

Prof. Paul Van Schil: association should provide a high-quality platform for young surgeons

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Founded in July, 2016, the Asia Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ASTS) recently gathered numerous experts from different international thoracic associations, like American Association of Thoracic Surgeons (AATS), Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery (EACTS), International Society of Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery (ISMICS), Canadian Association of Thoracic Surgeons (CATS), etc., together to have an active and aspiring discussion and sharing about the better development of ASTS. During this time, the Editorial Office of *AME Medical Journal (AMJ)* seized the opportunity to have an interview with Prof. Paul Van Schil, former president of EACTS (*Figure 1*).

Based on his experience, during the interview, Prof. Van Schil introduced three levels of education program in EACTS—meetings, different courses and practice with tutor. Through these three levels of program, the association could not just help young surgeons to acquire technique and knowledge but also help them to develop practical skills.

When talking about the reason for keeping an association stand for long, Prof. Van Schil thought factors including program with good quality, and providing opportunity for young surgeons are important.

Combining the experience in European associations, Prof. Van Schil mentioned different countries and languages in ASTS would be the biggest challenge for ASTS since it'll be hard to reunite everybody from many different cultures.

As for how should an association encourage its member to contribute, Prof. Van Schil emphasized the importance of providing a good platform for young surgeons, which is an opportunity for them to present in front of the whole world.

At the end of the interview, Prof. Van Schil as well shared with us his way of balancing the heavy workload and updating with the latest progress in the thoracic field. Given his own working experience for so many years, Prof. Van Schil also told us his idea about the essential quality as



Figure 1 Picture with Prof. Van Schil.

a surgeon—caring for the patients!

For more details, please click the following video (*Figure 2*):

Interview questions:

- (I) As the past president of European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery, here based on your experience, would you like to share with us some education or training programs in EACTS? How are these program help to improve surgeons' skill?
- (II) We know that EACTS just had its 30th annual meeting. Here in your opinion, what'll be the reason or important factor to stand long among so many associations?
- (III) Today's discussion covered many topics about developing ASTS, like language, journal, financial issue, etc. Among all these, what do you think is the biggest challenge for ASTS to develop?
- (IV) Doctors are always busy. Then how should the association encourage its member to contribute? What should an association provide for its members?
- (V) You're a cardiothoracic surgeon and also member of other organization as well as past president of EACTS. Would you like to tell us how do you balance your clinical work, association responsibility



Figure 2 Prof. Paul Van Schil: association should provide a high-quality platform for young surgeons (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1265>

and personal life?

- (VI) Under the circumstance that you're so busy, than how do you update yourself with the latest progress in the thoracic field?
- (VII) As a surgeon for so many years, what quality do you think is important for a surgeon for the sake of patients as well as self-development?

Expert introduction:

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Prof. Paul Van Schil was born on July 7, 1957 in Antwerp, Belgium. He graduated from medical school with great honor in 1982 at the University of Antwerp. After completing his training in general surgery he became a fellow in the department of cardiothoracic surgery at the Antonius Hospital, Nieuwegein, the Netherlands. His doctoral thesis was entitled "Bronchial sleeve resection for lung cancer: long-term results". In 1990 he became a staff member at the department of surgery of the Antwerp University Hospital in Belgium. Currently, Prof. Schil is professor in thoracic and vascular surgery at the Faculty of Medicine and chair of the department of thoracic and vascular surgery of the University Hospital of Antwerp. From October 2013 till October 2014 he was president of the European Association for Cardio-thoracic Surgery. His main interests are thoracic and vascular surgery with a special emphasis on lung cancer staging and therapy, lung metastases and mesothelioma.

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1. Gao S. Prof. Paul Van Schil: association should provide a high-quality platform for young surgeons. *Asvide* 2016;3:490. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1265>

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