World Spine II (Second Interdisciplinary Congress on Spine Care) was held at Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, USA on 10 – 13 August 2003. This was my third time to attend international conference in United State, but every moment to be here, I always feel such a huge country it is. What I know about Chicago is that this city has most American-style streets, buildings and music, and I fully understand at first glance.

Overall Meeting Chairman at this conference was Edward C. Benzel, MD (Cleveland, OH, USA) and Scientific Program Co-Chairmen were Richard G. Fessler, MD (Chicago, IL, USA) and Hansen A. Yuan, MD (Syracuse, NY, USA). And, Hiroshi Nakagawa, MD, and Junichi Mizuno MD (Nagakute, Aichi, Japan) were included among the 17 members of International Steering Committee.

The scientific programs could be analyzed as below briefly, so that the trends of issues, what spine surgeons all over the world concern, may be understood.

* The Subjects of Papers
  1. Basic (77) : pathophysiology (13), biomechanics (32), molecular and genetics (21), anatomy (7), others (4)
  2. Clinical (164) : clinical analysis (124), radiologic analysis (37), mixed (3)

* The levels of vertebrae discussed
  1. Cervical (58) : basic (19), clinic (39)
  2. Thoracic (12) : basic (6), clinic (6)
  3. Lumbar (109) : basic (34), clinic (75)
  4. more than two regions (62) : basic (21), clinic (41)

* Clinical procedure
  1. vertebroplasty/kyphoplasty : 10
  2. intradiscal procedures ( IDET, Nucleoplasty, disc replacement, artificial disc ) : 10
  3. decompressive procedure ( laminectomy, laminotomy, laminoplasty, disectomy etc.) : 19
  4. endoscopic procedure : 16
  5. fusion procedures ( interbody fusion, intertransverse fusion etc ) : 51
  6. instrument : 25
  7. tumor operation : 2
  8. medical, rehabilitation, psychologic treatment : 18
  9. non-operative procedure ( radiofrequency, rhizotomy, facet injection etc ) : 7
  10. no procedure : 25

* Numbers of cases
  1. less than 10 : 6
  2. 11 – 50 cases : 50
  3. 52 – 100 cases : 40
  4. 101 – 150 cases : 19
  5. 151 – 200 cases : 8
  6. more than 200 cases : 29 ( c.f. : more than 1000 cases : 8 )

* Follow-up periods
  1. less than 1 year : 19
  2. 1 to 2 years : 44
  3. more than 2 years : 38
  4. no follow-up period : 46
Country of presentors
1. USA : 126
2. Asia (32) : Japan (13), Korea (7), others (12)
3. Europe : 46
4. Others (Australia, Brazil, Africa etc) : 7
5. Mixed : 22

* Subjects of Scientific Poster
1. anatomy / physiology : 9
2. biomechanics / basic science : 15
3. diagnosis / imaging : 14
4. epidemiology : 3
5. nonoperative treatment : 9
6. surgery : 165

Country of author for poster
1. USA : 78
2. Asia (30) : Japan (6), Korea (7), India (10), others (7)
3. Europe : 79 (including Turkey (19))
4. others : 25

The topics which were concerned in the symposium was not typically different from any other spine meetings, but this was absolutely not an American spine meeting and every one could agree with this. There were many presenters from other countries, such as Europe, Asia, and etc. Of course, there were some problems in communications, but not as much as I expected. However, if this meeting wants to be established as a most magnificent and informative international conference, the quality of topics and issues must be upgraded, not restricted in introductive procedures. I am looking forward to seeing how it gets change on 2005.

At this meeting, World Spine Society was newly created, and Young-Soo Kim, MD and Hiroshi Nakagawa, MD were nominated as the Board of Directors.