

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**
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Inside this Issue

1	President's Message
2	50th Golden Jubilee of MSPTM & 6th ACTMP 2014
3	ISVM Kashmir
4	A Never Ending Story
5	Dengue Control in Yogyakarta
6	Announcements
7	Next Issue

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Highlights

50th Golden Jubilee **ACTMP 2014** 6th ASEAN Congress of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology
GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN TROPICAL DISEASES:
Bridging Gaps and Building Partnerships
5 – 7 March 2014 Intercontinental Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



50th Golden Jubilee MSPTM



A Never Ending Story



President Message

51st MSPTM Council (2014/2015)

Warm greetings to all members, associate members and corporate members of MSPTM!
I wish all of you well.

I am deeply humbled and honoured to be elected the President of the 51st MSPTM Council (2014/2015) and very fortunate to be working alongside a very dedicated and enthusiastic team of council members. I would like to thank the past president, Dr Reuben Sharma and his council, for an outstanding job in guiding MSPTM during his tenure.

The start of 2014 was a momentous one for all of us as we begin our MSPTM 50th year celebration. Under the superb leadership of past president, Dr. Reuben Sharma and organizing chairperson, Datin Dr Indra Vythilingam, the 50th Anniversary Celebration of MSPTM and the 6th ACTMP 2014 was successfully held from 5-7 March 2014 at the Intercontinental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur with the theme “Bridging Gaps and Building Partnerships”. The event was well attended with representatives from 44 countries. It was indeed a historic moment for the Society.

During the celebration, a coffee table book of the Society was launched. It chronicled the many milestones and landmark achievements of the Society since its inception in 1964. It was a wonderful team effort by the senior members and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone for making this book a reality and a truly memorable keepsake.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Lee Han Lim and Dr. Siti Nursheena as the respective recipients of the Sandosham and Nadchatram (formerly known as MSPTM) Medals. Both of the recipients have not only excelled in their individual fields of research but also contributed to the Society in various ways.

With regards to our Tropical Biomedicine journal, I am delighted to note that according to the 2012 ISI Thompson Web of Science, the journal has an impact factor of 0.921 (tier 3 journal). I would like to thank and congratulate the editor, Datin Dr. Indra Vythilingam, assistant editor, Mr John Jeffery and all editorial members for their tireless and excellent effort.

I am also very glad to inform you that after our 50th conference recently, the media has highlighted works of some of our members, namely Datin Dr. Indra Vythilingam, Dr. Reuben Sharma and Dr. Lim Boo Liat. Through the network that the Society has already established with the media, I hope we will be able to showcase the works of other members as well. Please feel free to inform us if you would like your work to be featured in the newspaper. I hope we can fully utilise this medium to educate and provide evidence-based information to the public at large.



President Message

Strengthening of Networks and Partnerships

We plan to hold our midyear seminar this year at the Veterinary Research Institute (VRI), Ipoh on June 24. In order to forge closer ties with our northern counterparts, we are planning to charter a bus to bring members from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor up north to Ipoh. This is to encourage greater networking and to forge closer ties among our local members. This event was held on June 24. News and photos of this event will be in the next issue.

Nurturing of Young Scientist

One unique feature of our Society is that it has such a diverse composition of members. The Society has many imminent and illustrious senior members who are still very active and ever willing to impart their knowledge and experiences to others. With the presence of these role models, the Society can be a fertile breeding ground for young enthusiastic scientist to flourish with the guidance of those with much experience. In order for this to materialise, we will try to provide various formal and informal platforms.

Educational Roadshow

An important aim of the Society this year is to promote parasitology and medical entomology by sowing the seeds of interest in schoolchildren and college students. We would like to do this through experiential learning, where students are allowed to feel and touch the parasites, we hope to garner more interest in these fields in the younger generation.

Outreach Programme

We are also planning to have a community outreach programme in the Orang Asli village. The Orang Asli have contributed tremendously in our pursuit of greater understanding in parasitic infections. We hope to foster greater network and empower them with educational programmes in controlling these diseases through this outreach programme.

Lastly, I hope many of you will be able to join us in these activities. I really look forward to meeting you in person especially in the next annual conference. Let us foster greater friendships and collaborations. Let us together play a more defining role in our quest to understand and unravel the mysteries of tropical diseases.

Wishing each of you the best of everything.

