

Endourological Society International Traveling Scholarship

Report, February – March 2024

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Duration of Visit: 16th February 2024 to 14th March 2024

Host Faculty and Institution: Dr. Joseph Liao, Stanford University. Dr. Brian Matlaga, Johns Hopkins University

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff and members of the Endourology Society, especially the Fellowship Committee and Ms. Paoli, for providing me with this invaluable opportunity. I am also grateful to Dr. Liao from Stanford University and Dr. Matlaga from Johns Hopkins University for graciously accepting my proposal. It is a great honor to have been given the chance to gain clinical and academic experience by spending two weeks at each institution.

The purpose of obtaining the International Traveling Scholarship was to learn about the latest techniques and research in endourology and to establish academic connections with leaders in the field. Furthermore, I wanted to gauge the position of my research on an AI-assisted cystoscopy system within the United States, where interdisciplinary collaboration is advancing and ecosystems are being developed, as well as seek opinions from American physicians on how they perceive it. Additionally, I was keenly interested in exploring the differences in perspectives between urologists in Japan and those in the United States regarding the practical implementation of research findings in society. My goal with this scholarship has been achieved thanks to the support of the urology teams at each institution.

Below, I will outline my experiences at Stanford University and Johns Hopkins University:

#Stanford University:

I applied to visit Stanford University because, as my research focuses on AI-assisted cystoscopy for bladder cancer, I had read about their cutting-edge research in academic journals. Before receiving confirmation of the scholarship, I also contacted Dr. Liao directly via email and AUA. I am grateful for his warm acceptance of my visit and I thoroughly enjoyed my time spent on Stanford University's vast campus.

During my stay, I had the opportunity to observe surgeries at both Stanford Medical Center and Palo Alto VA Medical Center, witnessing procedures such as RARC, RARP, PCNL, TURBT, and RARN. Additionally, I was granted access to observe Dr. Shkolyar's oncology outpatient clinic closely. I accompanied consultations with newly referred patients from regional hospitals.

I was impressed both by the system's ability to provide immediate interpretations for non-English speaking patients, including those speaking only Spanish, as well as by its ability to allow for online consultations of electronic medical records. Moreover, I was intrigued by the differences in facilities and patient demographics between Stanford Medical Center, a private hospital, and Palo Alto VA Medical Center, a public hospital.

Furthermore, I had the privilege of attending weekly research lab meetings at Stanford University's Research Park, where I was also allowed to present. I am grateful for these invaluable opportunities, which have allowed me to lay a foundation for potential future collaborations.



Caption: left picture) Me, Dr. Liao and his team

Caption: right picture) Entrance of Stanford University Hospital

#Johns Hopkins University:

I applied to visit Johns Hopkins University because it consistently ranks highly in patient surveys and is known for its proactive approach to interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, I was aware of the abundance of bladder cancer cases, which aligns with my research interests. In addition, I had previously met Dr. Kates at AUA 2022.

During my stay at Johns Hopkins University, I observed numerous surgeries, including RARC, PCNL, HoLEP, open nephrectomy, TURBT, and renal pelvis reconstruction using Da Vinci SP. Witnessing up to two RARCs and fifteen TURBTs in a day, especially for bladder cancer, was astonishing and provided me with insights into the differences between practices in Japan and the United States. I also had the opportunity to observe a Fusion Biopsy for prostate at Green Spring Station as Johns Hopkins' satellite hospital, gaining insights into the treatment environment of the hospital network beyond the main downtown campus.

In terms of research, I visited Dr. Ghazi's lab, which is conducting research on creating 3D

organ models using hydrogels. I had the chance to interact directly with the organ model currently under development for use in the Hands-on Skills Training program “A Specialized Masterclass for Single-Port Robot-Assisted Surgery” at AUA 2024. Additionally, I was introduced to Dr. Singla, the PI of the Clinical and Translational Research in Genitourinary Oncology lab, with whom I discussed potential future collaborations on bladder cancer research.



Caption: left picture) Dr. Ghazi and me

Caption: right picture) Hydrogel 3D organ models



Caption: left picture) Dr. Kates and me

Caption: right picture) Johns Hopkins' Historic Dome

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Endourology Society once again for providing me with such an excellent opportunity. I am equally thankful to the urology teams at Stanford University and Johns Hopkins University for welcoming me, my colleagues at Tsukuba University Hospital's urology department for their support, and my family for their encouragement. Obtaining this scholarship has undeniably been one of the highlights of my career, and I am committed to contributing to better patient care, research, and the global endourology community, not only in Japan but worldwide.