

The 4th Operative Spine Course: A Landmark Collaboration of the Asia-Pacific Spine Society, Philippine Spine Society, and Makati Medical Center

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The **Philippine Spine Society (PSS)**, in partnership with the **Asia-Pacific Spine Society (APSS)** and the **Spine Section of the Department of Orthopaedics at the Makati Medical Center (MMC)**, successfully concluded the **4th Operative Spine Course on August 17-18, 2024**. This much-anticipated event brought together experts, practitioners, and participants to advance the field of spine surgery, with a focus on degenerative and deformity spine conditions.

Comprehensive Planning and Coordination

Planning for the course began in early 2023, with the organising committee devoting substantial effort to every detail—from patient selection and lecture design to the coordination of live surgeries and technical requirements. The meticulous preparation included regular meetings with MMC administration and key departments to address logistics, patient care, and postoperative follow-ups. Challenges in patient selection were overcome with the unwavering support of pharmaceutical and medical implant industry partners, ensuring all cases were confirmed weeks before the event.

A Global Gathering of Spine Care Professionals

The course welcomed 134 participants, including both local and international attendees, united in their commitment to advancing spine care. Renowned surgeons and faculty members from across the Asia-Pacific region led the discussions and surgeries. Esteemed speakers included APSS President-Elect Professor Yat Wa Wong (Hong Kong), Dr. Choong Hoon Foo (Malaysia), and Dr. Dilip Chand Raja Soundararajan (India). Alongside 14 speakers and 26 moderators, they delivered a robust scientific program comprising 14 high-yield lectures and interactive case discussions.

Live Surgeries and Technical Mastery

A highlight of the course was the performance of seven complex spine surgeries, including advanced procedures such as:

- Corrective scoliosis surgery led by Professor Dato' Kwan Mun-Keong, APSS President, and Professor Chris Chan Yin Wei, President of the Malaysian Spine Society
- Anterior lumbar interbody fusion with percutaneous pedicle screw instrumentation
- Percutaneous lumbar endoscopic discectomy.
- Extreme lateral interbody fusion.
- Anterior cervical discectomy and fusion using stand-alone cages.

All surgeries were simultaneously broadcast to an auditorium, where a panel of experts engaged in real-time analysis and discussion. Local faculty, including Dr. Richard V. Condor and Dr. Elmer Jose A. Meceda, joined distinguished international surgeons such as Professor Jason Pui Yin Cheung (Hong Kong), Dr. Wong Chung Chek (Malaysia), and Professor Tomohiko Hasegawa (Japan) in demonstrating surgical techniques and sharing insights.

A Unified Effort for Success

The Makati Medical Center played an instrumental role in the course's success. Through the concerted efforts of the Spine Section of its Department of Orthopaedics of the Makati Medical Center and the Philippine Spine Society, the course fully funded all seven surgeries, creating a meaningful impact on the lives of the patients. Special acknowledgment goes to the patients, who entrusted their care to the team, enabling valuable learning experiences for all attendees.

Strengthening Collaborations in Spine Care

This event served as a platform to rekindle old friendships and forge new relationships within the regional spine care community. The Philippine Spine Society and Makati Medical Center were honoured to collaborate with APSS and are eager to continue fostering partnerships that support education and research.

Gratitude and Acknowledgments

The organising committee, led by PSS President Dr. Ronald Tangente and CME Head Dr. Anne Kathleen B. Ganal-Antonio, extends heartfelt thanks to the following for their invaluable contributions:

- Dr. Angel Gozum, Chair, MMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.
- Dr. Antonio Rivera, MMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.
- Members of the MMC Spine Surgery Section, including Drs. Jose Martin Paisy, David Cabatan, Agripino Javier, Buenaventura B. Canto IV, Anna Rosario Merceditas Sta. Ana-Famador, Marc Anthony Limson, David Endriga, and Angelo Philip Ong.
- MMC President and CEO, Dr. Saturnino Javier.
- MMC nursing staff and technical support teams.
- PSS Board of Trustees and Secretariat members, including Wina and Mike Villanueva.
- Industry and pharmaceutical partners.

This milestone event underscores a shared commitment to excellence in spine care. The positive outcomes of the surgeries performed during the course highlight the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in advancing the field. Looking ahead, the PSS and MMC eagerly anticipate further partnerships with APSS to drive progress in education, research, and patient care.