

Professor Man Chung HAN – A global radiology luminary talks about his role in the first Asian Oceanian Congress of Radiology (AOCR) hosted by the Korean Society of Radiology (KSR) in 1987 and reflects on the AOCR and AOSR.

This in-person interview was conducted in Korean in Seoul, Korea by AOSR Hon Advisor Professor Byung Ihn CHOI, translated by Professor Choi and edited by Professor Han. September 5, 2023



Professor Man Chung HAN is a legendary figure in the world of radiology. He is an emeritus professor at Seoul National University, College of Medicine. Professor Han served in various leadership roles in the education, research, clinical practice, and management fields of radiology including chairperson of department of radiology, president of Seoul National University Hospital, and president of many medical societies including the Korean Society of Radiology (KSR).

Professor Han has been awarded as an honorary member or honorary fellow of many international and national societies including RSNA, ECR, ACR, JRS, JCVIR and as a gold medallist of KSR, AOSR, APCVIR, etc.

What has been the highlight of your AOSR career?

I consider AOCR 1987 to be the highlight of my AOSR career. In March 1983, the executive council of KSR decided to bid to host the 5th AOCR. At the 4th AOCR from November 13 to 18, 1983 in Bangkok, the AOSR executive council decided and announced KSR to be the host of the 5th AOCR to be held in Seoul. On March 5, 1984, a kick-off meeting was held at COEX in Seoul with more than 60 members of the AOCR 1987 organizing committee. I was nominated as Secretary General of AOCR 1987 organizing committee. The organizing committee for preparing AOCR 1987 consisted of 10 sub-committees. From 1984 to 1987, the organizing committee members attended various national meetings of AOSR affiliated societies, and international meetings including radiology, ultrasound, and CT/MR to promote the AOCR 1987.

The 5th Asian Oceanian Congress of Radiology was held at Hilton Hotel in Seoul, Korea from September 21 to 25, 1987. A total of 2100 participants from 36 countries participated including 715 Korean members, 738 foreign participants and 647 industry representatives. The scientific program consisted of 2 congress lectures, 4 plenary lectures, 23 state-of-the-art symposia, 16 refresher course lectures, and 35 scientific sessions. For the scientific program, 123 speakers were invited to give 138 lectures and serve as moderators. For the scientific sessions and exhibition, there were 241 oral presentations and 102 scientific exhibits. For technical exhibits, 80 exhibitors participated with 214 booths set up including five major sponsors. During the congress, several business meetings of the AOSR were held. The Executive Council meeting and the AOSR General Assembly were held during the Congress. AOCR 1987 had been an opportunity to elevate the academic standard of AOSR and to provide a turning point in the history of AOCR and a platform to be a regional meeting as an international event.

What is the most important role of the Korean AOCR in the history of AOSR?

Korea hosted the AOCR three times, in 1987, 2008 and 2022. As I mentioned earlier, the AOCR1987 was the largest AOCR ever with over 2000 participants from 36 countries and over 480 scientific lectures and presentations as compared with previous AOCR in the 20th century. AOCR 2008 organized by Professor Byung Ihn CHOI, Congress President and Professor Dong Ik KIM, Secretary General, was also a record- breaking success not only in quantity but in quality, with more than 3200 attendees from

62 countries and more than 280 lectures, more than 1150 accepted scientific presentations, and more than 200 technical exhibits from 76 exhibitors.

What was the most important aspect of hosting the AOCR and how can we continue to maintain the academic quality of the AOCR? Any advice on what we should do in the future?



Prof Han (left) and Prof Choi (Right)

In the light of the AOSR's mission, the first priority is to ensure that the member societies hosting the AOCR are able to deliver a conference of appropriate academic quality which means that the host society must have strong academic resources, including personnel, scholarly achievements, and financial support. An analysis of past AOCR congresses shows that those hosted by globalized societies with strong organizing committee have been world-class congresses.

