

# Prof. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas & Prof. Alan Sihoe: what do we need to think about uniportal video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery?

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Uniportal video-assisted thoracic surgery (VATS) is being more and more popular as a procedure of thoracic surgery. On March 16–18, 2016, the 3<sup>rd</sup> international uniportal VATS course—Live Surgery & Wetlab was held in Berlin.

It was a 3-day-masterclass symposium jointly organized by the University Hospital Charité in Berlin, Germany, the University Hospital in Coruña, Spain and the Shanghai Pulmonary Hospital, Tongji University Shanghai, China.

This symposium addressed the technique and advances of uniportal VATS by lectures, discussions and video sessions on the first day and Live Surgery and Live Broadcasting from Shanghai Pulmonary Hospital of major pulmonary resections via uniportal VATS on day 2. The third day of this symposium is a Hands-on class (Wetlab) (*Figure 1*).

During the course, we are honored to interview Dr. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas & Dr. Alan Sihoe, who shared about their reflection on uniportal VATS.

Like any other walks of life, in the thoracic surgeons' community, blossoms of friendship were witnessed for their commonly shared passion and outlook. Diego and Alan are such very good friends to each other well known in the thoracic surgery arena. They banteringly called themselves as “uniportal guy” as pioneer and successor of uniportal technique in thoracic surgery. Based on their communication and experience in Europe and China even Asia, Diego and Alan can take a look at the development of uniportal VATS in these two continents.

## Interview questions (*Figure 2*)

- What do you love about uniportal VATS surgery?
- How popular is uniportal VATS in Europe and Asia?
- When did you first perform uniportal VATS?
- Is experience with conventional VATS needed before performing uniportal VATS?
- What is the challenge in promoting uniportal VATS further?
- What do you think is the future development of uniportal VATS? What about uniportal non-intubated

surgery?

- What would be your suggestions for the young thoracic surgeons?

## Introduction of the experts

Dr. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas is a graduate of Santiago de Compostela University and the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Coruña University (MD) (*Figure 3*). He received training in General Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, and lung transplantation at Coruña University Hospital. After completing a year working in Santiago University Hospital joined the faculty at Coruña Hospital and is currently Thoracic Surgeon in Coruña University center and an active member of lung transplantation program (40 cases per year). He is the creator of Minimally Invasive Thoracic Surgery Unit (UCTMI) working at Quiron Hospital, San Rafael and Modelo medical center. Actually he works in these four medical hospitals at Coruña city and in Shanghai Pulmonary hospital, in Shanghai, China. He is the director of the uniportal VATS training program at Shanghai Pulmonary Hospital (biggest thoracic center in the world).

Dr. Gonzalez Rivas serves on several editorial boards. He is the Associate Editor of *Journal of Visualized Surgery (JOVS)* and is reviewer of many scientific journals. He is the organizer of the annual meeting of Spanish Society of Thoracic Surgery (SECT) from 2014–2017. He also collaborates with educational activities of European Society of Thoracic Surgeons (ESTS) and International Society of Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery (ISMICS). He is a board European certificated surgeon since 2010 (FECTS). He started to perform VATS lobectomies in 2007 after learning the technique at Cedars Sinai. After 100 major resections performed he visited Duke medical center to learn the double port technique with Dr. Thomas D'Amico. Once experience was gained with this technique he evolved to single-port approach.

He was pioneer surgeon in the world performing uniportal VATS lobectomies (first case in June 2010) and



**Figure 1** Dr. Gonzalez-Rivas & Dr. Sihoe were signing on their book “*Uniportal Video-Assisted Thoracic Surgery*” for the best trainee in the course. For more information about the book, please go to: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/9881402735>



**Figure 2** Prof. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas & Prof. Alan Sihoe: what do we need to think about uniportal video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (1)? Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/articles/1046>

non-intubated uniportal major pulmonary resections (first case in April 2014). He has published several papers describing these procedures and the results in the most important medical journals and textbooks of thoracic surgery. More information about the technique in [www.videothoracoscopy.com](http://www.videothoracoscopy.com).

Dr. Alan Sihoe is currently a Clinical Associate Professor of the Departments of Surgery at the University of Hong Kong, and the Chief of Thoracic Surgery at the University of Hong Kong Shenzhen Hospital in Shenzhen, China (Figure 4). He is also an Honorary Consultant in Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong.

Dr. Sihoe received his medical training at the University



**Figure 3** Snapshot of Dr. Diego Gonzalez-Rivas, Department of Thoracic Surgery, Coruña University Hospital, Coruña, Spain.



**Figure 4** Snapshot of Dr. Alan Sihoe, Department of Surgery, The University of Hong Kong, Queen Mary Hospital, Hong Kong, China.

of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, where he was awarded multiple prizes and where he received an Honors degree and a Master's degree for research in Pathology. After working in Scotland and England, he completed his training in Cardiothoracic Surgery in Hong Kong under the mentorship of Prof. Anthony Yim.

Dr. Sihoe is a recognized expert and advocate of ‘next generation’ minimally invasive thoracic surgery techniques—especially uniportal and needlescopic chest surgery. He is a frequent Invited Lecturer and Faculty member at conferences and surgical education events throughout Asia, Europe and North America, sharing his experiences in these advanced thoracic surgical techniques. His many research interests include pain reduction and

air leak management strategies following pulmonary operations. Dr. Sihoe has published extensively, and has won or been short-listed for multiple awards in thoracic surgery and clinical research.

Dr. Sihoe is the co-Editor-in-Chief of *JOVS*, an Associate Editor of the *Interactive Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery* journal, and an Editorial Board member of multiple international journals in Surgery and Respiratory Medicine. He is the only Asian member of the Scientific Program Committee of the ESTS, and the Asia Team Captain for the ESTS Postgraduate Course. He is also a Committee Member of the Asian Thoracoscopic Surgery Education Program and of the Society for Minimally Invasive Thoracic Surgery. He is an examiner for the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong, a member of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Hong Kong, and a former member of the Cardiothoracic Surgery Board of Hong Kong.

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## Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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