



Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine  
(Persatuan Kajiparasit dan Perubatan Tropika Malaysia)

# Newsletter

Issue 1, 2012

Malaysian Society of Parasitology  
and Tropical Medicine  
c/o Institute for Medical Research  
Jalan Pahang 50588  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.  
[www.msptm.org](http://www.msptm.org)

Issue 1, 2012

(for members only)

Editor ~ Dr Siti Nursheena Mohd Zain  
[nsheena@um.edu.my](mailto:nsheena@um.edu.my)



## Presidents Message 47<sup>th</sup> MSPTM Council 2011/12

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### Corporate Members

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Firstly, I would like to thank members of the Society for electing me to be the President of the 48<sup>th</sup> MSPTM Council (2011-2012). I am indeed very honoured to be given the privilege to lead the Society for the second time. My first stint as president was in 2006-2007. I realize the task ahead of me is not an easy one, but I shall do my very best to keep up the good work of my predecessors. It goes without saying that this is not a one-person job and I am very fortunate to have a wonderful team of council members, whose experience and dedication is vital in the management of our Society.

I would like to thank our immediate Past President, Professor Dr. Stephen Ambu who has done a great job in leading the Society for the past one year. I especially congratulate him for the excellent organization of the MSPTM 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Conference, with the theme '*Climate Change and Its Impact on Public Health*', held at the International Medical University, on 3-4 March 2011.

Thanks, too, to Vice President Dr. Reuben Sharma, who successfully organised the MSPTM Mid-Year Seminar 2011 at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011, with the theme "*Recent Advances on Zoonotic Diseases in Malaysia*". The seminar was well-attended, with attendees from

various government agencies, research institutes and universities.

Over the years, I have seen a number of scientific societies struggling to maintain their existence or membership. However, this is not the case for MSPTM, which is now in its 47<sup>th</sup> year. MSPTM is one of the oldest but yet most active scientific societies in Malaysia. Every member should be proud of MSPTM's history and achievements. In recent years MSPTM has added a few more feathers to its cap.

The Society's journal *Tropical Biomedicine* is now not only cited and indexed in MEDLINE (PubMed), but also in the Thomson's ISI World of Science database. The journal is given yearly impact factor and ranking among the world's parasitology and tropical medicine related journals. This is indeed a recognition of the quality and standard of *Tropical Biomedicine* by the international scientific community. To obtain the recognition is by no means a simple task, and we have to thank the former and current Editors, Dr. Lee Han Lim and Dr. Indra Vythilingam, respectively, for tireless effort in gaining the recognition. The journal has increased its issue from two to three issues a year since 2008. I was recently told by Dr. Indra that the number of submission of manuscript has been increasing, and she suggested increasing the issue per year to four!

The current economic situation has resulted in the increase in cost of management and production in practically every sector. Needless to say, MSPTM too is affected, as the cost of printing our journal, newsletters and brochures have risen considerably. So, too is the cost of mailing these materials to our members because postal rates have increased significantly since last year. In view of this, the council plans to purchase another office lot for purpose of renting it out. This will generate more income for the Society without having to burden our members by increasing membership subscription fees.

Last but not least, I wish to congratulate Professor Mak Joon Wah, Honorary Member of MSPTM for being awarded the Merdeka Award in the category for Outstanding Scholastic Achievement. Professor Mak is recognised for his outstanding contribution to fundamental and applied research in parasitology and parasitic diseases, public health and pathology. I also

wish to congratulate Dr. Brij Kishore Tyagi, a member of MSPTM from India, who has been appointed as the Director of the Center for Research in Medical Entomology and has been awarded the M.O.T. Iyengar Memorial Award for his significant contribution towards the understanding of the causation and management of malaria, filariasis, plague or medical entomology.

M. Y. Fong  
President  
48<sup>th</sup> MSPTM Council (2011-2012)



### The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual MSPTM

The 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Conference of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine was held successfully from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2011 at the International Medical University, Bukit Jalil Campus. It was jointly organized with the International Medical University Kuala Lumpur.

