



# ATLS™ INTERNATIONAL

**ATLS International** is a monthly electronic newsletter that circulates the latest quality information on news and events across the ATLS global spectrum. Please contact Jasmine Alkhatib with questions or suggestions at [jalkhatib@facs.org](mailto:jalkhatib@facs.org).

## REGION XIV: LATIN AMERICA

### ATLS–Colombia

by *María Fernanda Jiménez, MD, FACS*

With an area of 1.14 million square kilometers and a population of more than 44 million, trauma in Colombia has been the most critical public health concern for the last four decades. In 1995, the annual homicide rate reached approximately 127 per 100,000 inhabitants, roughly seven times the global average and one of the highest homicide rates in the world. These were the figures when Francisco Holguin, MD, FACS, inaugurated the ATLS program in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1995. Octavio Ruiz, MD, FACS, from Mexico, directed the first Student and Instructor courses in Colombia, along with a group of Mexican instructors. Irvine Hughes, former ATLS Program Manager, coordinated the inaugural course.

In Colombia, ATLS is recognized as the most influential course that changed the paradigms of trauma care. ATLS has been conducted in Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali, where violence is extremely high. Over a period of 14 challenging years, we have trained 1,042 physicians and 51 instructors in 96 Student courses and 10 Instructor courses under the leadership of Jaime Escallón, MD, FACS; Francisco Holguin, MD, FACS; and Jorge Ospina, MD, FACS. Since my involvement as Chairperson for ATLS–Colombia, which began in June 2009, I have carried out 10 Student courses in Bogotá, Medellín, and Aruba.



**“In 1995, the annual homicide rate was approximately 127 per 100,000 inhabitants...one of the highest homicide rates in the world.”**



**ATLS fun among Colombian doctors.**

Internationally, ATLS–Colombia (Francisco Holguín, MD, and Daniel Alvarez, MD) assisted in the establishment of ATLS in Ecuador. Colombian faculty, under the direction of our Region XIV Chair, Renato Poggetti, MD, FACS, conducted a demonstration course in Aruba in October 2009.

Our commitment to research has also been rewarding. Three papers written under the supervision of Ricardo Ferrada, MD, FACS, did well at the ACS-COT Residents Paper Competition. Patricia Yugueros-1993 won first place, and Juan Manuel Sarmiento-1992 and Juan Pablo Carbonell-1998 won second place. Additionally, two projects performed under my supervision (Maria F. Jimenez-1994, Andres Becerra-2008) also represented Region XIV in the ACS-COT Residents Paper Competition.

Nowadays, homicide rates in Colombia have decreased but are still the leading cause of death. As physicians, we are direct witnesses to suffering caused by violence and trauma in Colombia. As ATLS instructors, we have the responsibility to improve trauma care in our territory. Our main goal in the immediate future is to expand ATLS throughout our metropolitan areas and all others regions where trauma is a health concern. Since Colombia is a developing country, and ATLS is not the norm in our medical system, we will also perform a controlled, sequential, before-and-after design study to determine the impact of ATLS on patient outcomes and educational intervention.



## REGION XV: EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA

### Mama Fatimah Hangs Up Her Boots

by *Subash Gautam, MD, FACS*

Popularly known as “Mama Fatimah” by coordinators in the Middle East and on the Indian subcontinent, former National Coordinator for ATLS–UAE Fatimah Albarracin retired at the end of 2009. Christmas and New Year celebrations were subdued among ATLS fraternity due to Fatimah’s decision to move to the U.S.

Fatimah completed her initial training in nursing in the Philippines in 1971 and pursued a BSN at the Pacific Union College in California in 1982. She is a registered nurse in many American states. Fatimah also served as regional faculty member for the American Heart Association (AHA), Basic Life Support (BLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS).

“Mama Fatimah” started her career as an ATLS coordinator in 1994 for ATLS–Saudi Arabia and later worked to establish three ATLS sites in the UAE in 2004. She was also instrumental in the establishment

of the PHTLS and ATCN programs in the UAE. Moreover, Fatimah founded several hospital life support programs adopted by many hospitals across our country. Having held senior positions in nurse tutoring, staff development, and Joint Commission programs in the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, she has received numerous awards for her work.

ATLS faculty in the UAE, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Lebanon, countries in which “Mama Fatimah” has been especially active in training coordinators for promulgations, will miss her. As a teacher and mentor, Fatimah displayed her affection as a mother. She has been a master teacher, master coordinator, master nurse, and above all, a humble and kind person.

