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The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine recently held the annual scientific conference virtually on the 15th September 2021, marking the historical event with an unusual lineup of talks and presentations on the latest in tropical diseases in animals and humans. The one day event highlighted several significant current issues facing us globally and nationally such as Malaria, neglected tropical diseases like helminth infections and Blastocystis as well as the more complex issues of One Health initiatives which are needed to combat these.

The keynote address given by international speaker Prof. Dr. Laura H. Kahn from Princeton University, USA brought to light the effects of deforestation and industrialization and the simultaneous increase in mosquito borne disease namely monkey malaria (Plasmodium knowlesi) as well as dengue and malaria. For a sustainable healthy human population, these issues need attention as shown from data as early as 2014 to 2020.

Plenary speaker Prof. Dr. Banchop Sripa from Khon Kaen University, Thailand, further added key information from research conducted over 20 year span, indicating fluke infections in humans require a One Health approach to control and eradicate it. As humans, animals and the environment co create the perfect scenario for spreading pathogens, we need to be aware of the many schemes in the name of modernization and globalization that could be creating future outbreaks and pandemics as microbes mutate and adapt to the situation. Additionally, Prof. Dr. John Russel Stothard from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, UK, who worked for several years in the African continent towards schistosomiasis control eradication showed in his plenary talk that programmes such as this will need governmental and community support to succeed. With current emphasis on Covid-19.

Dato’ Dr. Amar Singh HSS gave an in-depth analysis of real time Covid cases in Malaysia and several practical pointers to live with the pandemic safely. It was an eye opening talk which garnered much attention and questions from participants. The MSPTM being a traditional association for microbiologists, doctors, veterinarians and various other scientific disciplines to gather and exchange ideas and thoughts, it is very encouraging that the virtual conference attracted about 200 participants from Malaysia internationally, ever ready to share scientific information on the latest findings in tropical medicine. A total of 71 scientific papers were presented which consists of 16 oral presentations, 14 rapid oral presentations, 20 rapid oral presentations (student competition) and 21 e-poster presentations.
Some key areas which need attention in today’s disease scenarios are vector borne diseases with special reference to malaria as well as the importance of specific and sensitive diagnostics to speed up the identification and control of diseases is the ultimate in health sciences. Vector-borne diseases account for more than 7 million deaths annually. Among the vector-borne diseases, mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya and malaria are of particular importance because of their widespread incidence and higher frequencies of disease transmission. Dengue and malaria which transmitted through the bite of infected female mosquitoes Aedes and Anopheles, respectively, are particularly prevalent in Southeast Asia. Various prevention and control efforts are performed to halt disease transmissions through which mosquito control is primarily focused and adopted, notably in the course of disease outbreaks. In this conference, mosquito and mosquito-borne diseases were one of the main topics discussed among the researchers and scientists from various backgrounds. Knowledge gaps which required attention were also identified in this meeting. Some of the highlights include high prevalence of mosquito-borne diseases in Southeast Asia, but low awareness level of these diseases was observed among the underprivileged community, pinpointing the needs of targeted approach to raise awareness toward these neglected diseases. Various mosquito control measures were also discussed such as assessment of the efficacy of household insecticide products, establishment of new diagnostic doses for insecticide resistance monitoring, development of novel insecticides as the alternative for conventional insecticides, and new collection tool for entomological surveillance.

