

HKOA Spine Chapter Travelling Fellowship

Through the support of the Spine Chapter Fellowship, I attended the NASS Annual Meeting 2013 including a Hands-on Minimally Invasive Spine (MIS) Cadaveric Workshop in New Orleans, USA from 9-12 October 2013.

This Annual Meeting started with several workshops, one of which was a MIS Workshop. It was run by national experts in the USA and Canada which included a set of introductory lectures and various stations of workshops. I learnt some technical tips in applying percutaneous pedicle screws in the thoracic and lumbar regions from Dr Michael Wang, performed a direct lateral interbody fusion in the lumbar spine, and learnt useful techniques of endoscopic assisted spine surgery from Dr Christopher Yeung.

The other highlights of attending this meeting are the various symposia and best papers presentations throughout the conference. There were good debates between the surgeons using traditional open spine approaches and minimally invasive spine surgeons. Dr Wellington Hsu organized an excellent and informative session on Spinal Problems in Competitive Sports and a wide range of conditions were covered, which I have not previously encountered in Hong Kong. I also learnt a lot from the presentations by Dr Michael Fehling and his group on cervical myelopathy, as well as Dr Thomas Mroz on cervical spine foraminotomy.

I also visited the exhibition hall with great interest. I learnt about the importance of sacroiliac joint pathologies in the management of back pain from the physiotherapists and expert surgeons. I listened to talks given by Dr Anthony Yeung on his endoscopic spine technique. I visited the robotic spine surgery booth and cadaveric workshop container set up in the exhibition hall, and performed a few levels of percutaneous screw fixation using the robotic system.

New Orleans is also a fascinating city to visit after its destruction by Hurricane Katrina. Most of the city is now rebuilt but there are still traces of the aftermath. Bourbon Street in the French Quarter is very lively and characteristic. I also made some new friends from the USA, Taiwan and Japan during my visit.

Overall, I think this is a very enriching experience for my development in Spine Surgery and I thank the HKOA Spine Chapter for their generous support.

Kenny Kwan

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