

BERITA ORTOPEDIK



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Message from the Editorial Secretary

Dear readers,

As we commemorate International Women's Day on the 8th of March, it is with great pleasure that I introduce this issue of Berita Ortopedik, which celebrates the invaluable contribution of women in orthopaedics. We highlight the remarkable achievements, talents, and resilience of women who have made significant strides in our field.

Throughout history, women have played pivotal roles in advancing orthopaedic care, research, and education. The women featured in this issue exemplify excellence and leadership in their respective domains. Their stories serve as powerful testaments to the diverse talents and capabilities of women in orthopaedics and inspire future generations to pursue their goals fearlessly.

Through candid conversations and the sharing of experiences, this issue explores the challenges and opportunities faced by women in orthopaedics, including the importance of mentorship, work-life balance, and gender equality in the workplace. As we celebrate the achievements of women in orthopaedics, let us also reaffirm our commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within our fraternity.

I am grateful to all the women who have graciously shared their stories and expertise for this special issue, as well as to our readers for their continued support and engagement. Together, let us continue to champion the advancement of women in orthopaedics and work towards a future where talent knows no boundaries.

Happy International Women's Day!

Warm regards
Timothy Cheng



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Berita Ortopedik Editorial Board 2023-2024

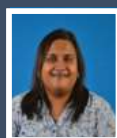


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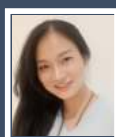
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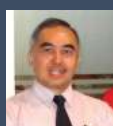


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“A Good Surgeon Must Have An Eagle’s Eye, A Lion’s Heart, And A Lady’s Hand...”

...Thus Runs The 15th Century English Proverb”

Meet **Dr Jade Ho Pei Yuik**, Hospital Kuala Lumpur’s Female Arthroplasty Surgeon, An Aficionado Of Robotic-Assisted Surgery.

Written By:

Dr Khanchana Devi

*Orthopaedic Surgery Medical Officer
Hospital Kuala Lumpur*

Dr Jade obtained her MBBS degree and Masters in Orthopaedic Surgery from Universiti Malaya, before pursuing subspecialty training in arthroplasty at prestigious centres in Malaysia, South Korea, and Australia. Her foray into and journey in the field of orthopaedics is rather interesting. “My initial dream was to become a paediatrician. Nevertheless, my interest in orthopaedics was piqued by an enthusiastic and inspiring lecturer in medical school. I also won a prize in orthopaedics in my final year, so I thought I must have some aptitude for it”.

Although highly inclined towards paediatrics in the beginning, destiny had a different plan for this brilliant young lady, as she started her career in Hospital Selayang. “Witnessing first-hand the ability to restore the function of an incapacitated patient, thus restoring life in itself, was a very rewarding experience and that ignited a deep interest within me”.

However, when reporting for duty as a medical officer, she was discouraged to join the orthopaedic department and was given the example of another lady doctor who quit after just a week. “Nonetheless, my then-head of department was very encouraging, and I was fortunate to meet the right people at the right time, who believed in me and helped me on in my journey. My seniors and colleagues have been supportive of me and taught me everything I know today. With regards to patients, there are some who still have the perception that only male doctors venture into orthopaedics and I have personally experienced some condescending

behavior though this is uncommon”.

Apart from clinical duties in which she dedicates a substantial amount of time revolutionizing patient care, her leadership qualities are demonstrated in her contribution to the fraternity as faculty member of AO Recon and AO Trauma, Editorial Secretary of the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association (MOA) 2022/2023, Editorial Board member of the MOA from 2018 to 2023 and Council Member of the Malaysian Society for Hip and Knee Surgeons 2021/2023. She is also actively engaged in research and has published in numerous well-known journals.

As she breaks down barriers to make her unique mark in the world of surgery, paving the way for many young female surgeons, her desire is for more women to be recognized and valued as key opinion leaders in orthopaedics. “My sincere advice to any lady interested in this field - find out early if that interest is strong, as practicing orthopaedics during housemanship is very different from being a medical officer or specialist. If you have the aptitude for it, persevere till the end. Do not be afraid of working hard because every effort you put in will go towards your education in this field.” She further adds “All things are difficult before they are easy. Change is inevitable, but growth is optional. Choose to grow.” A powerful reminder to hold on to. **BO**





Prof. Sara listening intently to a presentation during MOA conference June 2023 in Amari SPICE Penang

Interview with Dato' Prof. Dr. Tunku Sara binti Tunku Ahmad Yahaya

Interview by:

Rachel Ting Jingjing

*Orthopaedic Surgery Masters Trainee
Universiti Malaya*

'We have virtual grand rounds with Prof. Sara tomorrow. Make sure you prepare the slides and know the cases well. She'll ask questions.' I nodded as my superior gave the order and walked out of ward.