Malaria is a vector-borne disease caused by the parasite of the genus Plasmodium and is transmitted by the female Anopheles mosquitoes. It is a significant global public health concern especially to the tropical and sub-tropical countries. In the Malaria Report 2020 published by the World Health Organization (WHO), many malaria-endemic countries emphasize on eliminating malaria with focus on the human parasites \( P. falciparum \) and \( P. vivax \). However, zoonotic malaria caused by \( P. knowlesi \), a simian parasite naturally found in wild macaques, is being neglected in this elimination effort. It is unknown whether human-to-human transmission of \( P. knowlesi \) is established, since humans acquire the infection when undertaking activities at the forest which expose them to the Anopheles mosquitoes. However, duration of illness prior to hospital admission would open a window for possible human-to-human transmission through mosquito bites. In the recent MSPTM meeting, it was highlighted by researchers from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) that viable sexual stage of \( P. knowlesi \) in early onset of the infection would allow human-to-human transmission to occur if the mosquitoes are able to bite infected humans before seeking treatment. This indicates that the transmission of this zoonotic malaria is complex, and further studies are needed to understand the biology of this parasite. A study in Universiti Malaya (UM) shows that various Anopheles species are potential vectors that transmit the parasite from wild monkeys to humans. While these forest dwelling mosquitoes plays important role for the transmission of knowlesi malaria, vector surveillance studies are being actively undertaken to understand the bionomics and biting behaviour of the mosquito. Unlike Aedes mosquitoes, the collection of Anopheles mosquitoes in the forest is far more challenging, which involves humans as bait and the risk of getting malaria. Interestingly, researchers from UM successfully evaluate a new solution for this problem using Mosquito Magnet as a safer alternative to study mosquitoes for simian malaria.
In Malaysia, there is a tremendous decline in human-to-human malaria cases through the National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan 2011 – 2020. Despite the absence of indigenous cases caused by the human parasites, infections caused by *P. knowlesi* are now the leading cause of malaria in Malaysia, especially in Malaysian Borneo and among indigenous people in Peninsular Malaysia. The increased incidence of *P. knowlesi* cases in Malaysian Borneo, compared to other countries in Southeast Asia, shed a question as to why this infection pattern is not seen in Indonesian Borneo. To understand the epidemiology of *P. knowlesi* in Borneo, collaboration between the two countries is essential, as this was observed in the effort by researchers from Universitas Tanjungpura of Kalimantan and UNIMAS during the recent MSPTM meeting. This shows that regional collaboration among Southeast Asian countries requires great attention in the effort to develop new preventive and control strategies to reduce the risk of acquiring zoonotic malaria.

The next logical question in combating tropical disease would naturally be, are we as Malaysians now ready with the right knowledge and skills to tackle the emerging as well as re-emerging diseases. The Ministry of Education (MOE), Malaysia continuously has encouraged the younger generations to take up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education as it encompasses every part of our life. Among the aims of the ministry is to promote scientific research to generate knowledge that can contribute to enhance intellectual level, the creation of new technologies, to encourage women in scientific research and to proliferate a dynamic science culture in line with national aspirations. In line with this agenda, the MSPTM annual conference incorporated oral scientific presentation sessions from universities students, young researchers, early career researchers and senior researcher presenting their findings on vector borne disease, bacterial infection, viral infection, parasite prevalence, zoonotic transmission and veterinary research.

The oral sessions were carried out by displaying their pre-recorded videos followed by brief question and answer session, moderated by early career women researchers from Malaysia. The incorporation of pre-recorded video presentation was to remove the boundaries of the old traditional presentation mode to a virtual presentation in line with the digitalizing world. The presenters were from universities/ institutes (USM, UNIMAS, UiTM, Unikl, UM, UPM, UMK, UKM, VRI, UniSHAMS), hospitals and international universities from Thailand, Nigeria and Indonesia. Among the highlighting and impressive sharing was on functionality of the fibrous Kenaf cellulose as mosquito repellent, gut miorebs associated with deworming treatment among Orang Asli, usage of edible bird’s net for keratitis, parasite in house lizards/cats and use of ivermectin drug in exotic animals. Many interesting concepts and ideas where shared which catalyzed for new discoveries and innovative research path in future. In a nutshell, these oral presentation session created opportunity for research networking, new idea generation and boosted confidence among young researchers to present their findings scientifically.
Please find the below links for the conference video recordings by session:

**Video 1: OPENING CEREMONY VIDEO RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSbfoqxHxm8

**Video 2: KEYNOTE SESSION RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xT_EpxfMwQE

**Video 3: ORAL PRESENTATION 1 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Spu58W2uQf0

**Video 4: ORAL PRESENTATION 2 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNknVN4taoA

**Video 5: RAPID ORAL STUDENT COMPETITION RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTmeoXXu_bU

**Video 6: PLENARY SESSION 1 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oFnnkYW99A

**Video 7: ORAL PRESENTATION 3 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt-hGf2YxJw

**Video 8: PLENARY SESSION 2 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJmqLiH-NxQ

**Video 9: PLENARY SESSION 3 RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPTfsDgt8O8

**Video 10: CLOSING CEREMONY RECORDING**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za9Ou0b84XI
SEE YOU ALL AGAIN IN 2022

THE 58TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE OF MSPTM
THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) SIGNING CEREMONY

MOA SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN MSPTM AND UNIVERSITI MALAYA

6th December 2021, 11.00 A.M., The Cube, Level 4, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya

From the left: Professor Dr. April Camilla Roslani, YBhg. Professor Dato’ Ir. Dr. Mohd. Hamdi Abd. Shukor, Dr. Sam Mohan and Dr. Chen Chee Dhang.

The occasion was graced by the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of UM, YBhg. Professor Dato’ Ir. Dr. Mohd. Hamdi Abd. Shukor, Dean, Faculty of Medicine (FoM) UM, YBrs. Professor Dr. April Camilla Roslani and President of MSPTM, YBrs. Dr. Sam Mohan.

