne Kirstine).*



*Dr Shigematsu with medical staff in ward.*



*Dr Shigematsu with local host surgeons who turned best friends working in the Aarhus university hospital. Dr Kestutis Valancius (first from left) is also a previous recipient of APSS Fellowship in the year 2016.*

## 2017 APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship (cont.)

**Fellow Name** : Dr Dennis Hwee Weng Hey  
**Host** : Prof. Ulrich Noeth and Dr. Miguel Alquiza in Evangelisches Waldkrankenhaus Spandau, Stadtrandstraße 555, 13589 Berlin, Germany.  
**Attachment Period** : September 25, 2017—October 13, 2017

**Dr Dennis Hwee Weng Hey** is a fellowship-trained consultant spine surgeon currently practising at the National University Hospital in Singapore. He was previously trained and had practice experiences in the field of spine surgery in Singapore, Japan, South Korea, France and Germany. In terms of clinical practice, Dr Hey has exceptional interest, and has practice in the area of spinal deformity management, whilst in terms of clinical research, he has great passion in promoting the understanding of spinal mobility when it comes to treating adult spinal deformity, for which he have pioneered some of the earlier concepts pertaining to patient-specific deformity correction that respects spinal dynamism.

Dr Hey came to know about APSS and the fellowship programme during his work at National University Hospital in Singapore, which is a centre frequently visited by other APSS travelling fellows. He submitted his application after the recommendation from his seniors and peers. Having completed the fellowship between September 25—October 13, 2017, Dr Hey is pleased to share with us his experience in Evangelisches Waldkrankenhaus Spandau.

**Q: How would you describe your fellowship experience at the centre and what do you like best about the APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship that you have completed?**

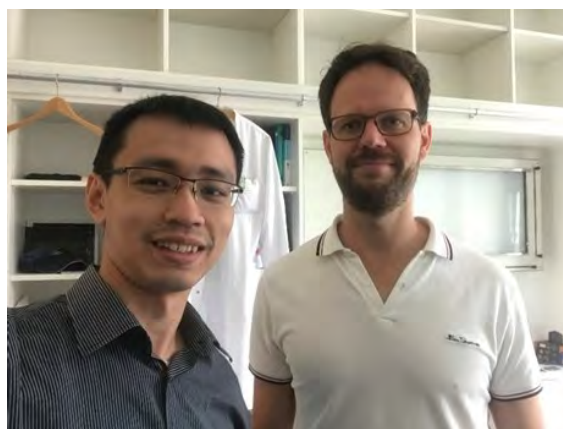
My entire 3-week stay in Berlin was filled with valuable learning lessons. The spine team in Evangelisches Waldkrankenhaus Spandau led by Dr. Miguel Alquiza was highly experienced. They were skilled in both open and minimally invasive (MIS) surgical approaches, and they also practice a wide variety of fusion and motion preservation procedures catered to patients' needs. This was the visit that made me realise the benefits of MIS approaches while recognising its limitations. By selectively reinforcing or replacing surgical steps with open techniques, one can achieve minimal soft tissue damage without compromising efficiency.

**Q: Would you recommend your peers to apply for APSS fellowship? Why?**

The APSS-SICOT fellowship is the most prestigious fellowship programme offered by APSS. Successful applicants are given the rare opportunities to visit top European centres for an approximate 3-week duration. Overseas fellowships are extremely valuable as they provide means to broaden the surgeon's breadth of clinical exposure. They also allow fostering of friendship which benefits future collaborative work. This is the main reason why I chose to apply for the fellowship. I feel that maximum benefit can be achieved if a surgeon's prior clinical experience and area of practice can be matched. Personally, this 3-week programme, though relatively short, served me well as I was able to start working on the first day as an operating surgeon. I was also able to engage in discussions on surgical strategies for a wide variety of spinal conditions including spinal deformity. As such, I would strongly encourage fully practising spine surgeons to apply for this fellowship.



*Dr Hey with Head of Spine Surgery, Dr Miguel Alquiza*



*Dr Hey with Chief Surgeon, Dr Ralph Schernberger, 2017 APSS DePuy Synthes Travelling Fellow.*



*Dr Hey with Head of Orthopaedic Surgery, Dr Ulrich Noeth.*

Visit [www.apssonline.org](http://www.apssonline.org) to read the full reports of their APSS-SICOT Spine Fellowship experiences.

| Activity  | Date                 | Venue  |
|---|----------------------|--|
| APSS Medtronic Fellowship 2017 / 2018   | Nov 2018 - Aug 2019  | Keio University, Japan<br>The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong<br>Seoul St. Mary's Hospital, The Catholic University of Korea, South Korea<br>Sapporo Orthopaedic Hospital - Center for Spinal Disorders, Japan<br>Primus Super Speciality Hospital, India |
| APSS Astana Spine Masterclass & Operative Course                                | 30 Aug - 1 Sep 2018  | Building of Nazarbayev University, School of Medicine, Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana City   |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Spine Deformity Solutions: A Hands-On Course from SRS and APSS | 7 Sep - 9 Sep 2018   | Hong Kong University – Surgical Skills Centre, Hong Kong, China  |
| APSS SICOT Spine Fellowship 2018  | Sep - Oct 2018       | SICOT Spine Centres of Excellence in Europe  |
| APSS Davao Operative Course 2018  | 6 Dec - 8 Dec 2018   | Davao Doctors Hospital, Davao City, Philippines  |
| APSS Nha Trang Operative Course 2019  | 25 Mar - 27 Mar 2019 | Khanh Hoa General Hospital, Viet Nam   |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> APSS-APPOS Biennial Combined Congress                          | 4 Apr - 6 Apr 2019   | Songdo Convensia, Incheon, Korea   |
| APSS Xi'an Operative Course   | 5 Sep - 7 Sep 2019   | Xi'Jing Hospital, FMMU, Xi'an, China   |



#### Asia Pacific Spine Society

The APSS started with the Western Pacific Orthopaedic Association - Spine Section in 1979 as an educational and scientific forum for the advancement of knowledge in the field of spine surgery.

Our mission is to advance knowledge in the field of spine surgery and promulgate the maintenance of professional standards in order to provide the best professional care to patients with spinal problems.

#### APSS News

APSS Secretariat

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