It was May 2020 during the pandemic rage when I joined the department of orthopaedic surgery in Universiti Malaya as a house officer. It was the first time I have heard of Prof. Sara's name. Her reputation preceded her as seniors and superiors excitedly filled me up on who she was and the awe-inspiring achievements she had, including a famous account of how she brilliantly reduced a hip dislocation in the emergency room with a team, employing the most

unconventional method – she sat on the patient after turning him prone and hanging his hip over the bed to aid in the reduction.

Since then, her name has always reverberated in my mind and when I finally met her in person in August 2020, I decided that she would be my role model in orthopaedic surgery. She was such an amiable person, very down-to-earth, always cheerful, and full of laughs. I could not be more thrilled and honoured at the privilege of interviewing the first female orthopaedic surgeon in Malaysia!

Can you give us a brief background about yourself Prof?

I am.... first a Malaysian. I graduated in London and came back to Malaysia for housemanship in Universiti Malaya, then joined as

a trainee lecturer here and did my post graduate training in Singapore under Prof. Robert Pho (who was my mentor and a good friend now), in Melbourne and Sydney (3 months each) under renowned plastic surgeon Prof. Wayne Morrison and orthopaedic surgeon Prof. Michael Tonkin respectively. Under the great leadership of Dato' Dr. A. Hamid, Dato' Dr. Pathmanathan, Dr. Vaikunthan and others, we pioneered and founded Malaysian Society for Surgery of the Hand, and organized the 1st Malaysian Conference on Surgery and Rehabilitation of the Hand in 1993. Since then it has been a rat race in the academic setting. I was always busy with teaching, clinical work and research but I enjoyed working. I first retired in 2016 but continued to renew my contract every 2 yearly until I eventually retired in 2022 at the age of 64. Right now, I am an honorary professor and a visiting hand specialist in Universiti Malaya, and I also practice in Universiti Malaya Specialist Center though not as much as I used to do.

What are your fond memories growing up?

Performing. Growing up I was always very fond of performing and I did a lot of singing, dancing and musical shows! I love going for holidays with my family and doing things together like art and craft activities, trekking, camping, and diving.

What inspired you to take up orthopaedic surgery? Was there a time when you felt like giving up in the pursuit of your ambition?

I am a practical person and I like practical and sensible things. I think orthopaedics is very practical,



Figure 1: A selfie with Prof. Sara at MOA conference June 2022 in Shangri-La KL

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it makes a lot of sense you know, rather than some esoteric basic science stuff which really does not appeal to me.

Never, I never thought about giving up at all. Orthopaedics was not super hard. There were bumps on the road of course, but they were temporary. And you don't give up on things you like to do, it was just never an option and I never thought about it at all.

Can you share with us a little more about your undergraduate and postgraduate journey and experience?

I did my undergraduate studies in London. Royal Free Hospital was 1 of the 12 teaching hospitals in London at that time, and it was the first medical school to ever admit women in England. There was a long history of strong women in that school. My pre-clinical years were in Hunter's Street while clinical years were in the hospital further up north where we travelled by train. It was my first overseas experience and it was exciting to see other students from other countries and other hospitals. There were different cultures and different seasons where we wore different clothes. Winter was gloomy but spring was cheerful. There was a very strong drinking culture among the medical students which was very strange. People were just going between the pub drinking and the student bar in hospital eating the hottest curry. I shared an apartment with 2 English students and was just working hard throughout those years.

After that I decided to come back to Universiti Malaya for housemanship and did my rotation in surgery, orthopaedics and medicine. Those days we had only 3 postings and 1 year of housemanship. Then I joined the trainee lecturer program and did FRCS (there was no masters program then). I did my part 2 in Scotland and by then I was already married so my husband came along with me. It was very cold. Following that was the Singapore fellowship, and then it was just endless working, oncalls, teaching, studying, research and starting hand specialty.



Figure 2: Prof. Sara supervising a cadaveric dissection (September 2023)

What are the happiest and most rewarding moments for you in orthopaedics?

- Success of students, seeing them grow and become great doctors & orthopaedic surgeons.
- Good patient outcome.
- Research publication.
- Friendship and mentorship. People are very important. It's good to have many friends and few enemies.

Of the many achievements and accolades that you have garnered, which are you most proud of and why?

I always love teaching and guiding people to good position and training, and I am very proud of my students who excelled. For example, when Prof Azura was accepted to the famous tumour center in Italy and Prof Kamarulzaman went to Liverpool to study with the late Prof. Simon, they both did very well and I was extremely proud of them.

I am also very proud of my 1st publication, it made me very happy. Other big clinical breakthroughs such as excellent results in plexus and flaps, successful toe-to-thumb transfer and pollicization were also achievements that I am very proud

of. I would look at patients and their outcomes and wonder 'Waaaahh did I do that? That is so good!' and I would be very proud of myself. XD

What were the challenges you faced as a young female surgeon in a male-dominated field? Do you think these challenges still plague the present day female orthopaedic trainees and surgeons?

Well, at workplace, my colleagues who were mostly male would tease me, but they were very helpful people and I never had any problems working with them. They saw me as a colleague and never undermined my capability as a female surgeon. I think orthopaedics attract a lot of nice people, most of them are friendly and helpful, there are no chips on their shoulder you know, in general.

