

Preface to the book *This is life: the journey of uniportal VATS*

This book is not only a scientific one but it is a demonstration of a successful story in the world of thoracic surgery. It is difficult to describe and talk about the thoracic surgeon behind this story, the reason is that I cannot add anything: every thoracic surgeon in the world knows him and he has visited him or vice versa. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas is not only a colleague he is my best friend and brother.

I can write many things about the story of uniportal, but I will restrict it to few stories and facts. I can remember the talk of Diego at ISMICS 2010 in Berlin where he represented his innovations (by the way his talk was the only one with music during the meeting). At that time it was clear for everyone that he will make a big explosion in the history of thoracic surgery.

“Mahmoud I did the first single incision lobectomy” this was his original message after ISMICS 2010 to me. I was very proud of him, and I hoped that he would develop this technique further and further. And he did it, he was not only developing it in his hospital but he was spreading it all over the world. I invited him and his colleague Ricardo in June 2012 to our hospital “Charité Berlin” and we performed with them the first German uniportal lobectomies. After that I went and visited him at his hospital and stayed at his beautiful house and get to know his family. His days were long working days but effective and with a perfect team. During one uniportal operation came the resident in her second year and was watching the operation and suddenly she gave Diego one remark during the procedure, and of course he followed her advice, this is the proper way how great surgeons with self-confidence behave. It was the inspiration he gave me in the world of thoracic surgery. Since that I started performing uniportal procedures, which changed my whole thinking, minimal than that you will never be in thoracic surgery.

In February 2014 was the first “International Uniportal VATS Course and Live Surgery” in A Coruña, and since that Diego and me decided to make it in Berlin which continued the success which was started in A Coruña. It was the start in Germany, the start of a new era of thoracic surgery, the Uniportal thoracic surgery.

According to me, the uniportal technique is not an adventure but it is a reality: “if you start performing it you will love it and you will never change”.

Dear Diego, my colleague, friend but overall my brother, thank you for your continuous support. I wish you a lot of success with this book. Readers of this book should be sure that through reading this book they will have a journey to the world of uniportal VATS, the world of Diego Gonzalez-Rivas and his friends, the world of thinking how to help our patients with minimal surgical trauma to give them the hope of fast healing and recovery.

Mahmoud Ismail

*Consultant Thoracic Surgeon,
Coordinator of the Department of Thoracic Surgery,
Charité University Hospital,
Berlin, Germany*