

## Recap of the 2017 SNO Wilkins-Barrick International Outreach Course held in Sri Lanka

Recap submitted by Ruvini Abeygunaratne

A SNO Wilkins-Barrick International Outreach Course in Neuro-Oncology was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on the 21st of January 2017. This was made possible by the generous grant awarded by the Greg Wilkins-Barrick Chair in International Surgery with matching support from the SNO Foundation. This momentous meeting was indeed a landmark event as it also initiated the first Neurosurgical academic sessions in Sri Lanka, which is a feat in itself.

Recovering from thirty years of civil war, Sri Lanka is making leaps and bounds in catching up with the rest of the world with regards to medical progress, and the course was another important building block in this process.

The course was held on the 21st of January at the Galleface hotel this was preceded on the 20th by an inauguration ceremony, where we welcomed our national and international speakers. As the function was a key event, the Minister of Health attended as the chief guest. It was a great privilege to have some of my teachers who are also experts in the field of neuro-oncology attend as speakers. It was also a great honor to have Gelareh Zadeh as our guest of honor and a speaker. We were able to cover all important aspects of neuro-oncology. The attendance was astounding and unexpected. Neurosurgeons but also neurologists, pathologists, anesthesiologists, radiologists and their trainees attended. The feedback we received was outstanding.

The course laid the first building block in not only bringing attention to the practice of neurooncology in Sri Lanka but also bringing together the neurosurgeons and allied professional to provide the best evidence based management for this important group of patients. The importance of a multidisciplinary approach was emphasized throughout the course.

The course initiated a cascade of events. Firstly and most importantly the importance of working together for the betterment of the patients. Great emphasis was placed on the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. The need to initiate a recruitment drive for more neurosurgeons is currently being looked into as we are in need of at least one hundred neurosurgeons for the population of Sri Lanka and currently we only have fifteen. Protocol driven management is being established, and we are in the process of setting up a brain tumor database. With regards to allied professionals, we will be looking into training specialist nurses in the area of neuro-oncology, which is a new concept in Sri Lanka. We are also looking into aspects of patient education and support networks for patients and their families when dealing with malignant brain tumors. We would also be looking into the establishment of links with other units of excellence from around the world for guidance and training opportunities.

The organizers would like to thank wholeheartily on behalf of the neurosurgeons association of Sri Lanka the Greg Wilkins-Barrick Chair in International Surgery and the Society for Neuro-Oncology for awarding us this grant and being pivotal in the events that followed.

