SINGAPORE OTOLARYNGOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION:

- Otolaryngology training in Singapore has consisted of three years of basic surgical training (BST) after candidates have been appointed as Otolaryngology trainees, followed by three years of advanced surgical training (AST). The Otolaryngology Specialist Training Committee (STC) proposes to change this to a five-year program with one year of surgical rotations and four years of Otolaryngology training (1 + 4).

OBJECTIVE:

- To establish a five-year Otolaryngology-Head & Neck training programme in Singapore, which will train well-qualified Otolaryngologists, allowing the trainees to participate in the Singapore exit examination given by the Otolaryngology STC.

GOALS:

- Country wide programme in Singapore
- Participants qualified to sit the Singapore exit exam.
- Provide an organized systematic didactic programme that will cover the basic science, research and clinical aspects of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery.
- Provide research exposure concurrent with one or more of their clinical rotations.
Prepare well-qualified participants to enter academic or government service, private practice or an overseas advanced fellowship programme.

Provide an atmosphere to encourage ongoing self-education and participation in continuing medical education activities to stay current with advances in the field of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO OTOLARYNGOLOGY TRAINING PROGRAM:

- Prerequisites
  - MBBS or equivalent
  - Housemanship (HO) – one year
  - Pass Membership Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS) exam, Part A
  - Appointments made in January to start five-year programme in May.

- Applications
  - Applications must be submitted by 1 November for appointment to start the training program the following May. Successful candidates will be notified by 31 January.
  - Application must include
    - Completed application form
    - Curriculum vitae
    - Medical school records
Three letters of reference from supervisor of HO or Medical Officer (MO).

- Successful candidates will be chosen on a competitive basis based on medical school record, personal recommendations during their HO year and as a MO, plus a personal interview.

PROGRAMME:

- Rotations
  - Year I – two six month posting as a MO or equivalent – surgical postings would include a minimum of six months general surgery and a six month posting in another surgical specialty.
  - Year II – two-six month Otolaryngology postings in Singapore General Hospital (SGH), Tan Tuck Sing Hospital (TTSH) and/or National University Hospital (NUH).
  - Year III to V – equal rotations of eight months each through SGH, TTSH, NUH and Changi General Hospital (CGH) and four months at KKCWH.
  - The Director of Training in conjunction with the Otolaryngology STC will determine the rotations.
  - All trainees will have equivalent and consistent rotations. Trainees would be expected to complete the five-year programme in five consecutive years and in only exceptional circumstances could
they temporarily drop out and return to the programme at the
discretion of the Otolaryngology STC.

- Each participating department must arrange for clinical and
  surgical experience, which must be supervised by consultants and
  shall co-operate with the designated programme director.

- The training program will be built on the concept of graduated
  responsibility. The Director of Training, the training committee
  and Otolaryngology STC will monitor the progress of each trainee
  on a yearly basis. It is expected that trainees will have experience
  in direct and progressively responsible patient management as they
  advance through the training program. This education must
  culminate in sufficient independent responsibility for clinical
  decision making to reflect that the finishing trainee will have
  developed sound clinical judgment and possesses the ability to
  formulate and carry out appropriate management plans.

- The trainee will be responsible to keep a logbook of operations,
  which he or she participated in, and attendance at approved courses
  and meetings.

- Didactic Programme

  - Department Heads have agreed to give the trainees protected time
    for a weekly meeting for all trainees, Monday from 7:00 AM –
    9:30 AM. The topics will include all areas of Otolaryngology in a
    systematic curriculum over a three-year period, which will be
updated and repeated. The director of training will be responsible for coordinating the program and topics. The format will include:

- Tutorials
- Case presentations by the trainees
- Journal club
- Guest lectures
- X-ray conference

- Hospital departmental meetings:
  - Mortality & Morbidity Conference
  - Case Discussions
  - Grand rounds with department head
  - Tumor board

- Research – research projects will be encouraged. The Otolaryngology STC has designated Dr. Wang De Yun, research scientist at NUS as a consultant and advisor for the trainees in the area of research. The goal is to have the residents ask a critical question and design a research project to answer the question, with the goal of writing and submitting a paper for publication.

- A temporal bone course will be provided for the trainees in Year III.

- A Functional Endoscopic Sinus Course will be provided for the trainees in Year IV.
o Conferences – trainees will be encouraged to go for overseas courses and conferences at least once a year and to take advantage of local courses for Otolaryngology.

☐ Qualifications

o During the last half of Year III the trainee will take the Masters of Medicine in Otolaryngology sponsored by the NUS Department of Graduate Medical Studies and the Otolaryngology STC.

o Trainees must pass the Singapore Otolaryngology STC exit exam to be on the Singapore Accreditation Board (SAB) Registry of Specialists.

o On completion of the five year program the successful candidate will be eligible for a MOH – HMDP grant, as an Associate Consultant in a restructured hospital or to enter private practice.

☐ Evaluations

o It will be the responsibility of each Department Head to complete an evaluation for each trainee in conjunction with the other departmental members within one month of the completion of each posting and submit this to the director of the training programme. Appropriate forms will be supplied. The director will present the evaluations to the Otolaryngology STC and will discuss the evaluation with the trainee so they can be aware of their progress.
With the 1 + 4 seamless training, the trainees will be evaluated each year by the Otolaryngology STC for eligibility to be promoted to the next year of training.

SUMMARY:

- In summary the Otolaryngology STC feels that the outlined program can provide excellent Otolaryngology training in Singapore.