

Prof. Steven Schwaitzberg: the future of laparoscopic surgery is bright

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The 15th World Congress of Endoscopic Surgery (WCES 2016) in conjunction with Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgeons of Asia (ELSA 2016) and 15th Chinese National Congress of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgery (CSLES 2016) was held successfully from Nov. 9th to Nov. 12th in Suzhou, China. Gathering international experts from more than 60 countries, the congress was quite a fantastic feast for surgeons all around the world in the laparoscopic and endoscopic field.

In the congress, Prof. Steven Schwaitzberg from University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences had brought an excellent speech on “Minor Ductal Injuries Are Not So Minor”, earning a lot attention. Seizing this opportunity, the Editorial Office of *Annals of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgery (ALES)* was honored to have an interview with Prof. Schwaitzberg (*Figure 1*).

During the interview, Prof. Schwaitzberg briefly told us why he choose to speech on the Minor Ductal Injuries, which were actually profound for the patients because if not manage well, it will cause deadly consequence.

As the principal investigator on a national prospective clinical trial of “natural orifice” versus conventional laparoscopic cholecystectomy, Prof. Schwaitzberg also shared some information of this trial as well as inspiration.

When mentioning about the future of device development, Prof. Schwaitzberg thought the future is bright. Laparoscopic surgery will continue to cooperate more computer-assisted technology, more images based technology and at the same time, will try to build new energy device to bring the cost down.

Speaking of what skill a successful surgeon should possess, Prof. Schwaitzberg divided it into two parts—brain, which needs hard-working study and hands, which need extensive practice. Prof. Schwaitzberg also shared with us the research in his lab about the brain changes when learning skill and becoming experts.

At the end of the interview, Prof. Schwaitzberg shared with us his way of updating latest progress. Moreover, Prof.



Figure 1 Picture with Prof. Schwaitzberg.

Schwaitzberg also told us his way of balancing the clinical work and personal life—be well organized as well as build a good team as no man is an island (*Figure 2*)!

Interview questions

- (I) This afternoon your speech topic is “Minor Ductal Injuries Are Not So Minor”, quite an interesting topic. Here would you kindly summarize some main points of your speech? Why minor ductal injuries are not so minor?
- (II) We know that you’re the principal investigator on a national prospective clinical trial of “natural orifice” versus conventional laparoscopic cholecystectomy. Here would you share with us some information of this trial?
- (III) One of your research focuses is on device development. Here would you like to tell us what do you think about the future development of laparoscopic devices? As the technology as well will change the way of surgery, what do you think the changes in laparoscopic surgery



Figure 2 Interview with Prof. Schwartzberg (1).

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with the device's development?

- (IV) Another of your research interest is about the skill acquisition in minimally invasive surgery. In your opinion, to be a successful surgeon in the laparoscopic field, what skills or knowledge you think a surgeon should possess? How to obtain this skill?
- (V) You're not just a doctor but also will do research, and also have academic responsibility. You also have your personal life. Then here would you like to tell us how do you balance your clinical work and personal life?
- (VI) How do you update yourself with the latest progress?

Expert introduction

Steven D. Schwartzberg, MD, FACS is Chairman of the Department of Surgery at the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and Professor of Surgery and Biomedical Informatics. Prof. Schwartzberg also serves as the Medical Director, Surgical Program Development, at Great Lakes Health.

A graduate of Johns Hopkins University, Prof. Schwartzberg received his MD from Baylor College of Medicine and a MA (Hon) from Harvard in 2014. He completed his surgical residency [1981–1986] at the Baylor Affiliated Hospitals, a fellowship in infectious disease [1980–1981] at the Methodist Hospital and in pediatric trauma [1986–1987] at the Pediatric Trauma Institute, Floating Hospital for Children.

He previously served as the Chief of Surgery at the Cambridge Health Alliance where he was Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School. He served [1990–1991] with the 365th Evacuation Hospital, US Military Medical

Complex in Seeb, Oman. He has held numerous leadership roles at the New England Medical Center including Chairman of the Institutional Review Board, Medical Director of the Center for Minimally Invasive Surgery, Director of the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, and Director of Surgical Research where he was Associate Professor of Surgery, Head and Neck surgery and Engineering.

Prof. Schwartzberg has won numerous awards including the American College of Surgeons 2010 Health Policy Scholar Award, Computerworld/National Smithsonian Honors 21st Century Laureate Achievement Award [2003], and many awards for teaching excellence. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and currently serves on the Board of Governors. He is Past President of the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons and currently serves as Chairman of the Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery Committee.

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Footnote

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