Laser treatments in the management of BPH/LUTS:
where do we stand?

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Technological improvements in modern medical science help us to treat patients much easier than before. In particular, advancements in the urologic field are so exceptional that we could observe the flare-up of laser prostatectomy for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Traditionally, the gold standard for treatment of BPH was the electrocautery-based transurethral resection of the prostate (TUR-P). However, the number of laser techniques performed is rapidly increasing. Advantages of laser include decreased morbidity and shorter hospitalization. Photoselective vaporization of the prostate (PVP) with a potassium titanyl phosphate (KTP) laser or lithium triborate (LBO) laser and Holmium laser enucleation of the prostate (HoLEP) currently represent the most promising new technologies. PVP and HoLEP are associated with minimal postoperative discomfort, while they offer results at least equivalent to the reference standards TUR-P and open prostatectomy. From a technical point of view, PVP is considered to be an easier technique for the urologist to master. HoLEP mimics open prostatectomy because the adenomatous tissue is peeled off the surgical capsule in both procedures. Although outcomes of laser prostatectomy for BPH are encouraging, sometimes are unbalanced because safety and feasibility studies were reported mainly for PVP, whereas long-term data are mostly available for HoLEP. There is no doubt that larger studies with longer follow up are necessary to further define the durability of results of PVP and HoLEP and to determine which procedure is the ideal alternative to TUR-P and open prostatectomy in the management of BPH.

After graduating from Seoul National University School of Medicine and becoming board-certified urologist, I returned to my alma mater to become Professor, later serving as Chairman of Department of Urology and also Director of Clinical Research Institute, Seoul National University Hospital. My research interests and clinical activity mainly lie in the field of andrology and female urology. Having authored more than 120 articles published in peer-reviewed international journals, I am on the editorial boards of several international journals. I am grateful for having chance to serve as President of Korean Urological Association and represent my country in several international associations.