New Perspectives

The first Global Spine Congress in Asia Pacific

“The Global Spine Congress 2013 marks a historic high point of AOSpine, an international academic community celebrating its 10th anniversary as an essential part of the AO Foundation. Technological innovation, cross-continent cooperation and knowledge exchange have been made possible all these years with our strong solidarity and one shared vision – promoting education and research in spine care, inspiring lifelong learning and improving patients’ lives.”

Jaime Quintero
President, AO Foundation

Following successful conferences in the USA and Spain, the Global Spine Congress 2013 took place at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wanchai. More than 1,000 spine care professionals from 82 countries participated in the three-day event.

As a meeting point for clinicians and researchers, the Global Spine Congress 2013 provided a full program of activities to allow interactive discussions on various topics of interest to the surgical community. Delegates shared their research output and clinical experience during the scientific sessions and ePoster presentations, whereas advanced issues and novel technologies were covered in the symposia moderated by the faculty and guest experts.

In accordance with the AOSpine vision of promoting spine care and knowledge collaboration on a global scale, the 2013 event was the first Global Spine Congress to be held in the Asia Pacific region. The record-breaking numbers of participants and abstract submissions, the consistently high quality of research presentations, and the dynamic AOSpine community all contributed to the great success of this event.

“This Global Spine Congress has been very successful and the largest ever. But what has impressed me the most is that we have attracted both clinicians and researchers, achieving our aim of bringing people from different disciplines together. In terms of promoting spine care, this model presents the best opportunity for the future.”

Kenneth Cheung
Local Host, Global Spine Congress 2013
“With this, our third Global Spine Congress, we’ve extended the international aspect of the event to reflect that AOSpine is the world’s largest organization of spine care professionals with a presence in more than 60 countries. We’ve come together to enjoy leading-edge presentations, discuss ePosters, attend lunchtime lectures and local-language sessions, and participate in symposia hosted by some very important societies from India, Korea, Japan, China, and the US. We’ve broken our own records too, receiving hundreds more high-quality papers than at our last Congress in Barcelona and welcoming more than 1,000 participants from 82 countries.”

Germán Ochoa
Co-Chairperson, Global Spine Congress 2013

“Following the first two editions of the Global Spine Congress, the GSC 2013 in Hong Kong was a tremendous success. It offered a unique platform for international collaboration and continuing education, and actively brought together different generations of surgeons from all over the world for the advancement of spine care. I was particularly pleased with the record-breaking number of participants this year, contributing not only to the exceptional quality of scientific input but also to a stimulating exchange of views between researchers and clinicians and the global sharing of in-depth knowledge.”

Jeffrey Wang
Co-Chairperson, Global Spine Congress 2013
GSC 2013 Participant Profile

The Global Spine Congress—a truly multi-disciplinary event with global representation—attracted over 1,000 participants, a record-breaking number.

Regional representation

- Europe: 48%
- Middle East: 29%
- Africa: 7%
- North America: 9%
- Latin America: 5%
- Asia Pacific: 2%
A Record-breaking Scientific Program

Bringing clinicians and scientists together, the Global Spine Congress 2013 provided a rare opportunity for spine surgeons and researchers to exchange ideas and knowledge through scientific sessions, symposia and an ePoster exhibition.

A record number of abstracts was submitted for the Congress. These were blind reviewed and peer reviewed by a panel of 86 experts to select the best papers for presentation. Over 1,000 spine care professionals, more than at any previous Global Spine Congress, attended to explore various aspects of spine surgery.

Scientific sessions—Peer-reviewed abstracts were presented by more than 235 oral abstract submitters, followed by interactive audience discussions.

The topics were based on:
- Basic science
- Biomechanics
- Nonoperative clinical treatments
- Novel technologies
- Surgery—cervical
- Surgery—lumbar degenerative
- Surgery—deformity
- Spinal imaging
- Spinal trauma

Symposia—Where faculty members gave lectures and answered questions from the audience on:
- Advanced cervical reconstruction
- Advanced management of adult deformity
- Motion preservation
- Advanced management of spinal trauma
- Minimally invasive spine surgery—novel technologies

Guest Symposia—Where invited societies and experts hosted a symposium on:
- Complex surgical procedures for deformities and tumors (Chinese Orthopaedic Society)
- Complex cervical spine cases (spine experts from Korea)
- Treatment of osteoporotic fractures (spine experts from Japan)
- Update on treatment of spinal infections (Association of Spine Surgeons of India)
- Degenerative spondylolisthesis (Lumbar Spine Research Society, USA)
Special Guests
Major Spine Societies contribute to Global Spine Congress

AOSpine was honored to welcome guests from the **US-based Lumbar Spine Research Society**, the **Chinese Orthopaedic Association** and the **Association of Spine Surgeons of India**, as well as **spine experts from Japan and Korea**. Each group hosted a symposium in which spine-related issues relevant to their contexts were raised and discussed. LSRS, for example, hosted a symposium on degenerative spondylolisthesis that drew an impressive audience.

