

Course Title: USANZ Trainee Week 2025, Sydney, Australia

Submitted by: Sho Nonoyama

Department / Institution: Department of Urology

Country: Japan

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Background

I was born and raised in Japan, and I am currently a PGY-7 urology trainee in the Hokkaido University program. Although I am not a native English speaker, I am presently working at the United States Naval Hospital Yokosuka.

One of my long-term goals is to improve access to high-quality medical care for everyone. In Japan, this includes supporting individuals who do not speak Japanese, which should not be a barrier to receiving proper care. As I approached the final phase of my residency training, the opportunity to attend comprehensive lectures delivered in English, and to interact with residents and fellows from around the world at a similar stage of training, was extremely appealing to me.

Program Overview

The USANZ Trainee Week is an educational program designed for urology residents and fellows in Australia and New Zealand. International delegates are selected from the EAU (x2), BSoT (x2), CUA (x2), and UAA (x4). The program aims to strengthen urological knowledge and promote the international collaboration and exchange of surgical expertise and academic perspectives within the field of urology.

Lessons Learned

It began with observing the USANZ trainees undergoing oral examinations. We were genuinely impressed with the questions covering wide range of topics and the ability of the trainee to think and communicate clearly under pressure.

We then went to the series of extensive lectures, which covered a broad range of urological medicine and surgery from female urology, urethral diverticulum, and mesh management on the first day, to male infertility, urolithiasis, radiation therapy, RPLND, and communication skills such as delivering difficult news. While I will not describe each session in detail, every lecture provided valuable insight and practical knowledge.

The highlight of the trainee week is Masters of the Uroverse quiz where each team representing each region of Australia compete for the prize. Six of the international delegates joined as a wildcard. The costumes were a lot of fun and once again we were impressed with the deep knowledge of the urology trivia.

One of the most striking impressions was the difference in training structure and operative exposure. Securing a urology training position in Australia or New Zealand appears much more competitive than in Japan; however, once accepted, trainees receive significantly more hands-on surgical experience. For example, one of the fellows told us that a program in Queensland performs approximately 180 robotic prostatectomies annually per trainee, far exceeding typical numbers in Japan. Although case volume is not the sole measure of competence, the gap was substantial.

Another realization was the privilege we have in Japan regarding access to advanced technology. Many hospitals possess da Vinci systems, and I had taken that for granted. In contrast, even an advanced healthcare system such as Australia has limited access to robotic platforms, which reshaped my perspective.

Networking

One of the greatest rewards was meeting fellow trainees and senior residents representing Canada, the United Kingdom, Armenia, South Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, India, and the USANZ region. The connections formed during this week were truly invaluable. Every evening we shared meals, conversations and experiences, not only about urology but also about culture, training systems, and life. This network is, without question, the greatest takeaway from the program.

Some of international trainees were interested in clinical and research fellowship training in Japan, especially in the field of robotics. I also learned a lot about the various fellowship opportunities worldwide, which helped me identify my future fellowship opportunities.

Benefits

The educational content was highly informative and grounded in the latest evidence from AUA and EAU guidelines. Compared to JUA webinars or conference seminars, the format felt more interactive and tailored to trainees, which made asking questions easier and discussions more dynamic.

The program was supported by twelve industry partners, all of whom contributed hands-on workshops, simulation labs, and product demonstrations, enhancing the practical learning experience.

Beyond education, the organizers arranged three formal dinner events, which created additional opportunities for meaningful discussion and strengthened connections between international delegates and USANZ members. By the end of the week, many of us had already made plans to meet again at future conferences.

Recommendations

I highly recommend this program to senior residents and fellows seeking advanced learning opportunities, international collaboration, and professional growth. The clinical knowledge gained and friendships formed through this experience are truly invaluable.

Photographs

