



## Meeting Highlights

### Asian Society of Gynecologic Oncology (ASGO): A new society for doctors working against gynecologic cancers in Asia

Last October, the 12th Biennial Meeting of the International Gynecologic Cancer Society (IGCS) was held in Bangkok, Thailand. It was another successful scientific convention for doctors working against gynecologic cancer all over the world. The homepage of the IGCS states that the goals of this not-for-profit, independent organization are the prevention, treatment, and study of gynecologic cancer, as well as the improvement of quality of life in women with gynecologic cancer throughout the world [1]. It also states that IGCS strives for global representation, reflecting the diverse cultural, economic, and geographic impacts of gynecologic cancer. In addition to the IGCS, there also exist some regional societies, such as the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists (SGO) and the European Society of Gynecologic Oncology (ESGO), which are fundamental organizations for doctors in America and Europe.

Concern was voiced that there is no organization or meeting devoted to gynecologic oncology in Asia, as was the situation in America about 40 years ago when the SGO was established [2,3]. There also exists a conflict over the evolution of gynecologic oncology as a defined subspecialty; Japan established a board certification process only a few years ago [4]. Some doctors from Asia, especially those from Japan and Korea, feel that a society for Asian doctors is necessary because Asian patients differ from non-Asians with respect to disease prevalence and patterns, ethnic background, and most of all, culture and economics. It is our desire that there be a global standard of practice for our patients.

In Seoul in 2002, the 9th Biennial IGCS Convention, hosted by the Korean Society of Gynecologic Oncology and Colposcopy (KSGOC), was attended by more than 1500 doctors, including 800 from abroad. On the last afternoon of the meeting, the first joint conference between Korea and Japan in the field of gynecologic cancer, the so-called Japan–Korea Joint Conference of Gynecologic Oncology Group (JKGOG), was established to facilitate scientific exchange and friendship between doctors from the two countries. Since then, gynecologic oncologists from Korea and Japan have met annually, the host being alternated.

Last year, after the 7th JKGOG conference in Seoul on November 27, 2008, the Asian Society of Gynecologic Oncology (ASGO) was inaugurated to expand the spirit of cooperation of JKGOG to all Asian countries (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, two invited representatives from India and Thailand were not able to join us because of accidents in their countries. However, the Inauguration Committee decided that the first biennial conference will be held in conjunction with the semiannual meeting of the Japanese Society of Gynecologic Oncology (JSGO). The Committee also elected the first president of the society, Professor Soon-Beom Kang from Korea.

The organizational committee for the first biennial conference of ASGO welcomes its members to the conference, which will be held in Tokyo this November. The ASGO welcomes not only doctors from Asia, but also doctors from around the world who agree with the spirit of ASGO and are devoted to it. The purposes of ASGO are facilitation of scientific exchange, international collaboration for clinical studies and basic research, provision of educational opportunities for doctors in



Fig. 1. Photo from the inauguration meeting of the ASGO, held in Seoul on November 27, 2008.

developing countries, and deepening friendship between members in Asia, ultimately to improve the standard of practice and the outcomes of patients with gynecologic cancers. ASGO will work in cooperation with other organizations devoted to women's health care and cancer.

We hope that ASGO will be the lighthouse for Asian women with gynecologic cancer, many of whom live in developing countries in the most populous continent in the world.

### References

- [1] International Gynecologic Cancer Society homepage. Available at: <http://www.igcs.org/>.
- [2] Averette HE. Society of Gynecologic Oncologist: reflections on the beginnings. *Gynecol Oncol* 1994;55:6–9.
- [3] Copeland LJ. Presidential address: the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists: yesterday, today and tomorrow. *Gynecol Oncol* 2007;107:169–72.
- [4] Fujiwara K. Gynecologic oncology in Japan. *SGO Issues News!* 2007;1–3 Winter.

Hee-Sug Ryu  
*Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology,*  
*Ajou University School of Medicine, Suwon, Korea*  
*E-mail address: [hsryu@ajou.ac.kr](mailto:hsryu@ajou.ac.kr)*

19 January 2009