

Professor Alan Sihoe: ‘AME’ through the eye of an editor means Author support, Medical product and Editorial Team

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Launched in 2009, AME Publishing Company, with the three letters interpreting Academic Made Easy, Excellent and Enthusiastic, is now publishing 41 English journals, among which 2 have been indexed by Science Citation Index (SCI), and 18 by PubMed. Except Hong Kong, AME has offices in Guangzhou, Changsha, Nanjing, Shanghai Beijing, Chengdu, Taipei and Sydney (1).

The friendly connection between Prof. Alan Sihoe (Figure 1) and AME started with Prof. Sihoe joining the Editorial Board of *Journal of Thoracic Disease* until being appointed as Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Visualized Surgery*. Through the years, Prof. Sihoe has been committed to bridge the academic communication between east and west and we are lucky with honor to stand together Prof. Sihoe to achieve the same mission of AME.

In this interview, we have a talk with Prof. Sihoe to review the endeavors that we have accomplished in the past few years. With the boundless guidance and support from the expert cooperators in the medical arena, we shall do better to serve the medical academic community.

Introduction of Prof. Alan Dart Loon Sihoe

Prof. Alan Sihoe is currently a Clinical Associate Professor of the Departments of Surgery at the University of Hong Kong, and the Chief of Thoracic Surgery at the University of Hong Kong Shenzhen Hospital in Shenzhen, China. He is also an Honorary Consultant in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong. Prof. Sihoe received his medical training at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, where he was awarded multiple prizes and where he received an Honours degree and a Masters degree for research in Pathology. After working in Scotland and England, he completed his training in Cardiothoracic Surgery in Hong Kong under the mentorship of Prof. Anthony Yim.

Prof. Sihoe is a recognized expert and advocate of ‘next generation’ minimally invasive thoracic surgery

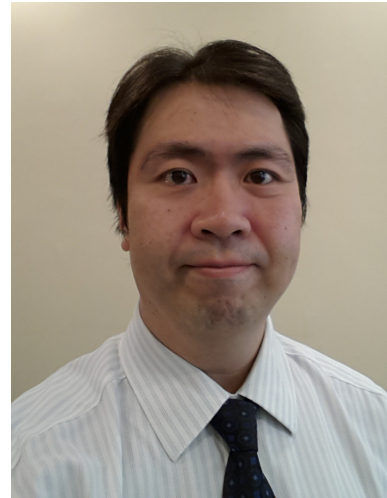


Figure 1 Prof. Alan Sihoe.

techniques—especially uniportal and needlescopic chest surgery. He is a frequent Invited Lecturer and Faculty member at conferences and surgical education events throughout Asia, Europe and North America, sharing his experiences in these advanced thoracic surgical techniques. His many research interests include pain reduction and air leak management strategies following pulmonary operations. Prof. Sihoe has published extensively, and has won or been short-listed for multiple awards in thoracic surgery and clinical research.

Prof. Sihoe is the co-Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Visualized Surgery*, an Associate Editor of the Interactive Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery journal, and an Editorial Board member of multiple international journals in Surgery and Respiratory Medicine. He is the only Asian member of the Scientific Program Committee of the European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS), and the Asia Team Captain for the ESTS Postgraduate Course. He is also a Committee Member of the Asian Thoracoscopic Surgery Education Program and of the Society for Minimally Invasive Thoracic Surgery. He is an examiner

for the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong, a member of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hong Kong, and a former member of the Cardiothoracic Surgery Board of Hong Kong.

AMJ: *What is your impression on AME?*

Prof. Sihoe: AME is a completely unique and innovative publication company. I think everybody in the world sees the result, the results in terms of journals that have very quickly and rapidly achieved the prominence in the international stage that everybody can see. And that's very impressive. But what I think a lot of people do not realize—that I see now behind the scene—is that the results are results of AME being unique and innovative. In the past, many traditional journals, which may or may not be affiliated with a society, have a separate publication company. AME combines both roles. They do the publishing and they are also in charge of the editorial office, which streamlines the whole process. So for authors, it means the manuscript gets submitted, gets processed all in house without going to separate journals. It is quick and efficient. For us as editors and reviewers, the process again is fantastic. AME has one of the best staff team I have seen anywhere. So they are able to trace support of the work, make sure all deadlines get on time, and keep in very good contact with all the authors, reviewers and editors constantly and all these in return just make the whole process the more efficient. The end product as what I suggest now is the rise of these journals, *Journal of Thoracic Disease (JTD)*, *Journal of Visualized Surgery (JOVS)*, *Annals of Cardiothoracic Surgery (ACS)*, all of these have become so important in the surgical world so quickly. This is a model that I don't think anybody else can copy. Any of the other major international journals would never be able to have an in house publishing like AME does.