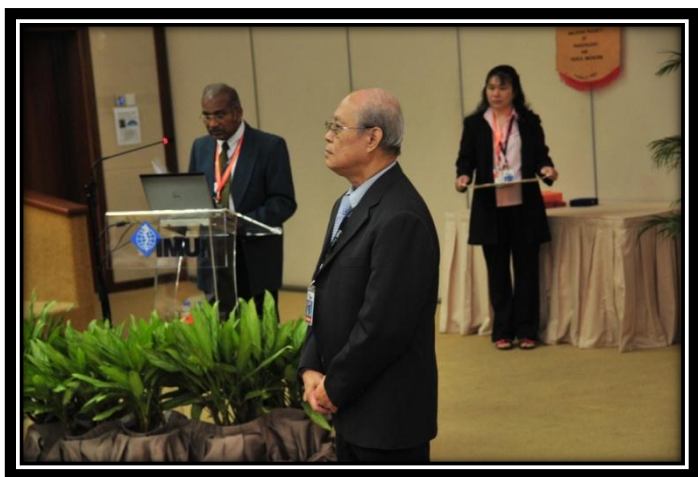


The theme for this year's conference is "**Climate Change and its Impact on Public Health**". More than 200 participants from all over the world participated at the Conference.

A total of oral papers and poster presentations were presented during this 2 days event. The conference was officiated by the President of IMU, Bukit Jalil Tan Sri Dato' Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman, who was also the Keynote speaker for the conference. Both himself and the President of MSPTM, Assoc Prof Dr

Stephen Ambu mentioned in their speech on the effects of climate change on human health and how it Human actions are contributing to the drastic changes in the global environment and this is resulting in a wide range of impacts on human health.

World renowned plenary speakers were invited to this conference and they were :1) Dr Brent Powis, Director, WHO Collaborating Centre of Environmental Health and Consultant of the Climate Change Programme China who presented a plenary paper on Climate Change and Health; 2) Dr Indra Vythilingam, Principal Research Scientist from the Environmental Health Institute, National Environment Agency Singapore, presented on Vector-borne Diseases and Climate Change; 3) Prof Dr Richard Loh, Respiratory Physician, Penang Medical College presented on Climate Change and Respiratory Infections; 4) Prof Dr Mak Joon Wah, Public Health Specialist in Tropical Diseases Parasitologist, IMU who presented on Climate Change and Emerging Zoonoses; 5) Dr Katarzyna Miska, Molecular Biologist, USDA-ARS, Animal Parasitic Diseases Laboratory, Beltsville who presented on Characterisation of Macrophage Inhibitory Factor in Chicken as well as in Species of *Eimeria* Infections to Chicken; 6) Dr Lee Han Lim, former Head of the Medical Entomology Unit, IMR and 7) Adjunct Prof Dr Seshadri Vassan, CEO of Oxitec Limited, Oxford, UK who presented his paper on Malaysia's First Open Release of Transgenic *Aedes aegypti*. This year, there were two prestigious awards that were awarded to the deserving member of MSPTM.



We witnessed the presentation of the MSPTM Honorary Membership Certificate to Prof Dr Mak Joon Wah who became a member of the MSPTM since 1972, have published over 300 scientific

papers and is still very active in promoting research among younger generations and never cease to contribute to the continuous growth of the Society, and Dr Reuben Sunil Sharma who was awarded the MSPTM Silver Medal award in which Dr Reuben has contributed tremendously in the field of molecular biology, antigenic variation and genetics of parasitic haemoprotozoa. His research findings has contributed to the revision to the life cycle and ontogeny of the infective cell stages of *Trypanosoma brucei*.

There were also competitions organized for both undergraduate and postgraduates alike. An Oral Presentation Competition was held for Postgraduate Students while the undergraduates get to test their skills in parasitology and public health in the Student's Quiz Competition. The Poster presentation Competition was open to all presenters who comply with all the criteria set by the organizers. There were 6 oral paper sessions focusing on public health policies, impacts on national and local policy responses, vector borne diseases, respiratory infections and emerging zoonoses. In addition to that, there was also a symposia on Blastocytosis. The aim of the conference is to bring together researchers and experts in the field of environmental health in Malaysia and the region to discuss current issues of climate change and its impact on public health.







At the end of the day we hope that we have achieved our objectives and that all participants benefited from this conference.

