

## HKOA Travelling Scholarship 2010 Trip Report

### The 7<sup>th</sup> SICOT/SIROT Annual International Conference (Sweden)

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Thanks to the support of HKOA, I attended the above meeting from 31 August to 3 September.

SICOT is the largest international orthopaedic organization with strong tradition and long history. This year the SICOT annual international conference was held in Gothenburg, the second largest city of Sweden. The venue was Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre. I learned that this complex was the largest of its kind in Sweden. Indeed, I appreciated that it was really a huge complex when I arrive the venue.

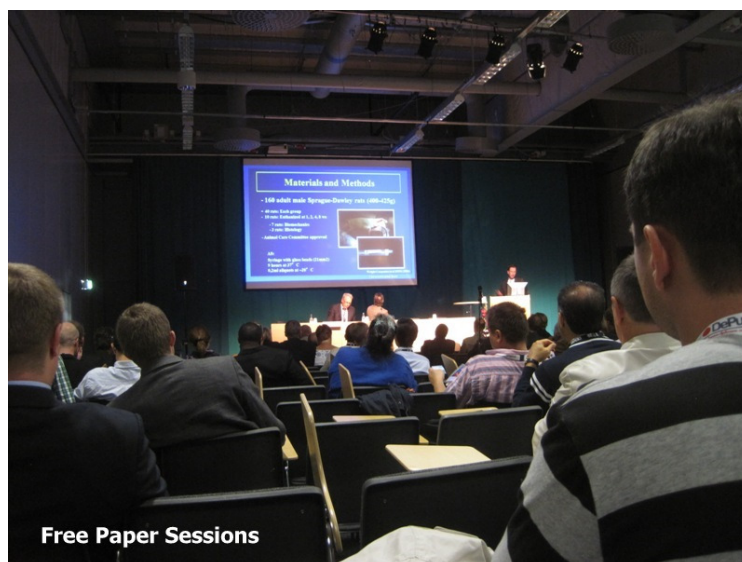


The front view of Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre. The building in the left picture is its attached hotel – Gothia Tower, the tallest building in Gothenburg.

As usual as the past SICOT meetings, the topics covered were very “general” and comprehensive. It nearly covers all aspects in orthopaedic practice. In order to condense everything within the few days, there were a lot of concurrent sessions, up to six sessions sometimes. The difficulty in attending the meeting was to choose among the different sessions holding simultaneously!

Fortunately, most plenary lectures did not have concurrent at the same time and I could enjoy all of them. They were all delivered by well known orthopaedic surgeons and were all very entertaining.

This year, Japan was chosen as the friendly nation. The Japanese Orthopaedic Association (JOA) sent a large group of delegates to the conference. Moreover, JOA was responsible for hosting several symposia, topics ranging from adult joint reconstruction to spinal surgery. I attended two of spine symposia. As we all know, the Japanese are experts in this subspecialty. The presentations and discussions were all very fruitful. One point I want to mention is that their command of English was surprisingly good which could be reflected from not only their presentation but also their immediate discussion with the floor. They had made great improvement on this aspect as compared with what I observed some years ago in other overseas conferences.



Besides the Japanese, participants from all over the world were presented. Another encouraging phenomenon is that there were significant numbers of participant from the developing countries. Judging from their presentations in the free paper sessions, you can see that their standard have progressed a lot in the past decade.

Delegates from war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan were also there. Orthopaedic surgeons from countries with a lot of internal conflicts such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka had come and presented their work as well. Representatives from Africa and other third world countries have also made their voice. Despite difficulties encountered, they still managed to provide high standard of care.



Apart from the lectures and presentations, the commercial part of the conference is also worth mentioning. Altogether, there were nearly 100 booths. Because of this grand number, it needed two great halls to accommodate all the exhibitors. Everything you can think about orthopaedic was there and not just simply implants. Strolling around the commercial booths actually was quite enjoyable, just like going to the New Year eve's market. It is good to know so many new technologies, though some of them are not available back home in Hong Kong.



Due to its high latitude, Gothenburg still enjoys a long day light by this time of the year. The weather was extremely good during the conference. Blue skies and clear clean air of the Scandinavia. You can still enjoy plenty of sunshine after the meeting ended at late afternoon. The conference venue was quite closed to the city centre and it was convenient for the participants to stroll around, exploring the city. Gothenburg is a beautiful city with ornate architecture lining its tram-rattled street.

The last day of the conference ended at noon time and most participants including me could enjoy a free afternoon. I joined a boat trip, cruising along the canals and the Gothenburg harbour, viewing the city from a different angle. On the boat, I met some Japanese delegates as well as other participants. The trip was very relaxing. Fantastic weather and awesome scenery.

The four-day conference finally came to an end. A well organized meeting by SICOT and SOF (Swedish Orthopaedic Association). I caught a late afternoon flight back home afterwards, with the memories of Gothenburg behind.



Cruising along the canals of Gothenburg



**Gothenburg harbour** – at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century, more than one million Swedish left their homeland seeking for new life in the new world, mainly to America and Canada. Most of them board here. The descendents of this early emigrant mass is estimated to be 12 millions, exceeded the total population of the whole Sweden itself.