The ceremony witnessed the signing of MoA between MSPTM and Department of Parasitology for renovation and restoration of Dewan CP Ramachandran in memory of our beloved Founder and Honorary member, Prof. Emeritus Dato’ Cherubala Pathayapurayil (CP) Ramachandran. Under the terms of collaboration, MSPTM agrees to make a sponsorship to UM for a sum of RM100,000.00.

In appreciation to the sponsorship, UM hereby agrees as follow: (i). to acknowledge contributions of MSPTM at website and social media; (ii). to provide tax exemption receipt for the monetary contribution of RM100,000; (iii). to place MSPTM’s name and logo on the donor recognition wall of Dewan CP Ramachandran upon completion; and (iv). to place a picture of Prof. Emeritus Dato’ (CP) Ramachandran and his brief CV on the wall.
The ceremony also witnessed the mock cheque presentation to Tabung Frontliner PPUM by the Vice President & Chairperson of MSPTM conference Dr. Chen Chee Dhang to the Dean of FoM and Vice-Chancellor of UM.
Speech delivered by YBhg. Professor Dato’ Ir. Dr. Mohd. Hamdi Abd. Shukor, Vice- Chancellor, Universiti Malaya & Dr. Sam Mohan Arupatham, President of MSPTM.

MSPTM council members who attended the ceremony and Prof. Dr. Lau Yee Ling, the Head of the Department of Parasitology, UM (4th position from the left).
THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA) SIGNING CEREMONY

Staffs and members of MSPTM and Universiti Malaya attending the MOA signing ceremony.

Cute little cupcakes with MSPTM and UM logos.

Token of appreciation presentation.
Click on the links below to read the latest open access articles:

https://msptm.org/vol-38-no-3-september/
COVID-19 infection in Malaysia: What does the discovery of a novel Malaysian lineage B.1.524 tells us?

Combating disease transmission demands new, rapid advancement of knowledge of the microorganisms that cause them. The COVID-19 disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has been a global health and economic threat. Containment of the disease entails identification of variants of the roaming virus.

Here’s an article that provides the genomic insights on the rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 in Malaysia.

https://doi.org/10.47665/tb.38.3.070

Download the article for FREE!
Knowledge of the types of bacteria that cause dental infections is crucial in understanding the systemic complications they could possibly trigger in children with cancer. Such information will facilitate diagnosis and treatment management of oral health.

Here’s an article that offers valuable insights into the detection of oral bacteria amongst select cancer patients in a pediatric oncology ward in Malaysia.

https://doi.org/10.47665/tb.38.3.068

Download the article for **FREE!**
Rabies is preventable, but why it is spreading and from where?

Policy making and control strategies needs science and data. Understanding the genetic makeup, diversity of the rabies virus and the transmission pattern of the disease are crucial for this purpose.

Here’s an article that sheds light on those important aspects of the circulating rabies virus in Malaysia:

https://doi.org/10.47665/tb.38.2.043

Download the article for FREE!
Are those mosquitoes unstoppable?

Dengue cases especially in the tropical and subtropical regions are not declining despite the various control measures to combat the threat of Aedes-borne diseases.

Here’s an article that elucidates a new approach to reducing the use of insecticides on different species of landscape plants in Malaysia in the vector management of Aedes mosquitoes.

https://doi.org/10.47665/tb.38.2.053

Download the article for **FREE**!
Malarial parasite plasmodium knowlesi, no monkey business

By Adrian David - October 13, 2021 @ 11:05am

KUALA LUMPUR: The malarial parasite Plasmodium knowlesi is no monkey business.

The deadly microscopic parasite, which is transmitted to humans from monkeys (particularly macaques) through the anopheles leucosphyrus group of mosquito’s bites, has increasingly become a threat to mankind in the tropics - accounting for tens of thousands of reported cases in Southeast Asia-wide to date.

Revealing this, Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) president Dr. Sam Mohan told the New Straits Times that unaware to many, Plasmodium knowlesi was becoming a bane as the primates were increasingly displaced from their natural habitat.

This, he said, was a result of rapid deforestation for economic development, which forced the primates to migrate closer to populated human dwellings in modernised towns and cities to survive.

"Typically, the parasites are maintained in low numbers in the natural monkey hosts from each mosquito bite.

"At the same time, these mosquitoes pick-up the infected blood from the monkeys and transmit the parasites to humans, dwelling close to the primate colony, during their next bite and easily multiply by the thousands in human blood.

"There on, the parasites continuously infect humans when they encounter the mosquitoes that also feed on monkeys during forest-related activities," said Dr Sam.

