

## FEATURED INTERVIEW

# Welcome to the 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Lung Cancer: interview with Prof. Kwun Fong

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The 15<sup>th</sup> IASLC World Conference on Lung Cancer is going to be held from October 27 to October 30, 2013, at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. Building on the success of previous conferences, the theme of the 2013 meeting 'Next-Generation Lung Cancer Care' will underpin the need for collaboration and cooperation in producing the best possible outcomes in the treatment of lung cancer. It is also a reflection of the nature of the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer which welcomes and encourages the participation of individuals from a wide range of professional backgrounds in its Conferences.

Physicians, nurses, other clinicians, researcher and scientists in the lung cancer field and those interested in any aspect of thoracic oncology are most welcome to attend this conference. It is only through an exchange of the widest variety of research that we can offer the best treatment options to benefit our patients.

As a key platform for academic communication between experts in related field, the *Journal of Thoracic Disease* is going to publish a focus issue dedicated to lung cancer which will be available at the conference. Our guest editor for this focus issue is Prof. Kwun Fong, the co-president of 15<sup>th</sup> IASLC World Conference on Lung Cancer. "This issue will focus on the latest and most topical advances in lung cancer research and care focusing on developments that have the highest potential to change practice or policy. It will focus on work with generalizability and applicability to help our patients in a format that meets the high standards expected by our medical readers," said Prof. Fong.

The *Journal of Thoracic Disease* is honored to have an interview with Prof. Kwun Fong for a preview of the 15<sup>th</sup> IASLC World Conference on Lung Cancer and the focus issue on lung cancer.

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**Figure 1.** Snapshot of Professor Kwun Fong.

### Introduction

Professor Kwun Fong, MBBS, PhD, is a Thoracic and Sleep Physician at The Prince Charles Hospital, Brisbane and a professor with the School of Medicine at the University of Queensland.

As the Clinical Manager of the Pulmonary Malignancy Unit in the Department of Thoracic Medicine, he practices general thoracic and sleep medicine with a special interest in thoracic malignancies. In addition to his involvement in laboratory based molecular and genomic research and translational trials of diagnosis and treatment in lung cancer and lung diseases, he was the inaugural Chair of the Australasian Lung Cancer Trials Group and serves as Chair of the Australian Lung Foundation's Lung Cancer Consultative Group, and was the Chair of Central Program Committee of Asian Pacific Society for Respiriology, the Co-Chair of 15<sup>th</sup> IASLC World Conference on Lung Cancer and Deputy Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Thoracic Disease* (Figure 1).

## Interview

### ***Could you share with us the recent progress in lung cancer research?***

Prof. Fong: For the first time in many years there has been progress against this disease which is a huge disease burden all around the world. Improvements due to research start from prevention, smoking cessation, identification of lung carcinogens such as diesel, improved diagnostic and staging processes, improved conventional treatments and of course the development of molecular targeted therapies and effective palliative and supportive care.

### ***The annual World Conference on Lung Cancer is hosted by International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC). What is the very core of the International Association for IASLC? What kind of role does it play in the lung cancer research?***

Prof. Fong: The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) is the only global organization dedicated to the study of lung cancer. Founded in 1974, the association's membership includes more than 3,500 lung cancer specialists in 80 countries. IASLC members work to enhance the understanding of lung cancer among scientists, members of the medical community and the public. IASLC publishes the Journal of Thoracic Oncology, a valuable resource for medical specialists and scientists who focus on the detection, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. Its mission is to embrace the study of the etiology, epidemiology, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and all other aspects of lung cancer and other thoracic malignancies, to provide education and information about lung cancer and other thoracic malignancies to IASLC members, to the medical community at large, and to the public, to use all available means to eliminate lung cancer and other thoracic malignancies as a health threat for the individual patient and throughout the world.

### ***As the co-president of the 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Lung Cancer, could you tell us what the spotlight of this year conference will be? What about the composition of specialists invited to this year's conference?***

Prof. Fong: The new more compact Conference schedule with three full Conference days also features more Abstract Sessions than ever before. This will cater for the increasing number of abstract submissions and give more abstract submitters the chance to present their work in Oral or Mini Oral Sessions. For the first time there will also be the inaugural Chinese Alliance against Lung Cancer session. The specialists will include lung cancer clinicians such as surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pulmonologists, radiologists, pathologists, epidemiologists, basic research scientists, nurses, allied health professional and advocacy members.

### ***What are the goals for this year's conference? Will there be any reports about the latest related trials in the conference?***

Prof. Fong: The learning objectives include: (I) Recommend

effective tobacco control and smoking cessation; (II) Identify effective global lung cancer prevention strategies; (III) Define risk stratification for screening and early detection; (IV) Identify optimal biopsy and molecular testing strategies to support individualized care; (V) Apply cost-effective imaging strategies for diagnosis, staging and follow-up; (VI) Describe best practice multi-disciplinary management and identify barriers to its implementation; (VII) Identify emerging technologies relevant to recent advances in treatment for lung cancer; (VIII) Define optimal symptom relief and palliation strategies for thoracic cancers; (IX) Practice survivorship and support strategies.

There are different sessions including original work such as trial data. Late Breaking Privileges will be allowed for randomized Phase II and III study, large observation study of over 1,000 patients and major biological discovery or breakthrough recently accepted but not yet published in a top-ranked journal.