I think the most challenging thing for me was managing my family as a mother and a wife. It was just heart-wrenching to have to leave my kids with someone else during oncall especially when my husband was not around. There was no work life balance and you just had to do it. I would then console myself that

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I could catch up on the quality if I could not have the quantity. So, during holidays I would spend time with my kids alone without the domestic helper and just be around them fully.

In the modern age where women are more career-oriented, husbands are changing and becoming more accommodating (not that my husband was not accommodating. He was extremely supportive of me.) but I think family is still a challenge today. Yes, we can leave the kids with our parents but still, it is not the same. No one else can discipline our kids like we do. If I had to do it again, I would cut down a bit on my work, share a job with someone else, take a longer time to complete my training etc. Mad rush is not good.

What is the hardest thing in life that you have encountered and how did you overcome it?

Being diagnosed with a rare breast tumour (inflammatory breast cancer) and going through the treatment. I was on sabbatical leave in France when I first noticed my left arm was swollen and had a rash. No one knew why until 6

months later a biopsy revealed the shocking diagnosis. I had the surgery done in Malaysia and then went to the States for 'poison and burn'. The chemotherapy caused troubling joint aches and I was also on hormonal therapy. When the cancer recurred in my brain, I had to undergo gamma radiation where my head had to be put on a skull tong for the treatment and when taken off, it felt very weird as if my head was expanding! I also went to Germany to see a hyperthermia expert who treated the recurrent lesion on my chest by making me sit in a hammock and get roasted like a steak at 41-degree Celcius. After that there was another treatment with another expert who did hyperthermia and concurrent low dose electron therapy which eventually cured my chest lesions. Few years later there was metastasis to the upper lobe of my right lung, for which I had a lobectomy done and experienced chest tube insertion for the first time. It was very painful.

Thank God I have been well since. My family has been very supportive throughout the whole ordeal and prayer has helped me overcome the difficult moments.

What are your tips to become a successful surgeon?

- Always read up on a particular problem and all the options that you have.
- Look at things from someone else's perspective. What you think your patients want may not always be what they actually want, always ask your patients and do not assume.
- Think out of the box, especially something simple. Do not complicate matters.
- Always ask your colleagues what they think. Everyone has different experience that may be helpful.
- Do not condemn people. Be as diplomatic as you can, keep an open mind.

What are your favourite books? Can you tell us more about them?

'The Thursday Murder Club' by Richard Osman. It is a thriller, a murder story that takes place in a geriatric home. Another favourite of mine is 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time' by Mark Haddon, which is about an autistic boy who investigates the death of his neighbour's dog. I like things with a lot of humour. We need to laugh.

What are your advices to the fledgling orthopaedic surgeons especially the female surgeons?

- Do your best.
- Enjoy all the positive moments. Enjoy the training.
- Be in the present.
- Make good friends.
- Record all the good things and remember them.
- Keep your logbook!
- Keep your motives blameless so you will be happier.
- Think out the things you do. Go where you are suited. Don't go against the tide, you will get worn out.
- Develop your strengths so your weaknesses will be of smaller percentage.

Thank you for the nuggets of wisdom Prof. Sara. You are truly an inspiration to many. ⁸⁰



Figure 3: Prof. Sara (dressed in red) performing in a musical show



53rd

MOA

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& ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2024

Theme:

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IOA-MOA Exchange Fellowship 2023 at the 68th Annual Conference of the Indian Orthopedic Association.



Written By:

Dr. Nik Kamarul Arif Bin Nik Kamrulzaman

*Orthopaedic and Trauma Surgeon,
Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz,
UKM.*

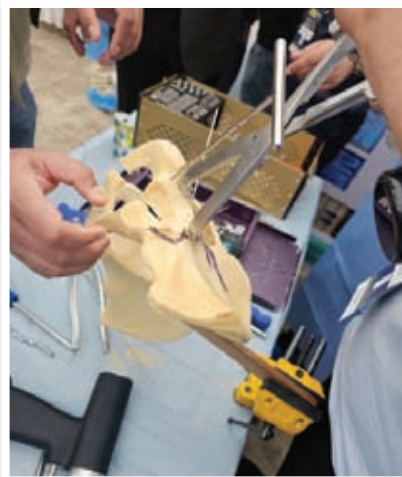
Introduction:

The IOA-MOA Exchange Fellowship 2023 took place during the 68th Annual Conference of the Indian Orthopedic Association (IOA). The fellowship was from December 12 to December 17, 2023, in Lucknow, India.

Program Highlights:

Arrival and Day 2 Activities (December 12-13):

I arrived in Lucknow on December 12 quite late in the day, initiating the fellowship. On the second day, I visited the Orthopaedic Surgery Department of King George's Medical School (KGMU) University Hospital. A cadaveric pelvic acetabular workshop at the Anatomy Department of KGMU followed this, featuring a keynote lecture by Professor Dr. Ramesh K Sen, a renowned pelvi-acetabular Surgeon and Member of the International AO Pelvic Expert Group. The workshop included detailed discussions on fixation methods for various pelvic fractures, concluding with a cadaveric dissection of the Kocher Langerback posterior approach with trochanteric osteotomy. Interactions with local and international participants enriched the experience.



