

## EDITORIAL

# The 5th World Symposium for Lymphedema Surgery

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It gives us great pleasure to host the 5th World Symposium for Lymphedema Surgery (WSLS) 2016 here in Taoyuan, Taiwan. The WSLS serves a crucial role in the development and treatment of an extremely under recognized and inadequately treated debilitating disease—lymphedema. Lymphedema is a disease burden often associated with post oncological resection with lymph node clearance and subsequent radiation. It is a post-surgical sequela that has devastating effects on the quality of life of patients, yet progress in its treatment has reflected its disease burden worldwide.

We are extremely grateful to Stephen Sener, Editor-in-chief of Journal of Surgical Oncology (JSO) and section Editor Ketan Patel for their gentleness and open mindedness when approached to provide a supplement issue covering the latest updates in lymphedema treatment. There could be no better journal than the ever clinically relevant JSO when updates regarding recently developments in lymphedema surgery are published. The opportunity to provide updates in the latest clinical and basic science research updates in an oncological journal puts the treatment of lymphedema in the spotlight. It is with our sincerest hope that the treatment of lymphedema has improved by leaps and bounds and rapidly developing treatment strategies are beginning to demonstrate evidence based efficacy. Most importantly, quality of life has been shown to drastically improve in lymphedema patients undergoing lymphedema surgery. It is through this opportunity to publish in this esteemed journal that we hope that a greater audience can benefit from the latest knowledge and updates in lymphedema surgery.

We are pleased to report an outstanding turnout rate for this year's symposium with a total of 245 participants, 108 of which hailed from 27 countries and 137 locally. 69 staff including 20 research assistants and 7 secretaries provided the manpower required for the smooth running of the symposium. Amongst which 13 were faculty members and 6 were live surgery operators. Local clinical staff included 10 residents, 8 fellows, 10 therapists, 35 nurses and 21 medical students. During the live surgery, the operating room teams included 42 scrub, circulating and anesthetic nurses and 3 anesthesiologists with residents and fellows having the opportunity to provide on-table assistance as well.

This year at WSLS we received 44 free paper submissions and chose 20 for oral and 20 for poster presentation with 3 video presentations. The best oral presentation goes to Dr. Gemma Pons for her talk on preoperative planning of lymphovenous anastomosis with ICG-lymphography and Lympho-MRI. The best poster presentation was awarded to Dr. Akitatsu Hayashi for the topic of preoperative ultrasound detection technique of lymphatic vessels for LVA.

The live surgery cases this year were specially selected to reflect a wide range of mild to severe chronic lymphedematous conditions in patients that are often seen in oncology clinics. We are grateful that Stephen had taken time out of his busy schedule to observe the live surgeries performed here at 5th WSLS. World renowned experts in the field were invited to Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Taiwan to demonstrate and partake in stimulating discussions with regards to existing techniques and future areas for development. Expert commentators, Drs. Peter Neligan, Ketan Patel, Hung-Chi Chen and David Chang were present to facilitate the exchange of information between operators and participants during the live surgery. This ensured maximum learning and increased participation by both demonstrators and participants.

WSLS rotates through three continents—Europe, USA and Asia. It has a key role in serving as a platform to provide likeminded clinicians who have experience in the treatment of lymphedema to gather and exchange updates in their treatment strategy. WSLS as a society also has a greater role in serving as a beacon in increasing the exposure of lymphedema as a disease burden. It also highlights the possible treatment options that are gradually gaining popularity with increasing efficacy evident from both patient quality of life improvement and limb reduction rates. WSLS also has a role in educating both the public and clinicians alike as to the availability of such treatments in overcoming this debilitating disease.

As nominated president of WSLS, Dr. Isao Koshima plays an important role in realizing the society's goals. Coupled with his extensive experience in the treatment of lymphedema, we believe he is more than equipped to steer this society as a whole to greater heights, allowing us to brave the frontiers of lymphedema science and clinical treatment, which ultimately benefits patients all around the world.

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Received 3 July 2016; Accepted 7 July 2016

DOI 10.1002/jso.24383

Published online 29 July 2016 in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com).