

Experience Sharing in the RACS 2012 Younger Fellows Forum

On 3rd - 5th May, 2012, I represented the College to attend the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons' 2012 Younger Fellows Forum in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Forum impressed me very much not only because it was held at the Golden Palm Tree Resort at Selangor, one of the most famous resorts with natural luxury in the area, but also it has put together a meaningful two and a half day retreat including a mixture of discussions and interactions with young surgeon specialists, College leaders and external experts. I was astonished by the degree of emphasis the Australasian College had put on this Forum, that a set of Forum recommendations on various issues discussed will be submitted and considered during Council meetings. Two Councillors stayed the whole Forum and listened to young specialists giving their opinions on surgical training model, role of supervisors, preparation for practice, changing face of health care system, challenges in their practice, and so on.



Delegates attending the Younger Fellows Forum



Photo with Steve Leiman (Left), Chair of Younger Fellows Committee, and Paz Quiballo-Puyat (Middle), Younger Fellows Committee Secretariat

Although the Forum mainly focus on surgical practice in Australia and New Zealand, many issues are equally important and worth discussing in our locality: what is professionalism? Do young surgeons nowadays retain their rights to professional autonomy? How can the College assist and maintain all these?... Things are discussed not only at the interests of the College but also to a personal career level, that every young specialist should think about his/her plan or vision, what we want to achieve with our career and make decisions accordingly, the balance between work and life, how we can maintain the durability and satisfaction with our surgical career, and to avoid burnout..... I am sure all these can stir up much hot discussions too if our local young specialists have the opportunity to sit down together

and share what we are facing currently. Although it may be disappointing if one wants to find the answers in the Forum, it provided stimulating insights and a wider perspective of seeing things. In one session, we were asked to play the role of a hospital administrator and to help solve a critical problem the hospital is facing. After listening to different opinions and ideas, I realized that being an administrator has so much things to balance that an easy way out is virtually impossible!

Apart from intense discussions and debates, the Forum was colored with an interesting cooking competition in that each group had to make a 3 course menu within one hour. This "surgeon master chef" competition brought everyone close and echoed what we go through

everyday on operating tables: decision making, being the chief or the assistant, tackling errors and mistakes, and facing the outcome together! On the first night, the traditional Malaysian fire dance at the beach party was another highlight - surgeons dance and sing hand in hand! What a wonderful picture!



Group photo of RACS 2012 Younger Fellows Forum

On my way back to the airport, I keep asking myself: can this Forum be replicated in Hong Kong? Will the Councillors be interested to spend a weekend with our young specialists, who are working so hard throughout the year and dedicating their careers in the operating theatres? I am looking forward to seeing this happening soon!



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