“It’s very exciting to be here. This is my first Global Spine Congress and I’m just overwhelmed by the attendance, the innovation, and especially the opportunity to learn from experienced surgeons from around the world. Meeting new colleagues and learning new techniques are of such great value, I’ll certainly return for the Santiago Congress.”

**Jeffrey S Fischgrund**
President-Elect, Lumbar Spine Research Society

“It is an honor to be included in such an influential event. The Congress has been a great success and I hope that it can continue to be focused on developing countries in the future, especially here in Asia Pacific where we really appreciate the opportunity for education and interaction at this high level.”

**Yan Wang**
President, Chinese Orthopaedic Association

“This Congress has been a fantastic experience, both because of the extremely high quality of the scientific content and because it’s been so well planned in terms of the range of presentations and exhibits and the logistics. At the end of the day, I’m returning home exhilarated by what I’ve learnt and with fond memories of Hong Kong.”

**Saumyajit Basu**
Executive Committee Member, Association of Spine Surgeons of India
ePosters

More than 200 ePosters of abstract submitters could be consulted electronically in an easy-to-access digital environment.

"The scientific sessions perfectly reflect what our international Congress is all about. Here we have a lot of spine care professionals from Asia and around the world, united under the AOSpine brand to share their experiences and what it means to work in different cultures and in economies at different stages of development."

Luiz Vialle
Past Chairperson, AOSpine International

“This edition of the Global Spine Congress marks a new phase in the development of international collaboration within the AOSpine community. It offered a wonderful opportunity for surgeons and researchers from various cultures to share their clinical experiences, research output as well as scientific insights in a three-day event with a carefully planned pre-course. Professional training is of the utmost need nowadays in developing economies of the Asia-Pacific region as many of our spine surgeons are handling huge numbers of critical and challenging cases. At this year’s Global Spine Congress our colleagues had the chance to update themselves, learn from leading experts of the field and exchange information with other fellow surgeons in an engaging, interactive manner.”

Bryan Ashman
Chairperson, AOSpine Asia Pacific
“Our Congress is a truly global event that provides space for people from every part of the world to communicate their ideas and research. Indeed, I think AOSpine is the only organization capable of encouraging such investigation while also covering the whole spectrum of education. Each Global Spine Congress has had more international support than the last and we are becoming one of the best conferences in the spine field.”

Roberto Postigo
Local Host, Global Spine Congress 2015

"More and more today, we’re engaged in collaborative learning and information sharing. We want to get together with international colleagues who bring different ideas and points of view, but such cooperation demands understanding and trust. There is no better organization than AOSpine to enable this because our community is built on these values. Our relationships are our strength.”

Stefano Boriani
Faculty Member, AOSpine

"I enjoyed this morning’s Best Papers presentation. It was a highly appreciable set of papers with a good mixture of physiology and biomechanics as well as retrospective clinical data."

Alexander Aichmair
Hospital for Special Surgery, USA

"For me, participation in the GSC this year in Hong Kong proved to be very interesting and useful again. It was interesting to hear about the latest studies and thoughts of colleagues all around the world on topics I less frequently come across and it was reassuring and useful to hear talks on things relevant to my everyday practice. It was also a great pleasure and honor for me to be selected to present my work in the Best Papers section. I certainly look forward to the next Global Spine Congress in Chile."

Tibor Csákány
National Center for Spinal Diseases, Hungary
Networking with Peers from Around the Globe

Values do not necessarily collide when East meets West, as professionalism and hospitality are both universal. In the words of Carlos Tucci, Chairperson of the AOSpine Community Development Commission: “Our values go beyond cultural differences and vast distances. The unique opportunity to meet and share the friendly atmosphere at the Global Spine Congress in Hong Kong with people from an amazing variety of countries perfectly translates the spirit of AOSpine as the unique global community of spine specialists.”

The welcome reception and exhibition opening, which took place on the evening of April 4 in the Exhibition Hall, was an ideal opportunity for mingling and networking. Delegates were warmly welcomed by Global Spine Congress 2013 Co-Chairpersons Germán Ochoa and Jeffrey Wang and—as is traditional in Hong Kong—enjoyed a sensational lion dance performance, presented on this occasion by famous local troupe Ha Kwok Cheung Dragon and Lion Dance.

10th Anniversary of AOSpine

This year marks AOSpine’s tenth anniversary. The organization is approaching its second decade in a spirit of reflection and with a renewed determination to remain relevant and attractive to all generations of surgeons.

“AOSpine is a great organization, a community of like-minded professionals who are active in all disciplines of spine surgery. We originally aimed to build an organization for teaching our knowledge, but over the last 10 years our community has successfully expanded AOSpine’s focus into new and exciting areas in Research and events such as the Global Spine Congress.”