We would like to extend our upmost gratitude to IMU and our counterparts in IMU for a wonderful collaboration and for making it possible for us to organize our annual conference with success. Our appreciation goes out our sponsors for funding and supporting the operation of the conference.

Last but not least, we thank all participants, organizing committee and secretariats that have made this conference a successful one. We look forward to meeting you at the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Conference of the MSPTM next year!



#### **MSPTM Mid-year Seminar** Reuben Sharma

The MSPTM MidYear seminar was successfully conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universiti Putra Malaysia. The seminar themed “Recent Advances on Zoonotic Diseases in Malaysia” attracted over 80 participants including researchers and students from various universities and research institutions. There were three presentations by local experts covering diseases like Filariasis,

Toxoplasmosis, Brucellosis, and Chikungunya infections.

Prof Dr Mohd Hair Bejo, Deputy Dean of Research and Postgraduate studies, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, UPM, welcomed the speakers and participants to the seminar and conveyed his address on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Our president Prof Dr Fong Mun Yik then delivered his welcoming address and expressed his gratitude to the speakers for taking the time to share their knowledge and thanked all the participants for their strong support.



*Dr Mohd Apandi sharing his knowledge on the historical incidences of the viral infection*

The first presentation entitled “Vaccination Prospect Against Parasitic Infections with Special Reference to Brugian Filariasis and Toxoplasmosis” was delivered by Prof Dr Wan Omar Abdullah from the Faculty of Medicine, UPM. Prof Wan Omar provided an eloquent historical account and update on these zoonotic infections in Malaysia, and shared his vast experience and research findings on epidemiology, immunology and the development of vaccines for both diseases. Following a brief coffee break, Dr. Mohd Apandi Yusof from the Institute for Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur, delivered his presentation entitled “The first isolation of chikungunya virus from non - human primates in Malaysia”. Dr Mohd Apandi shared his vast knowledge on the disease and brought the participants through the historical

incidences of the viral infection, and highlighted the occurrence of recent outbreaks throughout Asia with special reference to Malaysia. He also shared his research findings on the detection and phylogeny of arboviruses in non-human primates. Dr Norazah Bt Ahmad from the Institute for Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur delivered the third presentation entitled “*Brucellosis*”.



*Dr Norazah giving her overview on the global epidemiology Brucellosis*

Dr Norazah gave an articulate overview on the global epidemiology of this important zoonotic disease and brought the attention of the participants to major reports on the disease in Malaysia. Dr Norazah also provided a comprehensive account on the zoogeography, host range, epidemiology and clinical manifestations of the disease.

Prof Fong then delivered his concluding remarks and thanked the speakers and participants for making the event a success. The seminar ended with a lunch reception, providing a great opportunity for members to catch-up and for prospective members to get to know more about the activities of the society.



*All the participants*



*Participants enjoying the lunch spread prepared by the organizers*



**A brief Attachment at Parasitology Laboratory,  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences  
(SLU), Uppsala, Sweden**  
Heo Chong Chin

- Mr. Heo (Hon. Treasurer of MSPTM) was attached to the parasitology laboratory at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Uppsala, Sweden from 17 – 28 Jan 2011.
- The lab is actually located within the building of National Veterinary Institute



(SVA), which is about 5km from the city of Uppsala.

- The objective of the attachment was to get acquainted with the modern parasitology diagnostic methods, including the diagnosis of trichinellosis, intestinal protozoa, helminths and ectoparasites. During the attachment, Mr. Heo was supervised by Prof. Dr. Arvid Ugglå, who was the former Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, SLU, and co-supervised by Dr. Jan Chirico, who is the senior researcher at SVA.
- On the second week, he was attached to the Museum of Evolution, Uppsala University and examined the specimens of blow flies of forensic interest in Scandinavia. Plenty of dinosaur fossils also can be seen at the museum, including the skull of the Peking man.
- A seminar was also delivered by Mr. Heo during the attachment and “sticky buns” were served as refreshment (see picture). Although it was a short attachment, but Mr. Heo managed to survive over the freezing winter in Sweden and visited the home of the great taxonomist, Carl von Linnaeus.