With kind regards,

Prof Dr Yvonne Lim Ai Lian
President
51st MSPTM Council (2014/2015)



Past President Dr. Reuben Sharma past over the medal to our new President Prof Dr. Yvonne Lim

50th Golden Jubilee of MSPTM and 6th ASEAN Congress of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology 2014



The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) turned 50 years this year (2014). To celebrate the auspicious occasion, the 50th Golden Jubilee and 6th ASEAN Congress of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology (ACTMP) 2014 was held in Intercontinental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur from 5-7 March 2014.

We attracted 411 participants from 44 countries of which Malaysian comprised 44% and the foreigners 56%. This was the first time that all ASEAN countries were represented. This is the best the Society has ever had. We had six key note speakers inclusive of the Sandosham memorial lecture. The speakers were Prof. Khairul Anuar from MAHSA University (Sandosham memorial lecture) (Topic: Tango with parasites: parasitic diseases in the disadvantaged community); Prof. Prathap Singhasivanon from Mahidol University, Bangkok spoke on “Future threats and global challenges in Tropical Diseases”; Dr. Shahnaz Murad from the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) – “Translational research in infectious diseases”, Prof. Robin Gasser from University of Melbourne – “Tackling neglected tropical disease pathogens using the next generation technologies:



Officiated by Y. B. H. G. Datuk Dr. Lokman Hakim



Prospects and need for public-private partnerships”; Prof. Paul Tambyah from University of Singapore – “Emerging infectious diseases in Southeast Asia”; Prof. Maria Yazdanbakhsh (University of Leiden, The Netherlands) “Our helminth infections: the bad and the good”. All of them gave an excellent presentation on their topics.

There was a malaria plenary session by Betty Sim Kim Lee and Stephen Hoffman on “PfSPZ vaccine for malaria elimination: Vision to deployment”. There were two malaria symposium sponsored by Medicines for Malaria Venture and Sigma Tau. Besides there were symposium sessions on NTDs, dengue, veterinary parasitology, infectious diseases, omics in parasitology, vector control and insecticide resistance. There were also free paper sessions on *Blastocystis*, malaria epidemiology and vectors, dengue and vectors, zoonosis, water borne and soil transmitted parasitic diseases, forensic science, mosquitoes and vector borne diseases and extended parasitology and entomology.



Dr. Shahnaz Murad - “Translational research in infectious diseases”



Prof Suresh Kumar Govind “Blasocystis-of Paradigms and Paradoxes”.

In total there were 185 oral presentations and 132 poster presentations over the three days. The first day afternoon was devoted to the Golden Jubilee of the MSPTM; where Prof. C.P. Ramachandran spoke on the history of the MSPTM and its achievements over the past 50 years. This was followed by a presentation by the representative from WHO WPRO, Dr. Vicente Belizario on “Investing in the elimination and control of neglected tropical diseases in the western pacific region: A case for support”. Prof. Fong Mun Yik spoke on the topic “ Parasitology: From Microscopy to Molecular. This was befitting topic which showcased the transformation of the Society members over time. Dr .Indra Vythilingam spoke on “ Issues and challenges in vector control: A never ending journey” and Prof. Suresh Kumar Govind wrapped up the session with *Blasocystis*–of paradigms and paradoxes”.



Recipients of Awards

In 2004, the Society mooted the idea of the ASEAN Congress of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine and it was held in Kuala Lumpur for the 40th anniversary of the Society. This Congress is held biennially and since its inception it has been held in Bandung – Indonesia; Thailand, Singapore and The Philippines. This year we decided to host this congress in conjunction with the Golden Jubilee. The theme of this Congress was: “Global Challenges in Tropical Diseases: Bridging Gaps and Building Partnerships. The Congress was officiated by Y. Bhg. Datuk Dr. Lokman Hakim Deputy Director General of Health, Ministry of Health Malaysia. Datuk Dr. Lokman is also a life member of the Society. There were also 11 student fellowships that were sponsored by Environmental Health Institute of Singapore and the Molecular Biology Society of Singapore. This fellowship was only for students from the ASEAN countries. In conjunction with the Golden Jubilee we also launched a coffee table book on the achievements of the MSPTM. Those members who have not received the book can request a copy from the Secretary of the Society.



On the whole, to mark the Golden Jubilee of MSPTM we are glad to announce that the Congress was a great success and the best the Society has ever had with so many prominent scientists from the region and the world presenting at this prestigious occasion.



