

Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine

(Persatuan Kajiparasit dan Perubatan Tropika Malaysia)

NEWSLETTER

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Malaysian Society of Parasitology
and Tropical Medicine

c/o Institute for Medical Research

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www.msptm.org



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Issue 1, 2015

(for members only)

Editor : Premaalatha Bathmanaban

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President Message

52nd MSPTM Council (2015/2016)

Greetings to all members of the MSPTM!

I am deeply humbled to be given the privilege to serve as the President of the 52nd MSPTM Council (2015/2016) and am greatly honoured to work along side a dedicated team of council members. My gratitude to the immediate past president, Prof Dr Yvonne Lim Ai Lian for successfully leading the Society for the past one year.



This year sees a change in the management of our Society's journal, Tropical Bio-medicine. I would like to congratulate Prof Dr B Sinniah for being appointed as the new Editor, and express my appreciation to the past Editor, Datin Dr Indra Vythilingham and her team for their contribution in managing the journal and taking it to greater heights.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Assoc Prof Dr Lau Yee Ling for being awarded the Nadchatram Medal for her outstanding scientific contribution in parasitology and tropical medicine.

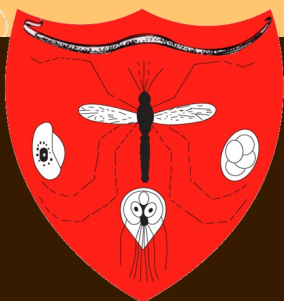
Finally, the new council will be planning and carrying out a number of activities throughout the year, and we hope that all of you will make the effort to contribute and participate in these activities.

With best regards,

Prof Dr Wan Kiew Lian

President

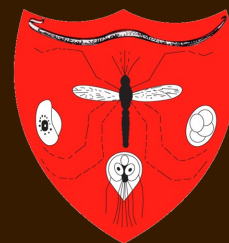
52nd MSPTM Council (2015/16)



MSPiM COUNCIL 2015/2016

MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF PARASITOLOGY AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

The MSPTM 51st Annual Scientific Conference in Kuala Lumpur, 2015



The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine 51st Annual Scientific Conference was held from 3-4th March 2015 at the Grand Seasons Hotel, Kuala Lumpur with the theme entitled “Tropical Diseases In Malaysia : Innovative Approaches For Emerging Issues”. The president, Prof Dr Yvonne Lim Ai Lian highlighted the importance of research and sharing of findings in order to better manage emerging diseases in the region especially with *Plasmodium knowlesi*, Coccidiosis and Sarcocystis. Research has to move beyond laboratories and conference rooms. She urges members and participants to bridge the divide between research, policy and implementation, and recognise the need for strong partnerships between researchers and policy makers.



MSPTM Council members with the guest of honour and invited speakers

Invited plenary speakers were Prof Alan Cowman, Prof Jenefer Blackwell and Dr Ronald Fayer. A forum on the scourge of Dengue and parasitic diseases was also conducted to update and bring about awareness to participants. A symposia on Sarcocystis infection in Malaysia was brought together with world renowned parasitologist and Sarcocystis expert, Dr Ron Fayer from USA as well as local experts from the Ministry of Health, the Wildlife Department and the Department of Veterinary Services. There were more than 160 registered delegates coming from 10 countries. The response for papers in this conference was overwhelming. A total of 9 invited, 57 oral papers and 52 poster papers were presented during the 2-day conference. This year, a new format for the oral competition (3 minutes based on one slide) was introduced. It was fun to see how the 10 competitors use only 3 minutes to impress the judges and audience.



The president - delivering her opening speech and visiting the booths with guest of honour, Dr Shanaz Murad.

There was also a special session on "Meet the Experts" for young budding scientists to interact with a foreign and a local experts at the end of the day's session. Information on the upcoming WAAVP Liverpool conference was also highlighted paving the way for the 2017 WAAVP conference which will be held in Kuala Lumpur.

Prepared by :



Dr. Chandra



Dr. Yvonne



Next.....



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM



The Orang Asli Community Outreach Programme was held on the 6th of December 2014 at Kampung Ulu Pangsun, Hulu Langat Selangor from 9 am to 2 pm. The program was organized by MSPTM in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, BP Diagnostic Center Sdn. Bhd. and Veterinary Research Institute (VRI) with the approval from the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA).

Health awareness and screening were the two main purposes of the program. The community was briefed on the intestinal parasitic infections and a video on the importance of personal hygiene such as hand washing was shown. Specimens such as adult worms of *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Trichuris trichiura* and hookworm were exhibited. A coloring competition based on the theme of personal hygiene was held for the children.



Medical students from UM are conducting a survey to provide information on health and health care and hygiene .