Carlos Tucci
Chairperson, AOSpine Community Development Commission
Pre-Congress Course
Training for Young Spine Care Professionals

Designed specifically to support young surgeons from the Asia Pacific region, the "Fundamentals in spinal deformity care" Pre-Congress Course brought together a range of spine care professionals with differing levels of expertise and experience for knowledge exchange. Leading experts in spine deformity presented a series of lectures and in-depth case presentations on April 3, covering a range of specific issues, and engaged in lively panel discussions. Close to 250 young surgeons attended.

According to Manabu Ito, who co-chaired the course with Sigurd Berven, the content and speakers were carefully chosen to meet the needs of younger spine surgeons in Asia Pacific.

"Given that the Congress was being hosted in Hong Kong, we knew that most of our participants would be from China and the wider Asia Pacific. Our aim was to give them access to famous doctors from the United States and Europe, which they would not normally have, and to introduce basic concepts as well as controversial topics," Dr Ito said.

Yong Qiu, a faculty member involved in organizing the Pre-Congress Course, agreed: "We chose to focus on spine deformity because this is such a challenging area, especially for young surgeons. Also, we have a great many severe spine deformity patients here in Asia. In other regions, such as Europe, America and, indeed, here in Hong Kong, well-organized school screening programs detect many scoliosis patients before severe curvature occurs. But the large number of severe cases in Mainland China, Korea, and in particular India, was an important reason for us to choose spine deformity as the theme of this Pre-Congress Course."

Manabu Ito
Co-Chairperson, Pre-Congress Course
Throughout the intensive day of study, experienced surgeons generously shared their successes and mistakes.

Manabu Ito said: “I shared my mistakes to let our younger surgeons know that, even as an expert, I have made mistakes and that they can learn from these. The reason I’m here at the Congress is to learn something from others. And this kind of interaction—where we share our mistakes, even if they are small—is important. We should learn from each other to provide a better medical service for patients. The reaction from the audience was really nice and we had very interactive discussions.”

Yong Qiu was also pleased by the level of audience participation, but he believes that adding more time for participants to discuss their cases would be of great value. “Perhaps when we next organize pre-meeting courses like this, we could leave more time for the participants to explain their experience and even their mistakes. Mistakes are very important; my mistake is your experience—a mistake you will not repeat. So while our participants were actively and dynamically joining in the discussions, they didn’t have the chance to present their own cases for open discussion,” he said.

Other organizers and speakers, as well as participants, praised the success of this pioneering event and expressed their hope that similar sessions will be held again.

Lawrence Lenke, whose presentation on adolescent idiopathic scoliosis was very well received, commented: “The deformity pre-course was a resounding success. With nearly 400 attendees, the course covered multiple topics on both pediatric and adult spinal deformity and allowed for excellent discussions that kept the auditorium full and lively until the very end of the program. I think we’re going to see an increase in this sort of formal training to support spinal surgeons to specialize in deformity conditions.”
The Awards

The Global Spine Congress 2013 culminated in an Awards Ceremony on April 6, 2013. Three awards were presented, namely the Best Clinical Paper Award and the Best ePoster Award—both sponsored by Siemens—as well as the AOSpine Europe Young Researcher Award.

Best Clinical Paper Award

Presented by: Germán Ochoa and Jeffrey Wang, Co-Chairpersons, Global Spine Congress 2013
Awarded to: Michael Fehlings, University of Toronto (Canada)

For the Clinical Paper: A clinical prediction rule to determine outcomes in patients with cervical spondylotic myelopathy undergoing surgical treatment: data from the prospective, multicentre AOSpine North America CSM study

“it’s a real honor for me to accept this award on behalf of our CSM North America Clinical Trials Team. it’s a particular honor because the Global Spine Congress truly is the premier academic spine meeting internationally. It’s also very gratifying and fitting, since our clinical trial was supported by AOSpine. Thank you.”

Michael Fehlings
Best ePoster Award

Presented by: Germán Ochoa and Jeffrey Wang, Co-Chairpersons, Global Spine Congress 2013
Awarded to: Huan Wang, Shengjing Hospital of China Medical University, China
For the Clinical Paper: Analysis of variations of vascular structures around the posterior arch of atlas using computed tomography angiography

“This was a wonderful congress for me. I regarded it as an excellent opportunity to exchange my ideas and workings with the surgeons, researchers, and also industry professionals from different countries. Certainly I have learned much from their lectures and ePosters at the same time. At this congress I also noticed a gratifying trend that an increasing number of surgeons and researchers are paying more attention to clinical issues. I am looking forward now to attending the following congress in China next year (the World Forum for Spine Congress in Xi’an, in May 2014)!”