Pictures during the pelvi-acetabular workshop



Picture with the president of the Singaporean Orthopaedic Association, Prof Fareed Kagda

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Day 3 Activities (December 14):

The third day included a Lucknow City tour, exploring historical sites such as the British Residency, Chota Imambara, and Hussainabad Clock Tower. An opportunity to savor local cuisine added to the delightful experience. In the evening, I attended the IOACON 2023 opening ceremony at Ekana Sports City Complex, a unique venue due to the event's large scale. The ceremony was captivating, followed by a grand dinner featuring a local performance themed "Dastan-E-Awadh," portraying the legend of Huma - the celestial bird.

Conference Participation (December 15-17):

I had the privilege to listen to the wide variety of lectures covering various orthopaedic subspecialties, with my focus on trauma, pelvic and acetabular surgery, and hip arthroplasty. A special dinner for faculty on the evening of December 15 provided a golden opportunity to network with eminent orthopaedic surgeons, including Prof. Dr. Kenneth M.C. Cheung, A/P Dr. Fareed Kagda, Prof. Dr. Üstün Aydingöz, and Prof. Dr. Ramesh K Sen. These interactions contributed significantly to my professional growth and knowledge.

Acknowledgments:

I express my gratitude to the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association and the Indian Orthopaedic Association for providing this enriching opportunity. Special appreciation goes to Dr. Jamal Ashraf, Organizing Secretary of IOACON 2023, for the outstanding hospitality and congratulations on the successful conference.

This fellowship has not only broadened my orthopaedic surgery knowledge but also facilitated valuable connections within the global orthopaedic community. I look forward to applying the insights gained from this experience in my future endeavors. ⁸⁰



Picture with Dr Jamal Ashraf, Organizing Secretary of IOACON



Picture with Prof Ustun Aydingoz, MSK Radiologist from Hacettepe University, Ankara



Picture at the IOACON venue with the Legends of Orthopaedics, a feature wall.

Healing Hands Across South East Asia: The AOA JTF 2023 Experience

Compiled by:

Dr Nesta Enggra, Indonesia

Dr Chaiwat Chuaychoosakoon, Thailand

Dr Rosalyn P Flores, Philippines

Dr Dickson Chau, Singapore

Dr Timothy Cheng, Malaysia

The Junior Traveling Fellowship (JTF) of the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association (AOA) has been a beacon of professional development and international camaraderie since its inception in 1983. This program brings together fellows from AOA member-nations on an enlightening journey through the region, fostering exchange of research and orthopaedic expertise. It also nurtures enduring connections through social gatherings, leading to collaborative efforts by distinguished alumni of the programme in clinical, academic, and educational ventures, contributing to the quality of orthopaedic care in the region.

Fellows would spend a week in each country, sharing experiences, presenting their research and engaging in social networking activities. It was unfortunate that the Covid-19 pandemic imposed



Group picture with Dr Sumpaico (orthopaedic surgery consultant and head of the motion analysis program in the PGH and the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital)

a hiatus on cross-border travels, halting the program from 2020 to 2022.

The 2023 JTF of AOA were Dr Nesta Enggra (Indonesia), Dr Rosalyn P Flores (Philippines), Dr Dickson Chau (Singapore), Dr Chaiwat (Thailand) and myself. We had the privilege of visiting esteemed institutions across the region, including the Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) and Jerudong

Park Medical Centre (JPMC) in Brunei, the Philippine Orthopedic Centre (POC), Philippine General Hospital (PGH) and University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH) in the Philippines, the Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM) and University of Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) in Malaysia, and the Queen Savang Vadhana Memorial Hospital in Thailand. We had an unforgettable time and would like to share some glimpses of our journey with you.

Brunei:

5-8 October 2023

Dr Nesta Enggra

The visit commenced with great anticipation as the ASEAN Junior Travelling Fellows first gathered in the hotel lobby to meet each other for the first time. What passed as simple introductions would markstepped foot into the renowned Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital, Brunei's largest tertiary hospital and a cornerstone of its healthcare system (and this was my first time stepping into Brunei).

We were greeted warmly by Dr Khairul Azmi, head of orthopaedics in RIPAS. From trauma care to joint



Group picture outside RIPAS

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replacements, the fellows witnessed firsthand the dedication and proficiency of Brunei's orthopedic specialists.

We also had the opportunity to venture into Brunei's private healthcare sector, where innovation and excellence converge. At Jerudong Park Medical Centre and Gleneagles JPMC Orthopaedic Centre, we were met with state-of-the-art facilities and cutting-edge technologies. From advanced imaging modalities to minimally invasive surgical techniques, we were impressed by the extent of services offered in these centers.

