

30 patients in doctors' workshop

BY SUSIE WELDON

ABOUT 30 patients underwent endoscopies before an audience of 320 doctors from around the world at the Prince of Wales Hospital.

The patients had stones removed from their bile ducts in live demonstrations at the hospital's three-day Seventh International Workshop, attended by doctors from China, Southeast Asia, Europe, Australia and the United States.

The doctors watched through closed-circuit TV as surgeons inflated balloons and manipulated "baskets" down endoscopy tubes passed into the gut via the mouth.

A video camera allowed them to see what was happening inside the body while a two-way microphone allowed the surgeons and the audience to talk to each other.

Dr Sydney Chung, chief of the hospital's Combined Endoscopy Unit which organised the event with the Hongkong Society of Digestive Endoscopy, said such workshops were important in helping doctors learn the technique.

Endoscopy had revolutionised the practice of gastroenterology, he said.

Used to remove stones out of bile ducts, stop internal bleeding and in laser treatment for tumours, endoscopy involves putting a one-centimetre-thick tube inside the body.

"You can see what is happening and you can also put instruments down the tube to do operations," Dr Chung said.

Sedated patients felt little discomfort and the technique removed the need for an operation.

Each year, more than 12,000 patients receive endoscopies at the Sha Tin hospital.