*The parasitology lab*



*Delicious sticky buns*



**One day seminar on:  
Forensic Entomology and Its Implications in  
Medicine  
Heo Chong Chin**

The one day seminar was held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at the Lecture Hall 1, Level 6, Tower 1, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

The guest speakers of the seminar were Asst. Prof. Dr. Jeffery Tomberlin (Texas A&M University), Asst. Prof. Dr. Eric Benbow (University of Dayton), Prof. Dr. Baharudin Omar (UKM) and Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad (IMR).



*The National Veterinary Institute (SVA), Uppsala Sweden*



*Line up of speakers and participants including postgraduate students from Texas A&M University*

There were also 4 PhD students and 1 Master student from Texas A&M University presented their papers in the seminar. The one day seminar was held on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at the Lecture Hall 1, Level 6, Tower 1, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

The guest speakers of the seminar were Asst. Prof. Dr. Jeffery Tomberlin (Texas A&M University), Asst. Prof. Dr. Eric Benbow (University of Dayton), Prof. Dr. Baharudin Omar (UKM) and Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad (IMR). There were also 4 PhD students and 1 Master student from Texas A&M University presented their papers in the seminar.

The titles of the presentations were as follow:

1. Bridging basic and applied research in forensic entomology: A focus on blow fly behavior and life history – Dr Jeffery Tomberlin
2. Understanding the mechanistic role of blow flies in the medical ecology of carrion decomposition: Implications to food borne disease spread – Dr Eric Benbow
3. Forensic entomology case studies in Malaysia – Prof Dr Baharudin Omar
4. Forensic entomology in Malaysia: An update – Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad



*Members of the faculty with guests*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



**The 5<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Congress of Tropical  
Medicine & Parasitology,  
Manila University of Philippines.  
Date: 15-17<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

The struggle to get the upper hand in the fight against tropical diseases and parasitism continues. With the theme “Fight Against Tropical Diseases and Parasitism: Triumphs and Shortfalls,” the Fifth ASEAN Congress of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology looks back at the last few years and discusses breakthroughs in research and implementation that have made a significant impact in the prevention, control and management of tropical infectious and parasitic diseases. Areas where our expectations have not been met and where challenges remain will likewise be discussed.

Clinicians, public health practitioners, biomedical researchers, teachers, parasitologists, microbiologists, medical technologists, those involved in control and prevention of these diseases, students or anyone who has a stake in



tipping the balance in this fight to our favor are invited to participate in this congress.

The Fifth ACTMP to be held on May 15 to 17, 2012 is jointly hosted by the University of the Philippines Manila College of Public Health and College of Medicine, the Philippine Society of Parasitology, the Philippine Department of Health, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization TropMed Regional Center for Public Health, Hospital Administration, Environmental and Occupational Health. The venue for the fifth congress is at the University of the Philippines Manila located at Ermita, Manila.

We look forward to your participation in the congress and expect to have a spirited exchange of our major gains and hopefully minor setbacks in our collective efforts to put these diseases under control.

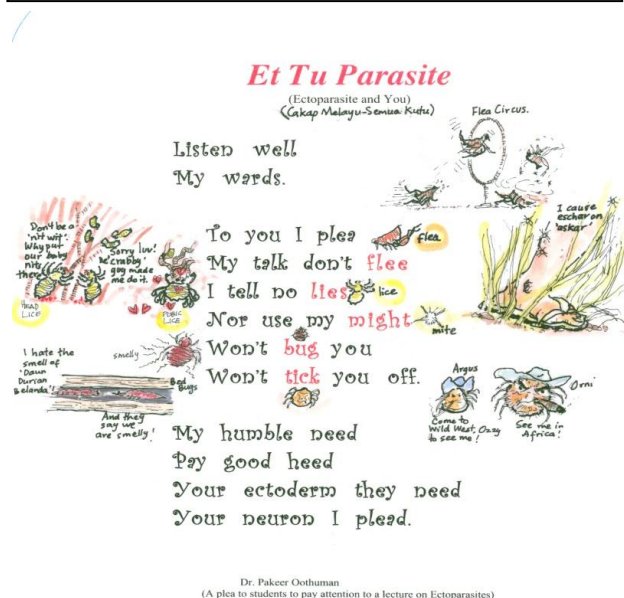
Registration forms and contact details are attached. Please submit accomplished forms to: DR. LYDIA R. LEONARDO