### ***We noticed that one of the goals for this year's conference is to "Appreciate emerging technologies and recent advances in treatment for lung cancer". Would you like to share with your opinion about it?***

Prof. Fong: Despite intensive research efforts to discover more effective treatment regimens, the survival rates for lung cancer remain low. However, data from lung cancer research continue to emerge, with the identification of genetic mutations and the developments of molecularly targeted agents that can help usher in the era of personalized lung cancer treatment. The World Conference on Lung Cancer provides a forum for the dissemination of the latest research findings to help physicians and researchers in lung cancer remain current on the optimum treatment approaches for individuals with lung cancer, as well as on issues related to prevention, early detection, imaging, staging according to the new IASLC staging system, and palliative care. The World Conference also addresses the importance of tobacco control in reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with lung cancer.

### ***This conference is divided into several sessions. What will be expected for these sessions?***

Prof. Fong: Educational Sessions offer multidisciplinary exploration of focused topics related to thoracic oncology. Particular care will be taken to ensure that these sessions are integrated in terms of such issues as surgical, radiation, and medical oncology; symptom management; health services research; global perspectives; and pathology.

Highlights of the Day Sessions in these sessions experts in the field will summarize the essence of selected abstracts of clinical/translational research presented on the previous day. For Interactive Grand Rounds Sessions, active participation of audience is expected using interactive keypad technology. After a brief introductory lecture, a typical case scenario will be presented for discussion with a series of questions for the audience to answer. Meet the Expert

(MTE) Sessions provide open discussion between recognized experts and session attendees, with an opportunity for attendees to interact personally with the experts. In Mini Symposia Sessions, reports on the latest scientific results, controversial issues, and emerging concepts will be presented. Experts in the field place the studies in the appropriate context based on the strength of the evidence and critically discuss the conclusions in terms of their applicability to clinical practice. In Plenary Sessions, several lectures which are of particular interest, importance, and relevance to attendees, will be presented. Top-scoring abstracts selected by the Scientific Committee will be presented in the Presidential Symposium.

***Individualized treatment is getting more and more attention in cancer treatment. What in your opinion is the principle of individualized treatment for patient with lung cancer? In which way can we make efforts to promote the development of individualized therapy for lung cancer?***

Prof. Fong: Individualized treatment requires the collaboration by clinicians of different specialties contributing and helping the patient during their lung cancer journey. It seeks to improve outcomes by providing treatment based on important patient and cancer characteristics. It is not so much the development of a brand new medication for each new patient, but really basing effective treatments on the knowledge of the specific features of the individual and their cancer, in other words providing precision medicine. Indeed, the concept is not new, purportedly practised many years ago in China, testifying to its importance.

***The differentiation in stage, tumor types, etc. (TNM staging) often affects the treatment regimen a clinical oncologist takes. How to balance all this factors for individualized treatment?***

Prof. Fong: Accurate staging is key to effective treatment for our patients, also entry to clinical trials, comparison of studies and prognostication. The IASLC Lung Cancer Retrospective Staging Project culminated in a series of recommendations to the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and to the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) regarding the seventh edition of the tumor, node, and metastasis (TNM) classification for lung cancer. In May 2009, the International Staging Committee of the IASLC launched a Prospective Lung Cancer Staging Project designed to assess the validity of each component of T, N, and M, and other factors relevant to lung cancer staging and prognosis.

***We are honored to have you organize a Focus Issue on lung cancer for Journal of Thoracic Disease, which will be promoted in this year's World Conference on Lung Cancer. Could you give a brief introduction on this special issue?***

Prof. Fong: This issue will focus on the latest and most topical advances in lung cancer research and care focusing on developments

that have the highest potential to change practice or policy. It will focus on work with generalizability and applicability to help our patients in a format that meets the high standards expected for articles in JTD.

***Is any consensus (guideline) in terms of the prevention or treatment to lung cancer expected in this conference?***

Prof. Fong: The WCLC is not intended to focus on developing guidelines as such. However, it is expected that the leading groups will submit their latest work on guidelines for presentation and discussion, including those using the latest platforms such as the modern wiki method, such as that developed by the Cancer Council of Australia [http://wiki.cancer.org.au/australia/Guidelines:Lung\\_cancer](http://wiki.cancer.org.au/australia/Guidelines:Lung_cancer).

***What would be your expectation to the conference? What would you like to say to our readers and specialists going to attend the conference?***

Prof. Fong: The 15<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Lung Cancer will be one of the largest international gatherings of clinicians and scientists in the field of lung cancer and thoracic malignancies. We encourage physicians, nurses, other clinicians, researchers and scientists in the lung cancer field and those interested in any aspect of thoracic oncology to attend this conference. It is only through an exchange of the widest variety of research that we can offer the best program and benefits to our members and patients. It is a great pleasure and an honor for Michael Boyer and me myself to extend to you a warm invitation to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> IASLC World Conference on Lung Cancer, to be held October 27 to October 30, 2013, at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. A near perfect climate, world-famous architecture, beautiful harbour and friendly people make Sydney the ideal choice for combining business with leisure and the perfect location for one of the world's largest international gatherings of clinicians, researchers and scientists in the field of thoracic oncology. Sydney offers national parks, botanic gardens, pristine waterways, green space and golden beaches in abundance. Outdoor experiences unique to Sydney include sailing on the harbour, a surf lesson at Manly or Bondi beach, or teeing off at a golf course overlooking the Pacific Ocean. So make sure you find time in your diary to experience some of these activities in Sydney.

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