In conclusion, our visit to Brunei was a testament to the power of collaboration and cultural exchange in advancing orthopedic excellence. It was a memorable, tranquil experience that broadened our professional horizons and expanded our network.

Timothy:

Our journey through Brunei began with great anticipation as the ASEAN Junior Travelling Fellows convened in the hotel lobby for the first time. Simple self-introductions marked the start of numerous conversations over the next 17 days, ultimately culminating in lasting friendships.

Dickson:

As strangers on the initial leg of our trip, we engaged in polite small talk during the drive to the renowned Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Saleha (RIPAS) Hospital, a cornerstone of Brunei's healthcare system. Brunei, a relatively affluent country with limited dependence on tourism, marked a first visit for most of us. Though familiar with Brunei as a Singaporean due to our countries' close ties, it was my first in-depth exploration of Brunei's Orthopaedic facilities.

Timothy:

Embarrassingly, despite working in Sandakan on the same continent as Brunei, this marked my first visit to the country. The drive to RIPAS intriguingly unveiled immediate similarities between Brunei and Singapore, such as the identical font and design of road signs.

Upon our arrival at RIPAS, the warmth extended by Dr. Khairul Azmi as head of the orthopaedic department in RIPAS, set a positive tone. Our



Welcome presentation by Dr Khairul Azmi



Enjoying Brunei hospitality - delicious Japanese cuisine!

firsthand observation of Brunei's orthopaedic specialists showcased their dedication and proficiency, adding depth to my understanding of Brunei's healthcare landscape.

Dickson:

The reception in the conference room was a delightful beginning, instantly dispelling any initial apprehension I may have had as we prepared to present our research topics. The genuine interest and engagement displayed by the Bruneian Orthopaedic Surgeons in our research was encouraging as we took turns sharing our presentations for the first time. Understandably, the allure of the presentations gradually diminished for us fellows as we journeyed through various host nations, as initially captivating anecdotes were revisited and recycled at each new location.

Despite familiarity eventually eroding novelty, I thoroughly enjoyed Timothy's discussion on fragility fracture management in his own institution. The resonance of healthcare challenges for the aging population, a concern prevalent in

Singapore, became strikingly evident across all the countries we visited.

Timothy:

Fragility fracture management is a topic close to my heart, and I was heartened by the enthusiastic sharing of personal experiences from our hosts and the AOA JTF Fellows. Dickson's presentation on the relatively high rates of hip fractures being operated within 48 hours in his institution, ranging between 60-70%, provided a heartening insight into an achievable goal.

Dickson:

However, as Timothy rightly pointed out, Singapore accomplished this at the highest cost among all ASEAN countries. I contemplate the sustainability of our practices and the importance of lessons to be learned from our ASEAN neighbours in achieving value-based care. The exchange of perspectives on healthcare practices and costs became an essential component of our collaborative

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journey, emphasizing the need for shared insights to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of orthopaedic care across the region.

Timothy:

Brunei was not shy to share the equal importance placed on sustainable public healthcare, as well as the bespoke healthcare services offered at the Jerudong Park Medical Centre and Gleneagles JPMC Orthopaedic Centre, where we were greeted by a convergence of innovation and excellence. These state-of-the-art facilities showcased cutting-edge technologies, emphasizing Brunei's commitment to providing advanced medical services.

Dickson:

We observed how these private institutions prioritized patient care through a seamless blend of technology and personalized attention, delivered by the same small team of Orthopaedic Surgeons who straddle to deliver at both public and private healthcare. This blend of service delivery was a poignant point of study as we compared it to our own practices back home.

Manila, Philippines:

8-14 October 2023

Dr Timothy Cheng, Malaysia

This was probably our busiest leg as Dr Rosalyn arranged three hospital visits - The Philippine Orthopaedic Center (POC), University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) and University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH). We had the privilege to attend and present our talks during the teaching sessions of all three hospitals. Discussions were fruitful and we took the opportunity to network with trainees and consultants.

Being a center that specializes in orthopaedic surgery, the POC is known for its high volume of orthopaedic cases, comprehensive rehabilitation programs aimed at restoring mobility and improving quality of life for patients.

UP-PGH is the largest tertiary government hospital in the Philippines, renowned for its commitment to providing quality



The prosthetic and orthotic section of the POC



Dr Chaiwat presenting at the UP-PGH



State of the art anatomy hall with cadaveric specimens in the UP-PGH

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Dr Nesta Enggra presenting at the USTH to consultants and orthopaedic surgery trainees

healthcare services to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. We were fascinated by the Motion Analysis Program here, one of the few gait labs in the region.

Our third and final stop was the USTH. Established in 1871, USTH is the teaching hospital of the UST, one of the oldest universities in the world. Among the top medical schools in the Philippines, USTH plays a pivotal role in medical education, research, and patient care.

