

# LIMB SALVAGE MASTERCLASS - LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

Orthopaedic oncology remains a niche in today's orthopaedic practice. Bone tumours or sarcomas are still extremely rare but devastating nonetheless for the patient, with many fearing loss of life, limb or function as a result of their disease. In the past, major sarcomas would have to be removed by grossly mutilating dissection and frequently, amputation of the affected limb.

However, over the past 50 years, limb salvage surgery has proven to be as effective as amputation for eradicating limb tumours. A multi-disciplinary approach to these 'beasts' in Orthopaedics have shown that it is possible to preserve form, function and quality of life without compromising survival. Coupled with advances in chemotherapy and radiotherapy regimens, we now see fewer amputations due to bone cancers, thus enabling our sarcoma patients to continue leading functional, fulfilling lives even after major surgery.



Left to right: Prof Peter Choong, A/Prof Tan Mann Hong, Dr Henry Soeharno, Dr Suraya, Dr Lester Chan

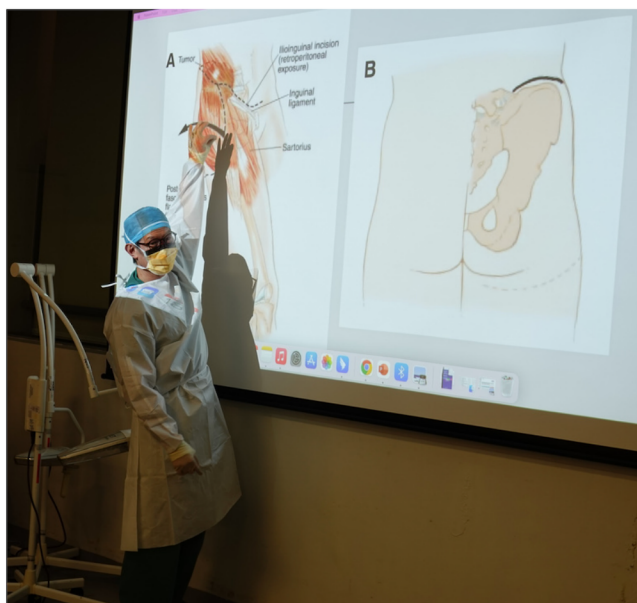
SGH Orthopaedics, in close collaboration with our colleagues at The National Cancer Centre were proud to host the first Limb Salvage Cadaveric Workshop this year, as part of the inaugural Singhealth Sarcoma and Skin Symposium 2023. The workshop attracted participants ranging from junior residents to senior orthopaedic surgeons in private practice, both local and international.

We were honoured to have **Prof Peter Choong** (Hugh Devine Professor of Surgery, Head of the Department of Surgery at St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne and past president of the Australian Orthopaedic Association) as well as **A/Prof Tan Mann Hong** (Senior Consultant and Director of the Musculoskeletal Tumour Service at the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Singapore General Hospital) to helm this full day cadaveric course.



**Hands on cadaveric dissection, demonstrated by Prof Peter Choong and A/Prof Tan Mann Hong.**

Due to the relative rarity of bone sarcomas compared to the bulk of our day-to-day Orthopaedic work, it can be difficult for trainees to gain exposure to limb salvage surgeries during the course of their training. A hemipelvectomy or major femoral resection can be something that a trainee never encounters on their long journey to becoming an Orthopaedic Surgeon and it is therefore wholly understandable that this entity of “Sarcoma Resection and Limb Salvage Surgery” may seem daunting to many.



**Lecture on the principles of limb salvage and approaches by Prof Peter Choong.**

Sarcoma surgery is not for the faint hearted, and the adage of “see one, do one, teach one” certainly does not hold here. These major resections are challenging. In most cases, the anatomy of the patient is altered due to the presence of a large deforming tumour. Major neurovascular structures are frequently in extremely close proximity – necessitating an intimate knowledge of the pre-operative imaging and structures at risk, as well as a clear surgical plan of what needs to be removed and what needs to be preserved – and how to get there safely.

This article is contributed by Dr Suraya Zainul Abidin.  
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