Huan Wang

AOSpine Europe Young Researcher Award

Presented by: Giuseppe Barbagallo, Research Officer, AOSpine Europe Board
Awarded to: Gianluca Vadalà, Campus Bio-Medico, University of Rome (Italy)
For the Clinical Paper: Mesenchymal Stem Cell Injection in Degenerated Intervertebral Discs: cell leakage may induce osteophytes formation

“I’m really honored to receive this award after many years in the field of spinal care. I’m sure it will improve not only my CV, but also my enthusiasm for our research. I thank AOSpine for encouraging more young researchers to engage in basic and clinical research in this field. As young surgeons, we need to drive innovation. This is something AOSpine has been doing strongly over the past 10 years and the Global Spine Congress is an indication of its commitment and success.”

From left to right: Giuseppe Barbagallo, Gianluca Vadalà
Sponsors and Exhibitors

The third Global Spine Congress was supported by two platinum sponsors, DePuy Synthes and Siemens, as well as four gold sponsors: Baxter, Haag-Streit Surgical, Medtronic and SpineArt.

Together with these six major sponsors, 19 other exhibitors, all renowned firms and organizations in the field of spine care, showcased new products and shared information in the Exhibition Hall located directly adjacent to the plenary theater for the Congress. Throughout the Congress, the area was filled with enthusiastic visitors interested in the latest technologies and professional networking.

Instructional Course Lectures (ICLs): One-hour lunch sessions were held daily during the Congress to allow selected sponsors and exhibitors to showcase their novel products and technologies to interested delegates. DePuy Synthes, Deuk, Mazor, Siemens and Signus were featured in the ICL series at the Global Spine Congress 2013.

Sponsors:
Exhibitors
The Event in Words:

“This has been a very interesting Congress. We've had more than 1,000 participants coming from different countries and continents, and we've heard very important news and interesting reports on different topics in current spine diseases and spine treatments. Overall, I think it's been a good opportunity for everybody just to broaden knowledge and keep up to date with the most recent treatments we can offer our patients.”

Giuseppe Barbagallo
Faculty Member, Global Spine Congress 2013

“This was my first Global Spine Congress and I am very impressed. Not only was it held in Hong Kong, which is a very nice city, but it was very informative. I’ve attended a lot of company-specific spine meetings in the United States and Europe, but this Congress is different in that it is very independent. In my opinion, this is a good thing.”

Jae Taek Hong
The Catholic University of Korea—St Vincent’s Hospital, Korea

“This has been a really good Congress, with many topics to discuss. We've seen traditional techniques and new techniques that are just now beginning to be developed in different parts of the world. We've heard different opinions and learnt about the experiences of colleagues from different countries and the results they've achieved. It's been great.”

Andrés Leiva
Clínica Alemana/Hospital Clínico Mutual de Seguridad, Universidad del Desarrollo, Chile

“This is a very good Congress and I enjoyed it. I got the opportunity to present, to be asked questions, and to discuss my ideas with other surgeons. Actually, I am a junior surgeon, having practiced spine surgery for a few years only. Participating in the Global Spine Congress 2013 allowed me to learn from senior experts and widen my knowledge of spine surgery.”

Philip Cheung
Kwong Wah Hospital, Hong Kong

“It’s my honor to be here at this Congress. As we all know, every surgeon has their own limits as well as their own expertise. At the Global Spine Congress, we have the opportunity to learn from experts from different fields, which is very beneficial to our clinical practice. The most important thing, in my opinion, is that we can learn about research methodologies and results in fields related to spine surgery. For many surgeons, especially those clinicians who haven’t had the opportunity to conduct research yet, this is an eye-opening experience.”

Chien-Long Chen
Lotung Poh-Ai Hospital, Taiwan

“It’s been a very exciting Congress. I’ve really enjoyed it. The Congress was led by experts from all over the world who covered all aspects of spine surgery, from deformity to minimally invasive surgery. My colleagues and I are grateful that we could come here to learn about advanced technologies that we can bring back to Malaysia to benefit our patients. We also had a presenter in the ePoster sessions this year, Dr Sallehuddin Abdullah.”

Ahmad Norshairid HJ Zahari
Hospital Sungai Buloh, Malaysia

“This Congress was very instructive and useful for me. So many doctors from so many countries were gathered here to discuss spine surgery and multidisciplinary treatments. And every country has different treatments and different ways of thinking. This is very interesting and impressed me a great deal.”

Ryuichi Takemasa
Kochi Medical School, Japan

“I’m very happy that this Congress is being held in Hong Kong, which is a very central location in Asia. It gives us a chance to experience an international congress and this is important for our region, as a focus of global development in the coming century.”

Sallehuddin Abdullah
Hospital Sungai Buloh, Malaysia
AOSpine—the leading global academic community for innovative education and research in spine care, inspiring lifelong learning and improving patients’ lives.

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