Food was plentiful as we were treated to a wide variety of delicious cuisines including a buffet at the Edsa Shangri-La, Manila and a rooftop dinner at the Bayleaf Hotel, Intramuros. Besides hospital visits we were taken on a tour around the Intramuros (and the National Museum), Fort Santiago and the Jose Rizal Museum. Our eyes were opened to the rich past and vibrant culture of the Philippines. I developed a deeper understanding of Rizal's ideals of freedom, nationalism, and social justice, which continue to inspire Filipinos to this day.

Our short stint here helped me develop a fresh perspective on healthcare in the Philippines and truly appreciate the dedication of healthcare professionals and the resilience of patients in the pursuit of health and well-being.



Group picture with orthopaedic surgery trainees outside the UST



The National Museum, Intramuros

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**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:
14-18 October 2023
Dr Rosalyn P Flores, Philippines**

The bonds that were formed amongst us delegates were further strengthened during the next leg of the journey: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Even before this leg commenced, unfortunate circumstances such as a flight delay of more than 12 hours, long airport queues, and an earthquake during the morning of our group's departure threatened to dampen our spirits but definitely did not succeed. Fortunately, arriving on a weekend meant more time spent getting to know each other whilst enjoying local tasty treats and visiting unforgettable locations.

The highlight of the weekend was when Timothy brought us to the Royal Selangor School of Hard Knocks where we hammered away at sheets of pewter in true orthopaedic fashion. It was a welcome interlude after a busy week spent in Manila and we certainly grew more comfortable with each other. Conversations flowed endlessly and ranged from serious to downright silly, as if we had known each other for much longer than nine days.

When the work week finally commenced, we were warmly received by the orthopaedic staff of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), headed by Prof. Sabarul Afian Mokhtar, and University of Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC), headed by Prof. Nor Faissal Yasin. We visited the two hospitals to deliver our presentations and tour their impressive facilities. My paediatric orthoped heart was thrilled to see the newly-built Hospital Pakar Kanak-Kanak (HPKK) of UKM since it was what I imagined a children's hospital to be: bright and cheerful, with outdoor recreation areas where kids can run free, play, and be kids.

The visit to UMMC National Orthopaedic Centre of Excellence for Research and Learning (NOCERAL) and Department of Orthopaedic Surgery was particularly special for me as a female orthoped as I was able to meet Prof. Tunku Sara Ahmad, the first female orthopaedic surgeon in Malaysia and a good friend of my own mentor, Prof. Teresita Altre, the first female orthopaedic surgeon in the Philippines.



Pictures from the Royal Selangor Pewter Center



Group picture at the lobby of Hospital Pakar Kanak Kanak UKM

During the dinner hosted by the board members of the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association (MOA), I was delighted to meet more female orthopaedic surgeons with active roles in the MOA – Prof. Azura Mansor and Dr. Sarah Sheena Toyat. These encounters definitely highlight the progressive

outlook of the ASEAN orthopaedic community regarding gender equity and inclusivity in a field that has traditionally been dominated by males.

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Picture with Prof Tunku Sara



Group picture with the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association Council Members

During the final day of our Malaysia leg, I felt a tinge of sadness as I was counting down the days to when I would fly back to the Philippines and be welcomed by the amount of work that piled up in my absence. In order to distract myself, I started making a list of the things I will miss most about Malaysia: Timothy's stellar hospitality and Filipino driving skills, Dickson powerlifting 1578 kg of pewter swarf, and Chaiwat unknowingly trapping Nesta in the back seat of Timothy's car. For my own sanity's sake, I had to remind myself not to consider the experience as coming to an end since it was actually just beginning. I started to see how the relationships built as a result of the travelling fellowship can enrich the practice of orthopaedics in the ASEAN region.

Professional (as well as personal) experiences were candidly being shared, best practices were being imparted, and potential



Presenting my talk on the National ClubFoot Program of the Philippines at UM

collaborations were thoughtfully explored in both formal and informal settings. The hospital conferences, the café-hopping adventures, and the countless meals shared (where an inordinate amount of calories were ingested) served not

only as platforms for us to grow in appreciation of each other but as venues for reflecting on what we deem valuable as professionals.

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Group picture after sharing sessions with masters trainees in UM

**Pattaya, Thailand:
18-22 October 2023
Dr Dickson Chau, Singapore**

Our voyage of discovery culminated in Pattaya, Thailand, where we attended the 2023 RCOST conference and visited the Queen Savang Vadhana Memorial Hospital. This experience served as a fitting conclusion to our journey, immersing us in a country filled with remarkable people and world-class orthopedic surgeons.

Our visit to the Queen Savang Vadhana Memorial Hospital was a revelation. The hospital, named after the revered Queen Savang Vadhana, is a testament to Thailand's commitment to healthcare. More than just a hospital, its history symbolizes Thailand's dedication to its people's health and well-being. Coming from Singapore, a republic, I initially found the influence of monarchy on public institutions unfamiliar. However, my experiences in Thailand and Brunei opened my eyes to the potential advantages of such systems. When a monarchy is deeply invested in the welfare of its people, it can make decisions that directly address public needs, leading to remarkable achievements. Thailand's healthcare system is a beacon of excellence, not just in Southeast Asia, but globally. It's ranked among the top in the world, outperforming many developed nations. This achievement is a testament to the country's commitment to providing quality healthcare to all its citizens.



