

## AN OVERVIEW OF “INTEREST”

In 2009 The Council of the IAES endorsed the concept of an outreach program providing support for Endocrine Surgical teaching, operative supervision and equipment provision to developing countries and communities.

This exciting concept was entitled INTEREST (International Endocrine Surgical Teams). The Council, through the INTEREST subcommittee, assesses applications from individuals, NGO's and Governments requesting such support.

The underlying premise of the program is to provide an ongoing legacy to a community through teaching rather than simply operative intervention, including the avoidance of inappropriate donations of equipment requiring local funding for maintenance and repairs. Members of the IAES may apply for such support or alternatively volunteer and add their names to a database of available endocrine surgeons for such programs.

Funding will be provided by the IAES, dependent upon availability of funds, and the quality and number of applications. In time it is expected that donations, patient bequests and both government and Medical Industry support will establish a strong financial base for ongoing programs.

It is anticipated and in practice realized that members of the IAES will strongly support INTEREST, with advantages to the IAES of a recognized international entity and to the individual surgeon with the satisfaction of a personal contribution to the world of endocrine surgery.

A comprehensive set of guidelines and requirements for support of a nominated project was prepared and includes details of potential activities and requirements for such things as donation of equipment.

The initial program involved the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Malaysian Ministry of Health and the Malaysian College of Surgeons linked to the International Association of Endocrine Surgeons (IAES) and Breast Surgeons International (BSI).

Thereafter postgraduate courses were established with senior clinicians from both the IAES and BSI being sponsored by their organizations and providing an intensive 3 day course initially in Kuala Lumpur with subsequent hospital visits and a combination of teaching ward rounds and operating over a further 2 days. The program in 2012 was centrally located initially to facilitate attendance by local surgeons with minimal disruption to their usual work requirements and hospital commitments.

The second Malaysian Breast-Endocrine Surgery course, combined with BSI, was held in Kuala Terengganu in October 2013. The two IAES participants were Professor Tom Lennard from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom and Assoc. Professor Peter Malycha from Adelaide, Australia. The meeting was combined with a Surgical Ultrasound Course provided by Assoc. Professor Rob Parkyn under separate funding. A two day interactive teaching program was provided with hospital visits to district hospital over the following 2 days.

The third Malaysian Breast-Endocrine Surgery Meeting, combined with BSI, was held in Johor Bahru under the guidance of Professor TWJ Lennard from Newcastle University and introducing Professor Mark Sywak from Sydney University who would have been the lead clinician in the following year. Again a highly successful program was undertaken over two days with hospital visits on the following two days. Reports are attached.

These programs were extremely successful and have continued on a yearly basis in other centres within Malaysia with the next venue Kota Bharu, Kelantan under the leadership of Prof. Mark Sywak from Sydney in August 2016 and introducing Dr. Ming Yew from Perth, Australia.

This rotational participation has been designed to introduce as many IAES members as possible to the role of INTEREST and to provide a degree of continuance to the program recipients. The aim of the project is to have at least two well trained and dedicated Endocrine Surgeons in each state of Malaysia by 2020.

In March of 2014, the Asian Association of Endocrine Surgeons held a very successful meeting in Sri Lanka and despite limited funding managed to attract a large core of internationally recognised speakers who volunteered their time under guidelines encouraged by INTEREST and with a supportive letter from the Chairman of INTEREST. IAES members from North America, Australasia and Europe travelled at their own expense to support the meeting. The success of the meeting was a just reward for those participating IAES members. Funding was provided to several keynote members for limited airfares. There were over 200 potential and practicing endocrine surgeons at the meeting from across Asia enthused by the support and teaching of around 30 senior surgeons from the IAES who volunteered their services. The lessons and camaraderie generated will facilitate future ventures into Asia for teaching.

In September 2014 Surgeons Stephen Farrell and Suren Jayaweera from Melbourne, Australia travelled to northern Sri Lanka to support the battle torn and Tsunami devastated area of Batticaloa. They participated in both OPD and Theatre sessions as well as considerable teaching. The trip was another great success with enthusiasm and plaudits from the local surgical community. There will be potential further visits to other nearby centres in the future. A report of the project is attached. Again the cost of the project was minimal with the surgeons involved providing their expertise for free and only requiring reimbursement for basic travel costs. This also

In August 2014, a project to West Africa was supported under the guidance of Professor Nancy Perrier from MD Anderson, Texas. The project was another great success, not only for the Togolese but for the individuals concerned and the expansion of their own personal ambitions and horizons. This experience was accordingly related to members of the IAES attending the Bangkok ISS Biennial Congress. The overwhelming support and encouragement for future projects was outstanding and will again enhance the profile and participation in INTEREST.

In 2016, the Chairman travelled to Vietnam, self-funded and liaised with surgeons from Hue with a view to establishing “Malaysian” style association with INTEREST. The first visit is planned for November 2016 with great expectations.

Similarly a project has been requested from Mwanza in Western Tanzania where the General Hospital services a population of nearly 17 million people. Dr. Alphonse Chandika, Director of the Mwanza General Hospital, is very enthusiastic for a similar “Malaysian” style connection with IAES and INTEREST and it is anticipated that an appropriate visit will be arranged in later 2016. A program is currently being developed and it is anticipated that this will be an enduring project dependent upon appropriate funding becoming available.

At present though the existing funding for such projects is limited and initially it is likely that the establishment of the project by the Chairman of INTEREST will again need to be self-funded, and although financially onerous is rewarding above all expectations. Invariably the IAES surgeons devote their time with a ready collection of volunteers.

The need for appropriate teaching is enormous and the opportunities for a considered and valuable use of financial resources extreme. The INTEREST project is well and closely supervised and is a balanced and rewarding project for recipients, Surgeons and benefactors.

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