

With immense gratitude to EBCOG and ENTOG Executives, I had the privilege of representing ENTOG at the JSOG Exchange and Congress 2024 along with Veronika Vogrin from Slovenia and Fabiana Interlandi from Italy. This report details my experience during the exchange and reflects on the valuable insights gained from the perspective of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (O&G). Through visits to renowned hospitals, engaging in roundtable discussions, and participating in cultural activities, I gained a deeper understanding of the Japanese healthcare system and its unique O&G practices. This exchange not only broadened my professional horizons but also underscored the universal commitment to improving patient care in our field.

18th April 2024 - Hospital Visits

Our visit to the University of Tokyo Hospital and the Japanese Red Cross Medical Centre began with an introduction to the Japanese health system and the hospitals. We noticed the tranquil hospital settings, reflecting the importance of creating a calm and home-like environment for patients. In anticipation of the JSOG Congress, clinical activities in O&G departments across Japan were reduced, allowing many professionals to gather at one of the largest national conferences with approximately 10,000 attendees.

The hospital visit included a diverse group of International Workshop Junior Fellows from the USA, Cambodia, Taiwan, and Korea, along with Japanese trainees and young specialists. It was a pleasure to reconnect with Tomohiro Mitoma, who participated in the ENTOG Mini Exchange to Krakow in 2023, during the hospital visits and to reunite with Mina Sakata and Miki Miyagi later.

During our tour, we observed clinic spaces divided by curtains, maintaining confidentiality as clinicians and patients spoke softly. Non-invasive examinations were conducted here, while intimate exams were performed in separate spaces. The innovative examination chairs automatically positioned patients, ensuring comfort and dignity. Additionally, curtains between patients and clinicians during examinations catered to patients' comfort.

We learned that Japanese maternity care, covered by insurance, allows for longer hospital stays, such as one week for a routine Caesarean section.

Doctors in Japan often work 36-hour shifts, and in rural areas, O&G doctors also perform obstetric anaesthesia due to a shortage of anaesthetists. The presence of 'tatami-styled' areas in maternity wards created a homelike atmosphere, encouraging mobilisation and family bonding during labour.



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18th April 2024 - Presidential Dinner

The evening concluded with a Presidential Dinner, featuring the EBCOG Past-President (Prof Tarlatzis) and President (Prof Louwen) participating in the 'Kagami Biraki' ceremony, symbolising unity and togetherness. ENTOG trainees enjoyed the grand scale of the dinner, savouring Japanese fine cuisine with a French twist and engaging with Japanese delegates



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19th April 2024 - International Workshop for Junior Fellows

The International Workshop at the JSOG Congress featured a well-organised roundtable session. Discussions on global perspectives of sexual and reproductive health rights, represented by myself and Veronika Vogrin, and current issues in prenatal screening tests, represented by Fabiana Interlandi, were both insightful and engaging. The strict timekeeping ensured productive debates and highlighted the progressive policies in countries like Slovenia.



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19th April 2024 - Nobuyuki Tsujii Piano Recital and Karaoke

We attended a moving piano recital by the world-renowned, blind pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii. His personal compositions and performances of Chopin's pieces honoured the O&G community and underscored the meaningfulness of our speciality. The evening continued with a spectacular group karaoke session, showcasing impressive performances by our Taiwanese and UK colleagues.



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20th April 2024 - Exhibition Hall and Cultural Immersion

The exhibition hall at the JSOG Congress featured a wide range of industry exhibitors. Highlights included a recliner chair for CTG monitoring, the Japanese robotic surgery system 'Hinotori', and the HIFEM chair. Engaging with the exhibits felt like a game, culminating in a celebratory photo with a cut-out of JSOG President Prof Yutaka Osuga. The day concluded with an 'izakaya' dinner, followed by deeper cultural immersion through karaoke and an 'onsen' visit.



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21st April 2024 - Tokyo Sightseeing and Farewell

The final day included sightseeing in Tokyo, visiting the Tokyo National Museum and Asakusa. Despite the rain truncating our tour, we enjoyed a memorable 'kaiseki' lunch, savouring traditional Japanese cuisine and bidding farewell to our new friends.



Final Reflections

The JSOG Exchange provided several invaluable insights into the field of O&G. The experience highlighted how effectively a productive roundtable discussion can be organised within a tight timeframe, emphasising the importance of time management and structured dialogue. Learning that Japanese obstetricians have the ability to perform epidurals in resource-strained settings was particularly inspiring, showcasing their adaptability and dedication. **Perhaps, it also emphasised the workforce challenges in first-world countries.** Additionally, the inclusion of a performance by a world-renowned pianist born with a disability reinforced the meaningfulness of our role in diagnosing anomalies and supporting parents of babies with abnormalities. It was also a reminder that despite being on different continents, we all share a common aspiration to improve and provide better care for our patients.