A total of 30 medical students from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya volunteered to perform blood pressure and glucose test. The group was led by Prof Dr. Jamiyah Hassan and she prescribed deworming medications upon clinical examination of the children. Meanwhile BP Diagnostic Sdn Bhd drove in their health mobile equipped with body fat and bone density analysis. A veterinary team led by



Dr. Chandrawathani was there to treat some infected chicken and cats.



The Program was well received and was very successfully. The Tok Batin and his village committee were very happy with the outcome of the program and invited us to come again. More than 130 villagers participated in the program. Free packed lunch was distributed to all families in the village after the event.

Contributed by Dr. Siti Nursheena (UM)



Regional Training Course On Mass Rearing and Sit-Related Activities for the Control of Aedes Mosquitoes, the Major Vectors of Dengue and Chikungunya



A regional training course on Mass Rearing and Sterile Insect Technique (SIT)-Related Activities for the Control of *Aedes* Mosquitoes, the major vectors of dengue and chikungunya was held from 22 - 25th September 2014 in Juazeiro, Brazil. This training was conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency or well known as IAEA. There are representatives from various countries such as China, Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Malaysia participated in the course. The training was held in MoscaMed facility located in Juazeiro, Brazil.



Dr . Nazni in front of the MoscaMed facility

The training started with the presentation on the progress and future plan for dengue control in each participated country. This session was then followed by the visit on the mass rearing facility for the genetically modified (GM) mosquitoes and fruit flies in MoscaMed facility itself. We were also got the chance to participate in the suppression trial of *Aedes aegypti* using the GM mosquitoes which was going on in Brazil at that time. The male release of the GM mosquitoes was done in the town of Jacobina located in the State of Bahia. The release site is a village located in the valley surrounded by mountains and hills.



Daniello explaining the handling of the mosquito cage for mass rearing



Dr Nazni and Noor Afizah with the delegates



Contributed by

Noor Afizah
Ahmad
(IMR)

In a nutshell, this was a very fruitful course apart from being exposed about the SIT techniques and discussion with the experts, we were also being equipped with other measures/techniques that were implied by other countries. For examples, China is currently utilizing *Wolbachia*, a type of bacterium that can also be utilized for controlling dengue vector.



Jacobina town located in the middle of valley



On top of the hill



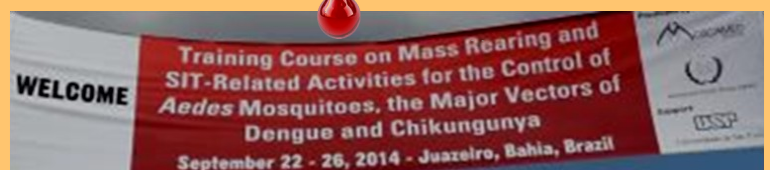
The representatives from various part of the world



The invited speakers, Professor Stephen Dobson (middle) from University of Kentucky, USA and the organisers



The PAT staffs are ready to release the GM male mosquitoes



CONGRATULATIONS



Anugerah Mangku Negara (AMN)

- Dr. Ramlan Bin Mohaməd
 - Dr. Chandrawathani Panchadcharam
- Reveiced Award Mangku Negara (AMN) on December 9, 2014 at the Istana Negara from Yang Di Pertuan Agong Keempat Belas Almu'tasimu Billahi Muhibbuddin Tuanku Al-Haj Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah



Training & Learning Visit - Eliminate Dengue Program

Monash University, Clayton, Australia



As part of the Latihan Dalam Perkhidmatan (LDP) for the government officers, I was nominated to attend 1 month training in Monash University, Clayton, Australia from 13th October- 12th November 2014. The purpose of the visit is to see how *Wolbachia* was utilized to interfere with the transmission of dengue fever under the hands of a group of people known as the Eliminate Dengue Program (EDP) team.



Checking larvae in the container

The EDP team is a group of researchers who The Eliminate Dengue research program is a not-for-profit international collaboration led by Professor Scott O'Neill that brings together scientific collaborators from around the world with a range of skills and experience including; *Wolbachia* genetics, mosquito biology and ecology, dengue epidemiology and control, and health education and promotion. In each country project site the program team works collaboratively with local research institutes, governments, regulatory authorities, and private enterprise and community members.





The first 2 weeks of the training started off with the visit to the release site of the *Aedes aegypti* carrying *Wolbachia* located in Cairns, Australia. I got the chance to interact with the local community during public engagement activity. One to one interview and surveys were conducted to see their feedbacks on the mosquito release that is currently going on at their residential areas. This was followed by the release in a city called Townsville, which was approximately 1-hour away from Cairns by air.