Email : [5thactmp@gmail.com](mailto:5thactmp@gmail.com)

Date : May 15 to 17 2012

Place : University of Philippines, Manila, Philippines

## Candid shots of the 47<sup>th</sup> MSPTM Conference (18-19 March 2009)



A poem by Prof Pakeer Othman





### MSPTM Membership News

The society's drive to recruit new members in the year 2010 was successful with a total of 29 new members already signed up. The committee gives a warm welcome to all new members.

No.	Name	Institution	Date of Admission
1.	Ooi Soo Shen	International Medical University (IMU)	25.03.2011
2.	Kalyani Raman	University of Malaya	25.03.2011
3.	Wong Oi Chen	Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Selangor	25.03.2011
4.	Prof. Hiroyuki Takaoka	University of Malaya	25.03.2011
5.	Prof. Dr. Mohd Sofian Bin Azirun	University of Malaya	25.03.2011
6.	Dr. Suhela Devi Samanath	International Medical University (IMU)	25.03.2011
7.	Abdulsalam Mohammed Al-Mekhlafi	University of Malaya	25.03.2011
8.	Fadilawati binti Ali	Pejabat Cawangan Penyakit Bawaan Vektor Negeri Sembilan	25.03.2011
9.	Mr. Wong Siew Tung	International Medical University (IMU)	25.03.2011

10.	Rusliza Basir, Dr.	Universiti Putra Malaysia	25.03.2011
11.	Souad Mohammed Alsaqabi, Assoc.Prof.	Damman University	25.03.2011
12.	Capuano Corrine, Dr.	World Health Organizations	25.03.2011
13.	Harpal Singh, Dr.	World Health Organizations	25.03.2011
14.	Mohammad Nazmul Hasan, Dr.	Universiti Teknologi MARA	29.04.2011
15.	Jamal Hussaini, Dr.	Universiti Teknologi MARA	29.04.2011
16.	Naji Arafat bin Haji Mahat	Universiti Sains Malaysia	29.04.2011
17.	Emelia Osman, Dr.	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	17.10.2011
18.	Noor Izani bin Noor Jamil, Dr.	Universiti Sains Malaysia	17.10.2011
19.	Hartini Yusof	Universiti Teknologi MARA	17.10.2011
20.	Noor Afizah Ahmad	Institute for Medical Research	16.01.2012
21.	Muhammad Nor Farhan Saat	Institute for Medical Research	16.01.2012
22.	Malarrvzelly a/p Munandy	Medical Lab Tecnology College	16.01.2012
23.	Tharsini a/p Salyam	Medical Lab Tecnology College	16.01.2012
<b>Associate member</b>			
24.	Safdar Iqbal	Hospital Lahad Datu Sabah	17.10.2011
25.	Mohamed Abdel Monam Dkhil	King Saud University, Saudi Arabia	17.10.2011
26.	Leopoldo M. Rueda, Dr.	Smithsonian Institution, U.S.A.	17.10.2011

27. Capuano Georges-Pierre, Dr.

16.01.2012

28. Hassanain Al-Talib

Universiti Teknologi MARA

16.01.2012

### *Members Updates*

On behalf of the 48th MSPTM Council, we would like to congratulate Prof Dr Stephen Ambu on his appointment as Professor at the International Medical University, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur on the 1st of July 2

### **Upcoming Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Conferences 2012**

VIII International Congress for Tropical Medicine and Malaria and the XLVIII Congress of the Brazilian Society for Tropical Medicine <http://ictmm2012.ioc.fiocruz.br/registration.php>

#### *Notice Board*

##### **MEMBERSHIP Subscription**

Dear MSPTM members,

A gentle reminder that you are required to pay up your membership subscription by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2012. According to our constitution membership in arrears of 2 years or more may be terminated. Please act NOW. The society depends on you and your support. Contact Dr Hoe Cheong Chin (treasurer) for further details or to check your membership status.

##### *Contribution of Articles*

*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/](http://www.msptm.org/)**