

Travel Scholar Daily Log

Sunday 19th April 2026

Travel Reception Evening Meet

I had a great time attending the Travel Scholar reception at the Camino Real Hotel during International Surgical Week in Mexico. It felt extra special because although ISW was held in my home country two years ago, I couldn't attend then as I had just started working in East Malaysia.

Getting here took 3 flights and nearly 30 hours, but it was absolutely worth it. I'm incredibly grateful for the travel scholarship—without it, I wouldn't have had the chance to attend ISW in Mexico.

At the reception, I had the privilege of meeting inspiring figures like Mr Michael Sarr and Prof Ho Seong Han, who kindly introduced me as an IASMEN scholar. I also met Prof Yip Cheng Har for the first time, along with fellow award recipient Fong Yan Bin. Listening to stories from such accomplished surgeons—true “superhero” figures like Mr Ari Leppäniemi—was both humbling and motivating.

Being in a room with so many renowned names in surgery was truly unforgettable.

Monday 20th April 2026

Day 1 of ISW Conference

I started the day early, putting on my best suit—it was an exciting morning as I made my way to the conference venue to receive my travel scholarship certificate. The weather was cool and sunny, making it perfect for a peaceful half-hour walk to the venue and a great way to start the day.

Walking up on stage to receive the award from Prof Ho, I felt a mix of pride and gratitude. It was a special moment to represent Malaysia, and I couldn't help but reflect on how far I've come to be here.

I also had the chance to connect with fellow travel scholars from Africa, Chile, and Argentina. Hearing about their journeys and sharing experiences made the whole event even more meaningful, and I truly hope these connections turn into lifelong friendships.

Throughout the day, I moved between different conference sessions, gaining valuable perspectives in areas I'm particularly interested in, such as UGI, trauma, and nutrition. It was inspiring to learn from experts and see how others approach similar challenges.

The day ended with the Mexican Night dinner, which was a fantastic experience. Great food, a lively atmosphere, and more opportunities to meet new people—it was the perfect way to wrap up an already memorable day. I feel incredibly grateful and lucky to be part of this experience.

Tuesday 21st April 2026**Day 2 of ISW Conference**

Today's highlight was moving between different sessions throughout the conference, especially in areas I'm passionate about like nutrition, trauma, and upper gastrointestinal surgery. Each talk offered something new, and I found it both insightful and eye-opening to see how colleagues from different countries approach similar challenges. It was a great reminder of how much we can learn from one another, and it really broadened my perspective on patient care and surgical practice

Wednesday 22nd April 2026**Day 3 of ISW Conference**

I had the chance to present my oral paper—definitely a nerve-wracking but incredibly fulfilling experience. Sitting in on the ISS General Assembly also gave me a better sense of the wider surgical community and the work happening behind the scenes globally. One of the nicest parts was catching up again with fellow travel scholars and students—sharing stories, exchanging contacts, and just enjoying the moment together. It really felt like the start of many lasting friendships, and I'm hopeful we'll meet again, maybe at ISW 2028 in South Africa.

Thursday 23rd April 2026**Day 4 of ISW Conference**

On the last day of conference, it was a bittersweet day, as I had the chance to say goodbye to many of the new friends I had made over the week. Before wrapping up, I even had a short video interview with the official photographer—hopefully it makes it into the final highlights!