Many western brand publishers just do the publishing typesetting, proofing. But here in AME is an entire process, right from the authors to the act of print. So from the author's point of view, the services that AME provides include linking people to artwork and to meetings, and actually reaching out to authors at the point when they actually deliver the research and getting that proactively into print. I think that is actually fantastic and I don't think anybody else can do that.

AMJ: *Why would you cooperate with AME?*

Prof. Sihoe: I like AME's thinking and mindset very much.

We all value quality, academic excellence and speed of processing. We want to do good research. We want to work with a publisher effectively and promptly. I think we all believe in integrity by maintaining it through honesty of data and writing. I think these are important qualities of AME.

AMJ: *As the Editor-in-chief of Journal of Visualized Surgery, how do you like the cooperation with AME?*

Prof. Sihoe: *JOVS* is a fantastic initiative of AME. I think the idea of a journal or publication based on videos has been around for some time. It is tried by some other journals and editorial teams but it seems they never work out for too long. I think *JOVS* changes that whole concept around and actually AME has launched quite a unique platform. In the past, a lot of journals shunned publishing videos because they did not generate citations. However, they may be overlooking the fact that there is a huge demand from authors around the world who are very anxious to show off what can be done surgically through videos. If journals just think about citation factors, like traditional ones do, they will neglect that and then a lot of good surgical skills are going to waste. *JOVS* targets that and we can actually see the value of sharing practical surgical technical experience around the world. That is why we are seeing *JOVS* booming very quickly. I think that is a very unique opportunity.

AMJ: *What do you think is unique advantage for AME compared to other publishers or academic service providers?*

Prof. Sihoe: I think when we talk about academic medicine, people just think about publication but AME goes far beyond that. AME goes into helping in the organizing of studies for a start, or organizing training for our younger surgeons so they have the background knowledge and experience to participate in the research. Once you get to the research, you also need a platform to present it through various meetings that in turn need to be organized - and only after all that, you can start talking about publications. What's great about AME is that they cover all of those sides that I just said. You organize training, exposure and opportunities for the young surgeons and then when everybody can get through those phases to get their work done, AME can also provide an outlet for their publications and meetings for them to present in. I think that's a very precious characteristic.

Another unique feature of publications under AME is that AME caters to articles that are not even traditional. I

think traditionally a lot of journals only look for original articles, maybe occasionally review articles (which are usually by invitation only), letters to the editor and case reports—that is a very limited range. What we see in AME journals over these last several years is that they are open to sort of non-typical or unorthodox articles, such as opinion pieces, commentaries. These are actually essential to the development of surgeons. These papers are not of a study we have done at all: they contain no research methodology. But they are the voices of a lot of experts around the world who have very valid and very insightful views on many issues within surgery—and yet they can't publish them in traditional journals. AME actually provides a platform for those voices—and if you look at some of the most quoted, referenced, reused, read articles in recent years, a lot of them are these kind of unorthodox articles published in AME journals. I think that is another ingredient we have seen in the success of AME.

AMJ: Will you recommend AME your friends?

Prof. Sihoe: That's for sure because AME has so many interests and so many areas of expertise. I personally have already been talking about AME to all my colleagues and friends around the world. Whenever any colleague is thinking about academic activities, whether it's a workshop, meeting, special issue/focused issue, I always recommend they talk to AME because what AME can provide for them includes full coverage of the academic event, which is extremely important for the success of the academic event. AME can organize special issues, but also special online coverage of the events. And once all the events have finished, AME also provides an outlet for the speakers and experts to publish their papers. That's very important I think for academic surgeons around the world.

AMJ: How is the reputation of AME in your mind in Asia and the world?

Prof. Sihoe: AME has already attained a very good reputation around the world. Take our friends and peers in Europe as an example: none of them have not heard of the Journal of Thoracic Disease and AME. I think the results are there for all of us to see.

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Footnote

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