Our lanyards for the 2023 RCOST Conference

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Group picture at the Queen Savang Vadhana Memorial Hospital

The 2023 RCOST conference, held at the sprawling Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall, was a testament to Thailand's capability to host world-class events. The conference was a melting pot of brilliant minds, with speakers from around the globe presenting cutting-edge research topics. The Thai hosts were gracious, their hospitality a reflection of the country's famed warmth and friendliness. One of the conference's highlights was the recognition of my fellow Thai delegate Dr Chaiwat, the 2022 winner of the best paper award. We happily celebrated his achievement as a testament to the quality of research in Thailand and the high standards set by Thai medical professionals.

Networking Opportunities:

Travelling fellowships such as ours, blessed by our predecessors in AOA, have paved the way for

mutual opportunities to further the boundaries of Orthopaedic care in the region. I was thrilled to see Timothy and Rosalyn mulling over the possibility of launching an inaugural AO basic course in Sandakan, Malaysia, just a boat ride away from the Philippines. It warmed me to discuss with Nesta of spine fellowship opportunities in Singapore, to promote the take-up of endoscopic spine surgery in his hospital in Indonesia; and I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to initiate a multi-centre study with A/Prof Chaiwat's esteemed institution in Songkhla, Thailand.

Humbling Realizations:

Singapore and Thailand have long been renowned hubs for medical tourism. However, after my travels, I humbly recognized that our allure might not have been rooted so much in surgical prowess, but in the cutting-edge technology we

offered to those who could afford it. If anything, our thriving healthcare ecosystem in Singapore might have shielded us surgeons from the more intricate challenges of healthcare provision.

For instance, as a resident, Nesta our Indonesian delegate had become adept at managing polytrauma cases on a weekly basis. Timothy our Malaysian delegate likely handled more cases of TB spine during his training than I might in another five years as a spine surgeon. Whilst Rosalyn, our Filipino delegate, casually shared how she watched as her resident independently performed a pelvic osteotomy and VDRO for a neglected DDH case - a scenario rarely encountered in Singapore, where a similar case might have triggered an inquiry into newborn screening procedures.

Bridges for the Future:

On 22nd Oct, the passing of the AOA presidency from A/Prof Denny Lie to A/Prof Thipachart, both former year 2000 AOA JTF delegates, symbolizes the enduring commitment to advancing orthopaedic care across generations. In an era that celebrates the rise of ASEAN prominence, organizations like AOA are pivotal in fostering collaboration and elevating healthcare standards. I am confident that the year 2023 AOA JTF delegates would similarly maintain warm ties and collective efforts to leave a lasting impact on Orthopaedic care in the region.

Conclusion

We learned to evaluate our own country's orthopaedic practice in light of what we were able to see in each country that we visited. More importantly, we all agreed to nurture partnerships that would help achieve our goals in elevating orthopaedic training and care to better serve our patients. When time came for all of us to part ways, aside from being grateful for the opportunity given to us by the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association to learn from and grow with each other, we were also resolutely committed to being instruments of change in our own country. No matter how little the spark, the ignited flame shall hopefully continue to burn bright for generations to come. **BO**



Group picture at the 2023 RCOST Conference



Opening Ceremony of the 2023 RCOST Conference

HTJS Orthopaedics: Maiden State Level Mock OSCE For Spot Examination

Written by
Dr Sasidaran Ramalingam
Orthopaedic Surgeon
HTJS, Negeri Sembilan

Postgraduate training is an important facet of our medical field that is often neglected as it not often accompanied with the glitz and glamour showered upon us in clinical practice.

However, to ensure there is an uninterrupted supply of the next generation of surgeons from our KKM's conveyor belt, the Orthopaedic Surgery Department of Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar, Seremban organized it's maiden state level mock Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) .

For those who are not in the know, the Conjoint Board of Orthopaedics in Malaysia has been actively involved in transforming the post graduate training for the next generation of surgeons to ensure its syllabus is in-keeping with the current times.

Selection processes have been fine tuned over the years and currently candidates who successfully clear the first stage of written examinations will be invited to

attend a second stage OSCE examination. Our mock OSCE program was geared to equip candidates with to the do's and don'ts of OSCE examination while giving them a taste of the stress of real life examinations. This was the brainchild of Dr Abdul Muttalib, the head of department of Orthopaedic Surgery in HTJS.

A committee comprising of Mr Salleh, Dr Denesh, Dr Manoosh and other department staff was set up to ensure smooth preparation and event flow. They worked extremely hard in making sure all aspects of this OSCE exams were looked into including early invitation to potential candidates, vetting questions, planning venue traffic flow and examiner selection. Their teamwork was vital in the overcoming of hurdles and the materialization of this program.

