



Building on the momentum of laparoscopic hepatopancreatobiliary surgery in South-East Asia

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Minimally invasive hepatopancreatobiliary (HPB) surgery has undertaken a dramatic evolution and rapid adoption since the turn of the millennium. The 2 consensus conferences on laparoscopic liver resection that were held in 2008 and 2014 were reflective of the stages of development and state of the art by the early innovators and expert surgeons, as well as setting the bar and inspiration for others to emulate. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) grouping was formed in 1967, with the purpose of promoting and facilitating economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration amongst its members. It is in the same spirit of the ASEAN community that we envision for the ASEAN Laparoscopic HPB Conference, of promulgating and sharing experiences and know-how of the technique, such that we can all learn and grow together.

In this special edition of *Annals of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgery (ALES)*, we are appreciative of the opportunity to present articles that describe the current status of HPB surgery in our respective countries. In contrast to Europe and East Asia, the healthcare landscape in ASEAN is far from homogenous. The 2 papers from Thailand showcase the epitome of surgical techniques in laparoscopic liver and pancreas surgery respectively. It is truly remarkable and highly inspiring to both novices and experts alike. It also demonstrates that with globalization and free exchange of ideas, how pioneering innovations can be quickly and successfully adopted and improved upon. The effort made by the surgical community in Brunei to transform their model of care from a general service to one of sub-specialization is laudable. It will be not too far in the future that the group of dedicated individuals there

will cross the next hurdle and embark on developing their own minimally invasive HPB program. The paper from Singapore describes the current state of development and collective experience of robotic HPB surgery amongst the various public healthcare institutions. As with many of the other ASEAN countries, cost remains a significant hurdle to its wider uptake, and its role in routine HPB operations remains to be defined.

The 1st ASEAN Laparoscopic HPB Conference was held in Bangkok Thailand in 2016, and the baton has been passed on to Singapore for this 2nd conference. It is the wish of the editors and contributors of this special issue that the congeniality and communal spirit fostered amongst the ASEAN HPB fraternity will remain strong, and that we can develop a common identity in international proceedings.

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