

Professor Gang Chen: enhance the development of thoracic surgery techniques and serve for people's healthcare

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Introduction

Zhu Hai, a beautiful coastal city of China, known as “the National Garden City” and “the City of Islands and Romanticism”, held a thoracic surgery academic feast on 25th March 2017—the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Thoracic Surgery Branch of Guangdong Medical Doctor Association and the 5th Summit Forum on Diagnosis and Treatment of Thoracic Surgery. It was held by the Thoracic Surgery Branch of Guangdong Medical Doctor Association (GMDA), co-organized by the Department of Thoracic Surgery of Guangdong General Hospital and the Fifth Affiliated Hospital of Zunyi. Many internationally reputable experts attended the meeting, making it a star-studded event. A number of domestic and foreign professionals were invited and more than 400 local and interprovincial thoracic surgeons gathered together. After the summit, AME had an exclusive interview with Prof. Gang Chen (*Figure 1*), Chairman of the meeting, Chairman of the Thoracic Surgery Branch of GMDA. He regarded the summit as “full success, full completion” while sharing the stories and highlights of the meeting during the interview.

Interview

Focus on national and international advancement in medicine and move ahead persistently

The theme of the summit is “new technology, new progress, mutual learning and mutual progress”. Prof. Chen explained that medical science is continuously improving and updating, thus if one stops the pace of self-learning, he will fall behind. It is gratifying that China's thoracic surgery has maintained a marvellous momentum of development and kept in line with other developed countries so as to gear to international standards. In this process, more opportunities should be provided to thoracic surgeons in China in terms of uplifting academic level, such as further education projects, national academic conference, and a variety of

other forms so that they can master new technology and progress fast, directly and effectively.

In terms of “new technology, new progress”, the focus of the summit has changed from “Minimally Invasive Surgery”, which remains an essential subject of this meeting, to “surgery-based comprehensive treatment” and the currently most concerned issue of “Precision Medicine”. The related areas include the application of genetic testing in clinical practice, improving the cure rate and patients' living condition. In regards of pathology, it mainly involves the reflection on the combination of pathology and clinical medicine. In terms of comprehensive treatment, it includes both contents of surgical treatment and the various methods to improve the treatment. During the past meetings, most topics were related to lung cancer, however in this summit topics of esophageal cancer are also discussed. Specifically, Professor Hitoshi Fujiwara (University Hospital, Kyoto Prefectural University of Medicine) was invited to share his experience on the world's first single-port mediastinoscope-assisted transhiatal esophagectomy for thoracic esophageal cancer in the meeting. His speech gained very positive feedback from the audience.

Multi-centred RCT, seeking “evidence” for the new technology

When asked “will any academic research or cooperation be carried through this platform?”, Prof. Chen stated that introducing the most advanced international technology to the attendees is one of the aims of this meeting. He hoped that more academic cooperation domestically and internationally would be implemented through this platform. It is insufficient to implement and promote new surgical technique barely by focusing on clinical practice results. Instead, it requires more evidence to prove that this new technique is indeed better. In terms of convincing and propulsion, it's not adequate to have only one centre to carry out the prospective randomized control study. Multi-centred implement is a requisite.

Speaking about the implementation, Prof. Chen already



Figure 1 Prof. Gang Chen.

has a well-structured plan. The prevalence of esophageal cancer in Guangdong Province is high, so they can start in Guangdong and then promote it nationally. Also they can cooperate with Japan and other countries. It is promising in the field of esophageal cancer surgery in China. They believe that along with many leading experts and diverse case studies, the country has marched into the front ranks of the world.

Prof. Chen illustrated that multi-centred prospective randomized control study on the comparison of transthoracic and transhiatal resection for esophageal cancer in minimally invasive surgery is relatively rare. If a study compares surgical risks, the amount of bleeding, pain, complications, long-term survival and so on can be carried out, with the comparison of advantages and disadvantages to figure out the suitable surgical procedure for patients, extraordinary academic values will be created and benefit the patients.

Improve primary health care for people's health and wellbeing

As the Chairman of the Thoracic Surgery Branch of GMDA, and one of the most reputable thoracic surgeons in Guangdong General Hospital, Prof. Chen introduced the development of thoracic surgery in Guangdong Province to AME during the interview. He pointed out that the development is encouraging and it ranks high holistically in the country. In Guangdong, there are many hospitals (including primary hospitals) capable to perform thoracic surgery with balanced distribution showing bright future. Specifically, the innovation in minimally invasive surgery and the non-intubated anesthesia leads the technique development trend.

Prof. Chen has always been paying attention to the development of the primary care. He agrees that to improve people's health, the development of primary health care system is very important. Each year, 4 to 6 training courses

are conducted by the Department of Thoracic Surgery of Guangdong General Hospital. Thoracic surgeons from primary hospitals are invited to observe surgeries in these courses. Prof. Chen also goes to different primary hospitals to teach the primary physicians complicated surgeries. The training is effective, as an example of Gaozhou People's Hospital, the number of surgeries has raised from 300–400 cases per year to 1,000 cases per year with the improvement of both quantity and quality. In addition, Prof. Chen and his co-workers have assisted Lufeng People's Hospital to establish their own Department of Thoracic Surgery.

Prof. Chen also mentioned that the previous forums were held in districts such as Shaoguan, Qingyuan with the purpose of promoting the influence of local hospitals. The fifth forum was held in Zhuhai for the same reason—to create more learning opportunities for local doctors. Apart from this, Zhuhai is one of the earliest special economic zones. It has unique and exquisite environment which obtained many praises from participants during this summit. The city also offers delicious foods with reasonable price. Meanwhile, the summit was strongly supported by the local government.

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Thoracic Surgery Branch of GMDA and the 5th Summit Forum on Diagnosis and Treatment of Thoracic Surgery have made a successful completion. However, the road of innovation and exploration for Prof. Chen and all other diligent and dedicated experts is endless. What will be the next achievements and improvements? We are looking forward to it in the coming summit.

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None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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