The two day event (5th & 12th January 2024) was attended by a total of 14 candidates from Hospital Tuanku Jaafar, Seremban, Hospital Tuanku Ampuan Najihah, Kuala Pilah, Hospital Port Dickson and UiTM.

Upon completion of the registration process and the customary

welcome speeches, the actual event started at 3.00 pm. The candidates were immediately put in a 'pressure-cooker' situation mimicking the actual OSCE examination – truly a testament to the saying by Michael Johnson " pressure is nothing more than shadows of great opportunity".

They were made to rotate in a total of 14 stations, each with duration of 5 minutes. Cooperation from all consultants, specialists, registrars and medical officers made this session a smooth session with no hiccoughs. Ushers, timer keeper, coordinators and traffic controllers worked in clockwise precision to ensure smooth transition and real life exam experience.

The event was an excellent avenue and opportunity for candidates to prepare and practice, and was also a 'modicum form of training the trainers' for future examiners. The massive success of this inaugural state-level event has provided us with air under our wings to soar higher. Under the guidance of Mr Muttalib, the department aims to emulate this success at a national level to ensure the dream towards becoming an orthopaedic surgeon becomes little less harder for our young doctors. ⁸⁰



After a successful event

The Triumph Of Conquering Mt Trus Madi: A Tale Of Teamwork And Adventure



The start was relatively easy and a pretty good warm up for the team. The newly constructed board walk made it so much easier - the old trail could be seen with steep rocky roots and narrow path. We took about an hour to reach the rest house.

It was a simple dormitory with bunk beds equipped with sleeping bags, bath towel and slippers yet it felt like heaven after a tiring walk. Taking a freezing cold shower took a lot of determination however it was a good way to cool ourselves down. After the lunch, it was free and easy for us and time was well spent by playing board games and lot of chit chatting - indeed a good catch-up and reunion of sorts with friends. After an early dinner we hit the sack at 8pm for the real challenge on the next day.

Early the next day, we got up at 1am and set off at 2:20am – the summit trail was right at the rest house.

After about two hours, we reached the 2000m distance marker. Unlike Mt Kinabalu's clear and easy path, the terrain had plenty of high steps and low while some segments were fixed with steep ladders. Certain areas even had near vertical sections and required a bit of rope climbing!

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Written By:
Dr Thanabalan A/L Tohkainathan
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Hospital Duchess of Kent, Sandakan

The idea of a team of orthopaedic surgeons venturing into the rugged terrains of Mt Trus Madi might seem odd, yet it epitomizes the spirit of resilience, teamwork, and determination.

Though we are accustomed to the sterile environment of operating theatres, we traded our surgical scrubs for trekking gear and embarked on an extraordinary journey that blended with passion for adventure.

Hiking Mount Trus Madi, especially for orthopaedic surgeons, can be a unique and exciting experience. Given the challenging terrain and physical demands of the trek, it was an opportunity for us to immerse ourselves in an environment that not only tested our physical endurance but also allowed us to witness the practical applications of our field in a real-world setting.

On the 3-4th March, team of 7 orthopaedic surgeons from both Hospital Queen Elizabeth and Hospital Duchess Of Kent led by our Advanced Trauma Consultant and Head Of Department Mr Gerry Maxmillan took the challenge of hiking the Mount Trus Madi, situated

in the heart of Malaysian Borneo which is the second-highest peak in Malaysia standing 2,642 meters above sea level.

The journey involved a two-day, one-night trek to the summit. On the first day, 3rd March 2024, after a 2 hour journey from Kota Kinabalu, we gathered at Tourist Information Centre at Tambunan for registration and continued another 1 hour journey via 4WD through rough terrain to Taman Kitingan where the starting point of Mt Trus Madi located.



Day 1 towards the resthouse



The team at the resthouse, and enjoying a game of chess while resting



The summit attack on Day 2

Low lying branches, fallen tree trunks and rocks were some of the obstacles along the track especially in the dark. What made it harder was the drizzle that turned into a thunderstorm halfway through the summit attack. We arrived at the viewing tower at 6.30am which was still 300m away from the submit. The view was beyond breathtaking. We were high above the clouds and the different formations and layering of the clouds made it so picturesque. The last 300m to the submit was through muddy path and we finally reached the official Trus Madi summit sign board. Though we missed the sunrise as it was already starting to get bright, yet the panoramic view was worth the effort.



Group picture on the summit

..... continue on page 21

Teamwork was the linchpin of this successful expedition. The reliance on each other's strengths and the camaraderie forged during the ascent mirrored the trust and collaboration required in our daily professional lives.

Beyond the physical challenges, we found solace in the simplicity of life on the mountain. Away from the hustle and bustle of our demanding professions, the expedition allowed us to reflect, recharge, and forge bonds that extended beyond the confines of the hospital walls.

The experience underscored the importance of holistic well-being, emphasizing the need for balance between professional commitments and personal pursuits. As we descended down the summit, we carried with us not only the memories of a challenging ascent but also the profound realization that sometimes, the greatest adventures unfold far beyond the boundaries of the operating room.

BO



The team after a successful expedition



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