Some Memorable Photos from ACTMP 2014

Contributed by Datin Dr Indra Vythilingam (UM)

The Indian Society for Veterinary Medicine (ISVM) 2014 Annual Scientific Convention Jammu, Kashmir -India

The Indian Society for Veterinary Medicine (ISVM) and Division of Veterinary Medicine Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & A.H. Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences @ Technology of Jammu, India organized the XXXII Annual Convention of The Indian Society for Veterinary Medicine (ISVM) & International Symposium. The theme for this year was 'The 21st Century Road Map for Veterinary Practice, Education and Research in India and Developing Countries'. There were about 350 participants from various countries. India had the largest number of participants with 4 participants from Malaysia. There was a wide range of topics presented: Dairy Animal Production Medicine, Companion Animal Medicine – Internal Medicine and Specialities, Small Ruminant Medicine, Equine and Park Animal Medicine, Avian and Exotic Species Medicine, Biotechnological development in Animal Health and other diseases. There were also 45 poster presentations of various topics on Veterinary Medicine.



VRI Team with their poster presentation.



Dr .Ranjit presenting on Companion Animal Medicine



Some side seeing pictures from Kashmir

Dr Chandrawathani, Mrs Premaalatha and Mrs Jamnah Omar from Veterinary Research Institute (VRI) and Dr Ranjit Kaur from private clinic represented Malaysia for this conference. An Oral presentation entitled 'Psoroptic mange mite treatment in goats using neem decoction in Malaysia' was presented by Dr Chandrawathani. One poster was presented entitled 'Seroprevalence of Anaplasmosis (*Anaplasma marginale*) in local cattle in Malaysia' by Mrs Prema.



It was a well organized conference and we would like to congratulate the organizing committee for a job well done. Apart from gaining new knowledge, we also made new contacts and had a chance to visit the Veterinary faculty and the facilities such as the cattle farm. In all, it was a useful and beneficial experience to see beautiful Kashmir and the livestock industry. We also like to thank Lee Foundation for sponsor us to attend this conference.

Contributed by Premaalatha (VRI)



A Never Ending Story

On March 18, the Department of Parasitology together with MSPTM and other NGOs co-organized the Animal Awareness Day at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya. Below is a contribution by the organizing chairperson who is a member of MSPTM.



Street Animal

As a saying goes “one cannot choose on how to be born and for what condition one lives in”. Street animal, in general sense, is a free-roamer including abandoned pets. Hence, these animals are not to be kept for any reasons e.g., a person's company or protection or for working capacity e.g., sport, livestock and laboratory which are kept primarily for performance, agricultural value, or research. Due to their unfavorable conditions, street animals are sometimes subjected to cruelty or abuse from the so called

“humans”. The uncertainty of animal rights is mainly due to human predominance in both mind and matter. The plight of these animals therefore needs urgent attention and solution of their presence in this eco-system to promote a harmonious environment.

**Spread the Kindness
to Animals**



This also leads to a special event that commemorates the lives of unfortunate and forgotten street animals.

Animal Awareness Day

Issues on street animals have been plagued in our society without much benefit to them. The urgency to improve their well-being is un-compromised. Animal awareness day (AAA), the non-profit and charitable event, has been initiated since 2013 by Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya. AAA, one of the department's activities, serves as a platform in not only striving to be the best in academic performance but also in steering to be the fore-front in social responsibility. AAA is the first of its kind that has been organized at the level of higher learning institutions outside veterinary compound in Malaysia. AAA aims to spread the awareness of kindness to animals in our own campus, to encourage students to be a part of this social engagement, to recognize animal welfare and any individual of his/her perseverance and commitment toward the better well-being of street animals and to raise funds for medical and neutering assistance to a selected organization.



Recognition - PAWS



Student Participation

Animal Care Society

AAA has been supporting this society which is a home-grown and reliable NGO that flourishes in the country. Animal Care has played an inspiring role for its transparency, accountability and sincerity in helping out caregivers, rescuers and most importantly street animals. Dr. Chan Kah Yein, the founder of Animal Care Society, is an avid animal activist who takes her time off from her routine and busy schedules to promote Care, Neuter, Rehome and Manage (CNRM), educate via books and most importantly to provide advices by sharing her own experiences on how to deal with animals. Her vivid blog (www.myanimalcare.org.my) is actively participated by many followers or readers from both the local and international communities in gaining benefits from various aspects on animal issues as well as in providing opportunities to reach out and save more lives of street animals.



