

Dr. Le Nguyen Uyen Chi: surgical education with ASOHNS

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Editor's note

Dr. Le Nguyen Uyen Chi was a visiting scholar studying in Sydney. She is very thankful to her tutor, Professor Richard Harvey, the Editor-in-Chief of *Australian Journal of Otolaryngology (AJO)*.

Surgical education with ASOHNS

Dr. Le Nguyen Uyen Chi was selected as the 2017 recipient of the ASOHNS International Scholarship for OHNS Surgical Education.

In her application, she stated that her goal was to improve the quality of endoscopic skull base surgery at the Cho Ray Hospital where she works as an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist. The Hospital is a 2,640-bed general hospital in southern Vietnam and is also a medical institution where undergraduates and graduates study and perform a variety of clinical practices. Dr. Uyen Chi wants to learn the latest clinical practices so that she can form an endoscopic skull base team, then organise courses in order to spread knowledge to others.

Each day, more than 300 patients visit the Department of Ear, Nose and Throat for treatment. A significant number of patients have head, neck and skull base tumours, which pose particularly difficult challenges in ENT as this field is not developed in Vietnam due to lack of knowledge and training. The Department also receives many of these cases from other hospitals, where the available technology and knowledge have not yet allowed them to provide effective treatment.

Dr. Uyen Chi is also a lecturer at medical school, teaching not only the doctors in her hospital but also those from different hospitals. She gives lectures and guidance to students in numerous hands-on courses and continuing medical education. She believes continuing training in the latest technologies and techniques is essential for proper patient care.

“If we don't do the research today nor continue to upgrade our knowledge and skills in our specialty, in 10 years' time we will still be managing patients' needs in

the same way as today,” she said. “That's why the learning opportunities provided to me through this Scholarship are important in updating my knowledge to improve patient outcomes in the future. Currently, endoscopic dissection courses in my country are held exclusively by overseas specialists. However, these specialists are only able to visit once or twice a year and for no more than a couple of days at a time. There is never even enough room for every young resident to attend. Basic courses like these are crucial for trainees. Therefore, it is necessary to have local Vietnamese instructors for these courses so that they can be held more frequently.” Dr. Uyen Chi is confident that, with proper training, Vietnamese doctors can also effectively perform this surgery.

Cho Ray Hospital has great potential to form a successful endoscopic skull base team due to enthusiastic support from well-trained neurosurgeons as well as other related specialists.

“We have performed some surgeries in collaboration with these neurosurgeons and achieved some promising initial results, which we reported at an ear, nose, and throat conference in Vietnam,” she said.

“However, we need official training and continuous updates of our knowledge and skills to truly develop in this field and deliver better treatment to our patients.”

Dr. Uyen Chi understands the important role of education in clinical practice and believes it is her mission to bring this education to Vietnam, where it is so desperately needed.

“In order to accomplish this, I plan to build an endoscopic skull base team, then organise courses to disseminate our knowledge and techniques so that other rhinologists can perform surgeries at their hospitals.

“It is my hope that in doing so, endoscopic sinus and skull base surgery in Vietnam can be greatly improved within the next 5 years.”

Dr. Le Nguyen Uyen Chi began her itinerary by attending Prof. PJ Wormald's FESS course in Adelaide from 23–26 November, then travelled to Sydney. She spent time with Prof. Richard Harvey in Sydney, as an observer at the various hospitals at which he works. Dr. Uyen Chi then travelled to Brisbane to attend the ASOHNS Queensland



Figure 1 Dr. Uyen Chi and Prof. Richard Harvey at Macquarie University Hospital.



Figure 2 Dr. Uyen Chi in Vietnam.

Temporal Bone Course run by Drs. Andrew Lomas and Andrew Chang from 8–9 December, after which she returned home to Vietnam (course links below).

Dr. Uyen Chi wrote in response to her experience to Prof. Harvey:

“I have learnt a lot from you in the theatre as well as in the clinic. I am really impressed with the operating theatre set-up. The Mayo table and all instruments should be in front of the surgeon for the convenient. As for me, it is well-organized, reasonable, visible and time saving. Moreover, I can well understand and feel so confident about Lothrop procedure. We can approach to the floor of the frontal sinus after 10 min drilling. When I heard about the floor of the

frontal sinus, I suddenly understood nearly all about this procedure. I no more worry about anterior cranial fossa because it is far-away from the drilling. Your guidance and your performance in detail made it easy for me. I learnt some tricks in dealing with narrow access to make it more space, observed the fastest full house FESS I have ever seen. At the clinic, I am impressed and surprised with the misdiagnosis between Rhinitis and Sinusitis that leading to the mistreatment which give me a reminder during my practice. The steroid injection in scar at olfactory mucosa, Botox in myoclonus cases are so nice. My 2-week observationship is so memorable, I wish I could learn more from you.”

“It was an honor for me to have a chance to study at your place. What I have learnt from you is invaluable for my career. I cannot express how much I would like to say thank to you and all your supports during my trip in Sydney. Please find attached the photo at Macquarie University Hospital (*Figures 1,2*)”.

The link to the 2018 application form and information:

<http://asohns.org.au/about-us/outreach/international-scholarship-for-ohns-surgical-education-2018>.

Adelaide ESS course:

<http://www.adelaidesinussurgery.com/>.

Sydney ESS course:

<http://stvincentsent.com.au/index.php/courses/nose-and-sinus/>;

<http://sydneyentclinic.com/richard-harvey/courses/endoscopic-sinus-skull-base-surgery/>.

Enquires for observership with Prof. Harvey: Margi Griffiths. Research Development Assistant, St Vincent’s Private Hospital, 406 Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010, Australia. Email: margi.griffiths@svha.org.au.

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None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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