The team is monitoring the surrounding area prior to deploying mosquito trap



Justin from the James Cook University demonstrating on the eggs counting

The last 2 weeks was spent in Melbourne primarily in Monash University. Most of the time was spent on how the samples collected from field were process in the lab involving various techniques such as microinjection, DNA extraction and real-time PCR.



Contributed by Noor Afizah Ahmaḍ (IMR)

Wellness Drive with the Community of Kampung Changkat, Gombak, Selangor

The Wellness Drive program is a project organized by Institute of Biological Science, Faculty of Science, University of Malaya and in collaboration with Primary Care Medicine & Family Medicine UiTM (MARA), University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) and the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM). This wellness drive was conducted amongst the urban poor communities earning <RM2000 a month with the main purpose to determine the health status a community that is generally ignored due to low income and exposure to poor sanitation. This program aims to educate the community about proper personal hygiene care and the prevention of transmission of non-communicable diseases due to the increasing number of cases seen over the years as dengue and food borne diseases.



During registration session



A talk on dengue was given by Dr. Husna from IMR

This program was conducted at the Dewan JKKK, Kampung Changkat in Gombak, Selangor on 20th and 21st December 2014 . A total of 131 participants including both men and women with age ranging from 18 to 72 years old attended this event with most attendees were locals.

The program was designed for the enrichment of the community through

- Knowledge in basic hygiene
- Improvement of their health quality
- Good conduct in sanitation of their living environment
- Conveying the message to their family and friends the importance of good health practices
- Understanding the transmission of non-communicable disease



During physical examination session

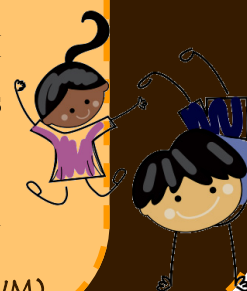


Sponsored goodies given out to participants

The health screening was divided into 5 main sections; physical examination (BMI, blood pressure, bone check), one to one questionnaire survey, hand swap, blood sample collection and stool sample collection. Two invited speakers delivered health talks to instill health awareness to the participants. Dr Husna from Institute of Medical Research (IMR) and a member of the MSPTM gave an informative talk on dengue on Saturday (20th December 2014). The following day, a BP Healthcare consultant gave a special talk on healthy eating and

The event was entirely a non-profit, non-competitive project and assisted by professional medical staffs and researchers. This event was free to all participants with token of appreciation provided in the form of goodies. A big thank you to the mentioned corporate companies for their contributions such as **Tohtonku, URC Snack Foods, Nestle and Indocafe** for providing us with personal care products, biscuits and free flow of coffee drinks and Milo drinks to be distributed to the participants. Free breakfast and lunch was provided by MSPTM and JKK Kg Changkat community . The event was indeed a huge success and members of the JKKK were satisfied with the respond they received from the residents. Those who attended also gave their heartfelt wishes and was satisfied with the overall program outcome.

Contributed by Dr. Siti Nursheena (UM)





Newspaper Article by MSPTM Members

MONKEY MALARIA IN HUMANS BECOMING MORE WIDESPREAD

According to Dr Reuben Sharma, who heads the parasitology lab at Universiti Putra Malaysia's (UPM) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, when it comes to infection by certain gastrointestinal parasites, some are dominant and don't give a chance for colonisation by other gut parasites.....



Entomologist Dr Indra Vythilingam, who consults for Universiti Malaya's Dept of Parasitology, points to a recent research presentation by Indonesian scientists at the 51st Annual Scientific Conference of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine.....

<http://www.thestar.com.my/Lifestyle/Health/2015/04/19/Monkey-malaria-in-humans-becoming-more-widespread/>

Newspaper Article by MSPTM Members

IS A MALARIA NETWORK THE WAY FORWARD?

MOVING forward in addressing the monkey malaria issue, there is lots to be done. And that applies as much to research and coordination efforts as it does policy matters. Associate Prof Dr Lau Yee Ling of Universiti Malaya's Dept of Parasitology, recently thought up a solution: establish a malaria network for the country.....



<http://www.thestar.com.my/Lifestyle/Health/2015/04/19/Playing-catchup-in-the>

PLAYING CATCH-UP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MONKEY MALARIA



One group, based at the Institute for Medical Research (IMR), looked at the susceptibility of different *P. knowlesi* vectors to chemical insecticides and found that mosquito populations from different areas exhibit a variation in resistance to different chemicals – useful information for localised control strategies. Another collaborative effort led by Universiti Malaysia Sabah in the state's Kudat district found that one of the primary *P. knowlesi* vectors – *Anopheles balabacensis* – did not show any preferred sites.....

