

Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Travelling Sponsorship for Young Fellows Written Report

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Event: International Conference for Children's Bone Health

Date: 22-25 June 2024

Location: Salzburg, Austria

Bone health is an oft-neglected aspect of paediatric orthopaedic care, the cost of which are bone fragility and fracture. While low bone mineral density is a hallmark of certain skeletal dysplasias such as osteogenesis imperfecta, it could also be present among neuromuscular patients with impaired mobility, patients with endocrinopathy, or other rare diseases. The management of paediatric osteoporosis differs from that of adults in terms of pharmacological treatment and dosage, calling for the need of increased awareness, multidisciplinary assessment and management.

Under the auspices of HKCOS YFC, I took part in the International Conference for Children's Bone Health (ICCBH) at Salzburg on 22-25 June 2024. It was a well-attended event by paediatric endocrinologists, geneticist, basic scientists, allied health professionals, and orthopaedic surgeons.

Throughout this meeting I gained new understanding on the latest clinical, molecular and genetic aspects of paediatric conditions with altered bone metabolism and bone mineral density. A special workshop this year focused on orthopaedic aspects of limb lengthening among patients with achondroplasia, with Dr Dror Paley as the invited speaker. There was a lively discussion and heated debate among medical professionals and patient representatives on the pros and cons of limb lengthening surgery, which is regarded by some as an elective procedure and a sign of failure of society to accommodate special needs of patients with short stature. It was encouraging to note preliminary findings of a multinational survey which suggested that patients are generally happy with limb lengthening procedures, and would recommend such surgeries to fellow patients.

In addition to poster presentations sharing our experience of treating osteogenesis imperfecta patients at the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital, I met doctors from different continents, and met with stakeholders in preparation for the International Conference on Osteogenesis Imperfecta to be held in Hong Kong next year (the first time to be held in Asia).

I am grateful for the support from the Hong Kong College of Orthopaedic Surgeons and Young Fellows Committee, and look forward to bringing back what I've learnt to perfect the care in this diverse group of challenging patients.