AOCR 2022 organized by Professor Jeong Min LEE, Congress President, and Professor Seung Eun Jung, Secretary General, was also another record-breaking, successful meeting with more than 4800 attendees from

43 countries and over 2000 presentations including 1127 lectures and 931 accepted scientific papers, despite being held as an on-line/off-line hybrid meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Every AOCR held in Korea has been a great opportunity to upgrade the congress standard of the AOSR and to provide an unforgettable moment and platform to enhance mutual friendship and professional networking among AOSR "family" of participants.

Until the AOCR establishes a strong global reputation, it is desirable that prominent member societies take on the responsibility of hosting the congress. In the meantime, smaller societies can benefit from a high-quality congress as well as participate in specific regional scholarly activities supported by the AOSR. Offering alternative regional and global AOCRs on a biennial basis could be an option that balances the quality of the AOCR with hosting opportunities among all AOSR member societies. However, the appeal of AOCR lies primarily in its academic quality, which exceeds that of individual congresses organized by member societies. Captivating the interest of the member societies is an important factor in determining the future trajectory of the AOCR.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the AOSR compared to the regional/continental societies?

In the past, the AOSR and AOCR were a "developing" society and congress in the world with weak infrastructure and low brand power. There was no fixed secretariat, and the AOCR's venue and AOSR secretariat changed depending on the host societies and presidents, resulting in uneven quality of AOCR and secretarial services depending on the host societies and presidents.

The RSNA and ESR have strong and stable secretariat with many competent staff in Chicago and Vienna, respectively, and the congress venues are also fixed in the cities where the secretariats are located. As you know, the AOSR is a society in the world covering the largest geographic area and

population, so it has a lot of potential. The secretariat of AOSR was first relocated to Australia in 2005 and managed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR). Then in 2011, the Korean Society of Radiology (KSR) took over the management and AOSR was registered in Korea. Several member societies now have global leadership and capacity to increase the academic appeal of the AOSR. According to the (2016 RSNA President) Dr. Richard Baron's presentation at the 2015 Japan Radiology Congress, in terms of recent Asian scientific activity in the RSNA meeting before COVID-19 pandemic, the number of accepted scientific abstracts was 327 from Japan, 290 from Korea and 273 from China. The Impact Factor of 2022-2023 for latest journals is higher for the Korean Journal of Radiology (7.11) than for the European Radiology (7.03) and for the American Journal of Roentgenology (6.58).

What are your thoughts on the reason for existence and value of the AOSR?

The AOSR should be a strong foundation for Asian and Oceanian radiologists to pursue their goals. From a global perspective, the AOSR should function as a regional organization representing radiologists in Asia and Oceania and position itself as an equal partner with other regional societies such as the RSNA and ESR.

How can the AOSR adequately represent the academic quality of Asia-Oceania?

The AOSR faces an inherent challenge in that there is a significant gap in the academic level of its members compared to its partner societies. To overcome this obstacle, the AOSR must make a concerted effort to leverage the potential of the advanced societies to support those in smaller societies. To establish a fair representation of Asia and Oceania as equal partners with other regional societies, it is important to prioritize raising the average academic quality within the AOSR. Practically, I believe that Asian Oceanian School of Radiology (AOSOR) proposed and run by Professor Byung Ihn CHOI is a good tool for this purpose. During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual on-line meetings have replaced traditional off-line meetings, and recently, all lecturers have become accustomed to virtual teaching. Therefore, AOSR can prepare and utilize on-line virtual teaching materials for its member societies.

What has the AOSR done to achieve equal partnership with RSNA and ESR, and what more needs to be done?

To my knowledge, the AOSR leadership including the AOSR president and secretary have endeavored to have ongoing joint business meetings with the ESR and RSNA during each congress of AOSR, RSNA, and ECR. It is important to maintain these business meetings to understand each other's societies. However, effective, and productive communication between regional societies, requires smart and competent presidents who are globally recognized not only politically but also academically, with a solid background in society management. In addition, an efficient secretariat is important, so, efforts should be made to expand the capability of secretariat. In summary, I recommend to select a smart person of global stature with foresight, wisdom, and expertise as the AOSR president, and if possible, strengthen the secretariat.