BEHIND THE LAB: THE JOURNEY, THE STRUGGLES, THE SUCCESS

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Why did you choose to enter medicine and above all, prefer to specialize in Electrophysiology?



I chose medicine because I wanted to do something meaningful for people and make a difference through my work. During my cardiology training, I became increasingly fascinated by cardiac electrophysiology because it combines physiology, anatomy, technology, and procedural skills. I was especially attracted to the opportunity to understand the electrophysiology behind arrhythmias and then treat them precisely. EP is a field where every case teaches you something new, and I found that combination of intellectual challenge and direct patient impact deeply rewarding.

What is the EP practice condition in Myanmar?

EP practice in Myanmar is still developing, with relatively limited access to advanced electrophysiology services and trained EP specialists. Myanmar serves approximately 55 million people with only 8 EP labs, 1 Lab per 6.9 million. Historically, EP procedures were concentrated in only a few centers, and EP was not widely established as a separate subspecialty. In recent years, however, there has been growing interest and significant progress. More cardiologists and institutions are recognizing the importance of arrhythmia care, and new EP services are emerging. I believe Myanmar has great potential to develop a stronger national EP network through collaboration, training, mentorship, and sharing of expertise.

Can you talk about an accomplishment that you are particularly proud of?

One of the accomplishments I am most proud of is establishing **a new dedicated 3D EP lab** at No. 1 Defense Services General Hospital in Yangon. When I returned to Myanmar after completing my EP fellowship, I was transferred to the Medical Academy as a teaching staff and also worked as a cardiologist at its academic hospital under our institution. However, there was no EP lab at my new hospital, so there was no established facility where I could continue performing EP procedures.

With the support of my mentors, colleagues, and the Korean Heart Rhythm Society, I worked step by step to build the EP service. In October 2025, we initially started our EP service in a pre-existing cath lab using a 2D mapping system. Despite the limitations of sharing the old cath lab with other procedures, we gradually built our experience and performed around **120 SVT ablation cases**. In September 2026, we completed the setup of our dedicated new **3D EP Lab**, which marked an important new chapter in our EP program. With the 3D mapping system, we have now started performing more complex procedures, including **complex PVC ablation, ventricular tachycardia (VT) ablation, atrial fibrillation (AF) ablation, and atrial flutter ablation**.

This transition, from a shared cath lab with 2D mapping to a dedicated new 3D EP lab, has allowed me to expand beyond routine SVT procedures and begin developing a comprehensive EP service in Myanmar. For me, this represents not only a personal achievement but also a new beginning for EP development in Myanmar.



Initiation of 2D EP Services in the Existing Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory



From an Empty Space to a Dedicated EP Lab in 11 Months and Our First Atrial Fibrillation Ablation Under the Guidance of Dr. Chun Hwang

Why did you choose Korea for EP fellowship training?

I chose Korea (Seoul St. Mary's Hospital, The Catholic University of Korea) primarily for its **strong hands-on EP training**, with high procedural volume, advanced technology, and experienced EP specialists. I wanted to gain practical skills through direct exposure to a wide range of arrhythmias and modern mapping and ablation techniques.

What made the experience even more valuable was **the follow-up fellowship support program**. The continued mentorship from KHRS and my mentors - Dr. Chun Hwang, Prof. Oh Yong Seog, Prof. Kim Sung Hwan, Prof. Young Choi, Prof. So-Yoon Park allowed me to receive guidance even after returning to Myanmar. My goal was to bring this knowledge and experience back home and contribute to the development of EP services in Myanmar.

What was the most difficult part for Korean EP training preparation?

The most difficult part was preparing myself for a completely new environment while trying to make the most of a limited training period. I knew that I would be exposed to advanced EP procedures and a very different healthcare and training system, so I felt a strong responsibility to prepare myself adequately. There was also the challenge of adapting to a new language and culture. Looking back, that preparation helped me become more confident and focused during the fellowship.





What is the most impressive during Korean EP training?

What impressed me most was the combination of expertise, teamwork, and systematic approach of Seoul St. Mary's EP team to every procedure. I was amazed by how carefully the EP team prepared each case and how everyone in the laboratory understood their role. The high procedural volume allowed me to observe and learn from many different types of arrhythmias. I was also deeply impressed by the willingness of my mentors, including all technicians and nurses to teach, explain their reasoning, and encourage me to think independently. I realized that becoming a good electrophysiologist is not only about technical skills—it is also about discipline, teamwork, continuous learning, and patient-centered care.

What was the most challenging part of your EP training in Korea?

The most difficult period was probably the early stage of training, when I had to adapt to a completely different environment while trying to absorb a large amount of new knowledge and procedural experience. Sometimes I felt overwhelmed because there was so much to learn, especially when observing complex procedures and advanced mapping techniques. However, these difficulties taught me to be patient with myself, ask questions, observe carefully, and keep learning every day. My mentors and whole EP team were very supportive, and those challenges eventually became some of the most valuable parts of my training.

What are your thoughts or impressions after completing your EP training in Korea?

My time in Korea changed my professional life and, in many ways, changed my vision for my future. I returned to Myanmar not only with new EP knowledge and procedural skills, but also with a much clearer goal—to contribute to the development of EP in my country. I am deeply grateful to my mentors, especially the Korean EP community, for believing in me and supporting my journey. The fellowship taught me that knowledge becomes more meaningful when we share it. I hope to continue building connections between KHRS and Myanmar and create more opportunities for the next generation of EP trainees.

What advice would you give to your younger self?

I would tell my younger self: **Do not be afraid of starting from nothing and never give up**. You may not have all the resources, opportunities, or answers at the beginning, but if you keep learning and continue moving forward, things can change. Be patient with your journey and do not compare your progress with others. Find good mentors, stay humble, and make the most of every opportunity to learn. Most importantly, when you finally have the opportunity to grow, remember to bring others with you. Your journey becomes more meaningful when your success can help create opportunities for others.

What advice would you give to other EP fellows for preparing foreign country training?

Before going abroad, build a strong foundation in EP fundamentals and try to understand the principles behind the procedures rather than simply memorizing techniques. Set clear learning goals and identify what you want to bring back to your own country. During training, observe carefully, ask questions, keep notes, and learn from every case—even the difficult ones. Be respectful of different cultures and training styles, and build genuine relationships with your mentors and colleagues. Finally, remember that fellowship is not only about learning for yourself. Think about how you can transfer that knowledge and experience back to your own EP community.