

Report on West African College of Surgeons Meeting on Radical Prostatectomy

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The annual meeting of the West African College of Surgeons, WACS was held in Dakar, Senegal from 14th-19th January 2007. On the morning of the 18th, a symposium was held on Radical Prostatectomy with Urologists from Senegal, France, USA and the UK on the discussion panel. It was one of the highlights of the meeting and the conference hall was full to capacity and overflowing. A cross-section of participants included General Surgeons, Urologists, Gynaecologists, radiologists, anaesthetists, pathologists, etc since the WACS is a multidisciplinary college.

The initial plan was to hold a radical prostatectomy, RP workshop but in the event, a symposium was held. Several discussions were held with the conference organizers before the meeting. It all started in February 2006 at the WACS meeting in Accra, Ghana when we presented a paper from the North Middlesex University Hospital: Radical Retropubic Prostatectomy, RRP- 7 Year Experience from One Centre. This caused much debate amongst Surgeons with some arguing that RP was not feasible in West Africa; that it would be difficult to recruit suitable patients and manage the complications. However, the more creative and innovative Surgeons expressed interest and a wish to learn the technique of RP. As such, the idea of a RP workshop in West Africa was born.

To achieve this, we brainstormed on several options ranging from holding a workshop in a selected institution in West Africa to asking a local department of Urology to bid to host such a workshop. In the end, the former was decided on in a meeting (in Atlanta, USA at the May 2006 AUA meeting) which we held with the Professor of Urology from Dakar, Senegal, Prof. Serigne M. Gueye. As his country and department were due to host the 2007 WACS meeting, it was decided to organize and hold a RP workshop during the conference. It was planned to perform live surgery to demonstrate the technique and a master class to discuss patient selection, tricks of the operative procedure, post operative care and management of the complications. Accordingly, Prof Gueye advertised on the WACS website, a Workshop on RP to be held on the weekend before the official start of the 2007 WACS meeting. However, in the event, due to logistic reasons, a workshop proved impossible. Instead, Prof. Gueye and the conference committee decided on a RP symposium.

The symposium was entitled “Radical Prostatectomy” with speakers from Senegal, France, USA and UK. Mr George Fowlis co-chaired the session and was also a speaker. The Senegalese had with the assistance and collaboration of an American Urologist performed a few Radical Perineal Prostatectomies; also, one of the local Urologists, Prof. B.A Diagne had attended a short training course on RRP in the USA. As a result, he described the outcome of their initial experience and made the point that there is a demand for RP in West Africa and it is feasible. The American Urologist, Dr Albert Ruenes of Doylestown, Philadelphia described his personal experience of Radical Perineal Prostatectomy and his work with the Senegalese. The speaker from Val De Grace Military Hospital, Paris, France, and Dr Alain Houlgate

spoke in French on their experience of Radical Prostatectomy. The speakers from the UK spoke on Radical Retropubic Prostatectomy. Mr Samuel Osaghae presented indications for surgery, patient selection and Radical Prostatectomy pathway. Mr George Fowlis presented and discussed the operative steps and necessary instrumentation. It was impossible to support the discussion with a prepared educational video (DVD) because the conference audio-visual equipment failed to transmit (incompatible software). However, a copy was left with the conference organizer to distribute to interested participants.

Overall, it was a memorable event which was assessed by participants as stimulating, challenging and inspirational. Speaker after speaker, from the floor praised the idea and rationale for the symposium and the educational value of the event. The retropubic approach seemed of most interest to the attendees. Prof. Edward Yeboah, Professor of Urology at the University of Ghana Medical School/ Consultant at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital Accra, Ghana, and President of the WACS as well as several other distinguished West African Urologists praised and thanked the panellists and expressed a wish to host a workshop on RP, as soon as possible with the help and mentoring of Mr Fowlis. Additionally, a commissioned article on the subject for the West African College of Surgeons Journal of Medicine is under preparation (SO/GAF)

In conclusion, the trip to Dakar, Senegal for the symposium on RP and the opportunity to interact with a wide spectrum of West African surgical and urological colleagues and opinion leaders was a memorable and worthwhile event. As a result, we would like to pursue this educational initiative further and hope that under the auspices of BAUS UROLINK, there would be an opportunity to organize a workshop on RP in a host West African Department of Urology in the near future.

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