<http://www.thestar.com.my/Lifestyle/Health/2015/04/19/Playing-catchup-in-the-fight-against-monkey-malaria/>



Professor Anselm Stanley Dissanaike,

a world renowned scientist in medical parasitology and a life member of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) died on 28 January 2015 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He was 90 years old. The last position he held was in the WHO Special Programme for research and training in tropical diseases (TDR) located in WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. At TDR, in his role as secretary of the Scientific Working Group for research, he invested in lots of effort to get a greater understanding, through scientific research, the strategies which would enable the developing countries to control the disease caused by filarial worms, including that of onchocerciasis, the worm responsible for “river blindness” in many African countries.

His research competencies lay in the field of medical parasitology in which field he was a pioneer in Sri Lanka. His training in Zoology with parasitology as a special subject, for which he was awarded first class honours, increased his understanding of parasites and contributed to his expertise in parasites of medical importance. A few years after he completed his medical training with flying colours, he took the job of a teacher in Pathology in his own Medical School in Colombo. He subsequently moved to Medical Parasitology, his first love. He was a student of Professor PCC Garnham in the mid 1950s at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in protozoology working on malaria research. He rose rapidly to become the Professor and Head of the Department of Parasitology and subsequently the Dean of the Colombo Medical School, one of the oldest medical schools in Asia. After a relatively brief period of 3 years as its Dean, he moved in 1970 to the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Malaysia as a Professor of Parasitology where his research interests were propelled by the plentiful resources he had there for research into medical parasitology.

Quite early in his medical training he took an interest in research rather than in the clinical practice of medicine; although he had scored highly in the clinical subjects in the final examination. In a recent interview by one of his juniors as to why he was drawn to an academic career, he had said that during his work as a junior house officer in the Colombo Hospital, he was disillusioned by the unscientific methods used by the Clinical Consultants of his time in solving clinical problems.

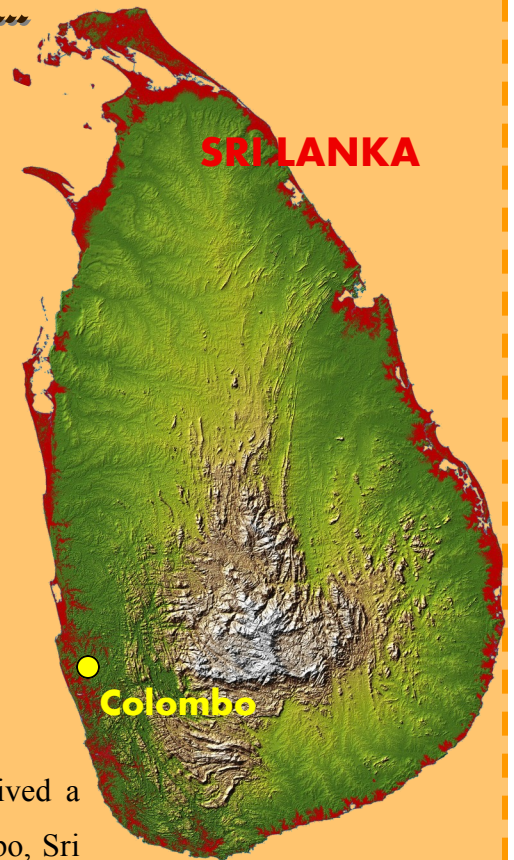


Professor Anselm Stanley Dissanaïke....

This perspective on clinical practice lasted throughout his life time. During the time I worked with him in the WHO/TDR programme training research managers and researchers from the developing countries, his perspective of the clinical sciences was a bone of contention between us, which led to many enjoyable discussion and disagreement.

His numerous publications in medical parasitology in general reflected the greater understanding he and his colleagues have generated in that field. Of these insights, the most beneficial to humanity are in the treatment of patients with filariasis. The use of ivermectin in onchocerciasis is just one example of the many clinical trials that were done in the field.

His beloved wife Ellerine pre-deceased him, following which he lived a philosophical, serene, tranquil and calm life in his house in Colombo, Sri Lanka. His four children Surini, Niranthi, Eoma and Gerald were in constant close contact with him during his widowershood and during his final ill health.



May his soul rest in peace.

Adapted from the obituary written by,

Professor T. Varagunam,
Chancellor of the Eastern University,
Sri Lanka, Professor of Medicine,
Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka.



*Our Deepest
Sympathy*

Upcoming Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Conference 2015



LIVERPOOL
15-20 AUGUST

25th International Conference of the World Association
for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology



We would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles to this issue. The MSPTM Newsletter thrives on the support of its members. Everyone is invited to contribute articles, photographs, comments and vacancy adverts which may be of interest to the Society. We also encourage researchers to submit updates on research projects and publications, so that this newsletter may serve as a portal for disseminating current information on Parasitology and Tropical Medicine in Malaysia.

MSPTM Website

Visit the MSPTM website for updates and online access to current issues of Tropical Biomedicine

www.msptm.org/