

Gynaecological Oncology Training for Surgical Oncologists (Part 2)

Dr. Kato, an internationally renowned Japanese gynaecological surgeon specialised in oncology, was in town for 3rd to 6th February 2025 to provide advanced clinical training on nerve-sparing radical hysterectomy (NSRH) for cervical cancers. This was the practical part of the training, following the four-hour online session in September 2024 (click [here](#) for the Sep. 2024 online training), participated by the same eight surgical oncologists from eight government tertiary care hospitals.

Background information of NSRH

Nerve-sparing Radical Hysterectomy is a surgical procedure originally developed by a Japanese surgeon named Dr Okabayashi in 1921 to treat cervical cancer. In this technique the surgeon carefully preserves the pelvic nerves during the removal of the uterus and cervix, aiming to minimize post-operative complications like bladder dysfunction and sexual dysfunction by avoiding damage to the nerves responsible for these functions.

Dr. Kato from National Cancer Center Hospital Japan, mastered the Okabayashi technique and further developed his expertise through more than 30 years of experiences as a gynaecological surgeon specialised in oncology.

1. CADAVER TRAINING AT TIRUVALLUR MEDICAL COLLEGE (4 FEB)

The Anatomy Department of Tiruvallur Medical College hosted this hands-on session. The morning lecture included a recap of the online training in September 2024 highlighting the critical points that characterise this complex technique. Pertinent points in post-operative care, i.e. rehabilitation of urinary function, were also discussed.

In the afternoon, Dr. Kato demonstrated, step-by-step, his precise techniques of the NSRH on a cadaver with detailed explanations. It was a great opportunity for the surgical oncologists to watch Dr. Kato's expert technique in this delicate and intricate surgery. Dr. Anitha, Assistant Professor from Tirunelveli Medical College Hospital stressed "I am amazed by Prof. Kato's detailed and diligent demonstration of the technique. I truly learned a lot." Dr. Kavitha, Associate Professor of Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (IOG) echoed in "This session was really a turning point. By observing Sir's techniques, all my doubts were cleared". The session was video recorded to serve as a training material for many current and future surgical oncologists who aspire to learn the technique, which would contribute greatly to the quality of life of women affected by CaCx.



Cadaver dissection session demonstrated by Dr. T. Kato (5th Feb 2025)

2. DAY 3&4 - LIVE SURGERY AND POST OPERATIVE CASE DISCUSSION AT GAAMCH, KANCHIPURAM (5-6 FEB)

On the day 3 and day 4 of the training, the surgical oncologists performed the NSRH on two patients at the Government Arignar Anna Memorial Cancer Hospital (GAAMCH) in Karapettai, Kancheepuram, applying the learnings from Dr. Kato in the previous days. The two patients were pre-selected amongst the seven, all with early CaCx, through a detailed review of their conditions by the surgical oncologists together with Dr. Kato.



Dr Kato and trainees examining the patient's condition (3rd Feb 2025)

Both surgeries took close to five hours. Dr. Kato stayed in the OT throughout, watching the entire process carefully on the monitor set up in the theatre. “We were able to incorporate the new techniques learnt from Dr. Kato into our usual practises. It is a good start” commented Dr. Kavitha, who was the primary surgeon of the case #1. Dr. Selvaraj, Associate

Professor from Coimbatore Medical College Hospital and the operating surgeon on the case #2, stated that “It was very moving to take on this highly advanced surgery together with my former batchmates, we trained together to become surgical oncologists and still learning together to further advance our services”.

After the surgery on each day, the post-operative discussions took place, during which Dr. Kato provided technical comments and answered questions posed by the trainees. “I am so impressed that what you learned in previous sessions were so well reflected in the operations as if you had been performing this (nerve-sparing) technique on a regular basis” exclaimed Dr. Kato.



Surgical oncologists/trainees operating the patient (5th Feb 2025)



Video and audio recording of the surgery (5th Feb 2025)

The training concluded with a completion ceremony following a wrap-up session where plans to consolidate and disseminate the technique were discussed. The eight trained surgical oncologists, based on their learning and experiences from the training, will be producing a

technical guide outlining step-by-step procedures and pre- and post-operative patient management in coming weeks.



Completion ceremony (6th Feb 2025)