All of us in the ATLS International family will miss our ace, our chief coordinator. Fatimah, you have an open invitation to return to ATLS–UAE, and we all hope you will come back after a short break.



**Day trip after ATLS–India inauguration in April 2009. Pictured from left to right: John Kortbeek, MD, FACS; Fatimah Albarracin; Diane Chetty; and Will Chapleau, ATLS Manager.**

## REGION XVI: AUSTRALASIA

### ATLS Holds Inaugural Course in Malaysia

“It is fantastic to have a multinational faculty representing the different nations of Region XVI,” Michael J. Hollands, MD, FACS, said during the first ATLS Provider course in Malaysia last month. Dr. Hollands, Region Chairperson for Australasia and Asia, was referring to ATLS representatives from Australia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and the U.S., who participated in the inaugural courses from January 18–23. The international faculty was led by Karen Brasel, MD, FACS, Chairperson for the ATLS Subcommittee, along with Dr. Hollands, who directed the course. Siew Kheong Lum, MD, FACS, Chairperson of ATLS–Malaysia, was evaluated as a director candidate, and five other Malaysian doctors were critiqued as successful instructor candidates.

The inaugural courses took place in a facility at Sungai Buloh Hospital, just north of Kuala Lumpur, built specifically for ATLS courses. The venue featured a lecture theater, rooms for the skill stations, and a site for surgical skills, accommodating two teams at a time. Two other rooms were set aside for faculty use. Lesley Dunstall, National Coordinator for ATLS–Australia, coordinated the course with Jasmine Alkhatib, ATLS International Coordinator. Wan Marina Wan Ismail and Yusof bin Said participated as Coordinator Candidates. Additionally, Mary Lawson from Australia was the Educator and monitored professor Moses Samuel as Malaysia’s Educator candidate. Professor Samuel said, “I am very impressed that



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the course participants can convert to new ways of thinking and approaches in a short span of five days. We can apply the same principles in training our teachers.”

Sixteen students, mostly senior clinicians and leaders of the profession, participated in the provider course and represented a number of hospitals in the western peninsula of Malaysia. Nine of the 16 participants were invited to the inaugural Malaysian Instructor course. The doctors included five surgeons and four emergency physicians, all of whom attended and passed the course.

Plans to run back-to-back Student and Instructor courses in Malaysia in coming months are in progress. Congratulations to all involved in the successful promulgation of ATLS in Malaysia!

“A multinational faculty from Thailand, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, and the United States, along with an incredibly dedicated group of students and staff from Malaysia, helped make the inaugural ATLS course in Malaysia a huge success. One of the most fun and rewarding aspects of the week was the camaraderie between students and instructors from so many countries. We welcome Malaysia as the newest member of the ATLS family!”

**Karen Brasel, MD, FACS, ATLS Subcommittee Chairperson**

“The inaugural Malaysian ATLS course was well run, and I feel it will maintain the high standard associated with ATLS courses throughout the world.... The present leadership has in place succession planning, and the course has been enthusiastically embraced by the medical community at large.”

**Michael J. Hollands, MD, FACS, ATLS Region XVI Chief**

“All the hard work in bringing the course to Malaysia was worth it. I made good friends all along the way, and we had a great course according to the feedback from the participants.”

**Siew Kheong Lum, MD, FACS, ATLS-Malaysia Chairperson**

“From an educational perspective, the inaugural ATLS course in Malaysia was vibrant, with many examples of active student-centered learning. The instructor candidates were among the most enthusiastic and committed that I have met. Their collective commitment to adopting interactive learning methods was inspiring and highly commendable.”

**Mary Lawson, ATLS Educator**

“The pre-course faculty meeting was the first indication to me that ATLS-Malaysia would have a successful inaugural course. The excitement and dedication among instructors and coordinators, both visiting and local, was unmistakably present.”

**Jasmine Alkhatib, ATLS International Coordinator**



**Students from the first ATLS-Malaysia Provider course.**



**International Faculty**



**Mary Lawson observes students.**

## About Our Organization....

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and to improve the care of the surgical patient. The College has worked to establish guidelines for the care of the trauma patient. The Advanced Trauma Life Support Course teaches a systematic, concise approach to the early care of the trauma patient. This course is vital to guiding care for the injured patient in emergency department trauma rooms. The course training provides a common language that can save lives in critical situations.

**Lesley Dunstall (Australia) and Jasmine Alkhatib (U.S.) with ATLS-Malaysia coordinators and assistants.**