CNRM-Care, Neuter, Rehome and Manage

Overpopulation among street animals is worrying and this matter needs to be addressed rationally. Neutering is a practical method as it not only serves as the most compassionate way but also as the best option in balancing the number/colony of animals to prevent further breeding. As a beginner, one can start with “One Street CNRM” by 1. Caring for the street animals on your street, 2. Taking the animals to a vet for neutering and apply for subsidy from AnimalCare Society, 3. Rehoming the animals by publicizing or joining physical adoption drive organized by various animal welfare organizations and 4. Returning the animals to their original colony and continue taking good care of them e.g., by providing food, vaccination and medical attention until their last day. To achieve CNRM, one should put the best of one’s ability in helping street animals and most importantly **“Do not give up”**.

Take Home Message

This charitable event will continue to grow and move forward to propagate **“Compassion in action”** which can make a significant difference for street animals. To achieve the goal, various groups of people including both academics and public must come together to reinforce our efforts on how the awareness can be extended further for the benefit of street animals in the long term. One can start off by adopting **meat**” which is a simple but effective way to practice the kindness to animals!



Support us for the 4th

Animal Awareness Day,

University of Malaya.



Dr.Chan Kah-Yein, founder of Animal Care Society



Dr. Vellayan, a senior member of MSPTM giving his presentation

Contributed by Assoc. Prof Dr Veeranoort Nissapatorn

Field Release of *Wolbachia* Infected *Aedes aegypti* for dengue control in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

A short visit to Yogyakarta, Indonesia was held from 16th to 19th June 2014. The purpose of the trip was to get the first-hand experience on the release of the *Wolbachia* infected *Aedes aegypti* into the field which is currently happening in Yogyakarta by the Eliminate Dengue Program (EDP) team, Indonesia. There are three officers from Medical Entomology Unit, IMR who joined the trip which includes Dr. Lee Han Lim, Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad and me.

On the 1st day, we were greeted with a warm welcome speech and given the overview of the EDP by Prof. Dr. Adi Utarini, Project Leader, Eliminate Dengue Indonesia who is also the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia. The session continued with briefing on “Background on Eliminate Dengue Program” by Dr Peter Ryan, Eliminate Dengue Program Director, Monash University, Australia followed by updates by the lead scientists of Eliminate Dengue Programme, Indonesia.



The EDP team

We were also given a chance to visit the insectarium where the mass rearing activities of the *Wolbachia* infected *Aedes aegypti* are taking place. We were briefed on how the public engagement has been taking place a year prior before the release as one of the biggest challenges with this programme is to engage with the public to ensure they are having a clear overview and a sufficient understanding on what is going on in their surroundings.

DAY 2

We joined the EDP team including the volunteer which comprises the people from the community itself. The spirit and cooperation shown by the esteemed team is so overwhelming. We were impressed by the level of understanding about the mosquito release project even among the community themselves. Dr. Lee Han Lim was given the privilege to release the first cup of the mosquito during the visit.



*Dr. Warsito is giving a briefing on the mass rearing of the *Wolbachia* infected *Aedes aegypti**

On the final day, Dr Nazni WA was given the honour to deliver a talk on the dengue control measure that has been taking place in Malaysia in front of the postgraduate students of the University of Gadjah Mada as well as the Health Inspectors. Prior to departure, we had a chance to do a quick visit to one of the 7 wonders of the world, Candi Borobudur.



The molecular laboratory in University of Gadjah Mada



Visit to the households of the study site



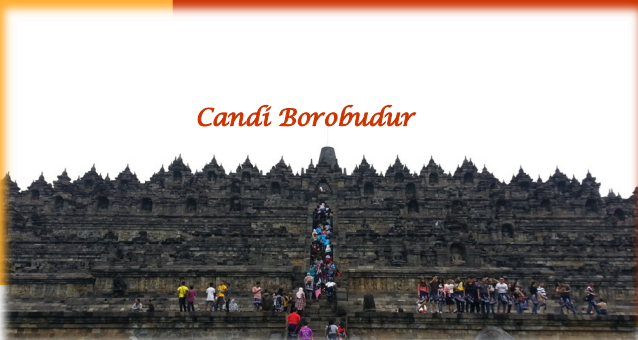
Pamphlets designed to educate and update the public about the progress of the project



Dr Nazni giving the updates on the dengue control tools in Malaysia



Dr Lee doing the mosquito release. Standing next to him is the village head



Candi Borobudur

Upcoming Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Conference 2015



Notice Board

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/

Next Issue.....

The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) Mid-Year Seminar



Training on Diagnosis and Control of Human and Animal Trypanosomes