MSPTM’s biggest concern, he added, was that many cases in Southeast Asia may be undiagnosed or unreported owing to lack of health checks by the authorities.

Thus, at least 32 deaths from plasmodium knowlesi - 18 of whom were males - were documented from Sabah and Sarawak.

Plasmodium knowlesi infections were strictly confined within the Southeast Asian region due to the limited natural distributions of the monkey hosts and the particular type of anopheles leucosphyrus group of mosquitoes.

"The detection of Plasmodium knowlesi in patients require the use of the molecular laboratory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) method, due to its undistinguished morphological characteristics with other parasite species. "In hospitals across Malaysia, microscopy is still the gold standard for laboratory diagnosis of malaria for all species.

"The use of the PCR molecular method is mainly for research or molecular epidemiological studies and specific confirmatory cases," Dr Sam said this in conjunction with the recent ‘MSPTM Annual Scientific Conference 2021’.

He noted that the molecular epidemiological studies conducted in Malaysia from 2004 to 2019, cumulatively identified 5,776 Plasmodium knowlesi infections.

Thailand recorded 34 cases, Myanmar and the Philippines five each, Singapore and Kalimantan in Indonesia one each, Sumatera in Indonesia 392, Cambodia two, Vietnam 38 and Laos ten, for the same period.

However, based on microscopy, Dr Sam said that out of the 3,565 average annual malaria cases in Malaysia, between 2016 and 2020, 85 per cent were due to Plasmodium knowlesi.
Of this figure, he said 88% of *Plasmodium knowlesi* cases occurred in east Malaysia, with Sabah reporting 55 per cent, followed by Sarawak (33%), Kelantan (5%), Perak (3%) and Pahang (2%).

Dr Sam said the National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan aimed to eliminate indigenous human malaria, especially malaria caused by human parasites *Plasmodium falciparum* and *Plasmodium vivax*, since 2011.

“We are aware that zoonotic malaria caused by *Plasmodium knowlesi* has steadily increased.

“All *Plasmodium knowlesi* malaria patients acquired the infections when performing activities in the dense forests and fringes, which involve mainly agriculture, plantation and logging activities, when they were exposed to the Anopheles mosquitoes that fed on wild infected monkeys,” Dr Sam said.

*Plasmodium knowlesi* requires 24 hours to complete its development cycle in red blood cells before invading new cells, making it the fastest malaria parasite to multiply in humans.

“Delayed laboratory diagnosis and treatment will cause the patients to develop severe disease and potentially death due to high parasite burden,” Dr Sam said.

To combat the spread of *Plasmodium knowlesi*, health authorities had begun conducting studies to understand the biology of *Plasmodium knowlesi* and the epidemiology of the disease.

“For almost two decades, since the large focus of natural infections reported in Sarawak in 2004, current significant findings showed that the evolution of this parasite was complex, indicating that there are at least three genetically divergent *Plasmodium knowlesi* infecting humans.

“Two of these divergent parasites infect humans in east Malaysia - each associated with long-tailed macaque and pig-tailed macaque species, respectively.

“Whole genome data of these parasites isolated from patients indicate that two independent zoonosis are occurring sympatrically over there.

“One divergent *Plasmodium knowlesi* is exclusively found in Peninsular Malaysia, mainly due to the geographical barrier of the South China Sea that separates the parasites in the monkeys from those in east Malaysia,” he said.

Entomological studies also showed that there were many anopheles mosquito species responsible for transmitting *Plasmodium knowlesi* to humans.

The *Anopheles balabacensis* is the main vector in many regions in Sabah, while various species have been incriminated as potential vectors in Sarawak, like *Anopheles latens* in Kapit, *Anopheles latens* and *Anopheles donaldi* in Lawas, and *Anopheles latens*, *Anopheles introlatus*, *Anopheles roperi* and *Anopheles collesi* in Betong.

*Anopheles cracens*, however, are still the main vector for *Plasmodium knowlesi* in Peninsular Malaysia,” he said.

Meanwhile, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak’s Malaria Research Centre director Dr Paul Cliff Simon Divis warned that malaria was a mandatory notifiable disease under the Malaysian Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Act 1988.

“Active and passive surveillances are being routinely performed by the district health offices to control the disease, which include *Plasmodium knowlesi* parasite.

“PCR-based detection should be continuously applied in the surveillance especially on symptomatic patients.

“While this molecular detection method is time-consuming and costly, collaboration between the Health Ministry and other agencies such as the universities, should be continuously emphasised to combat this zoonotic disease,” said Dr Paul.

Additionally, he said, there ought to be greater public awareness through health education on monkeys malaria by *Plasmodium knowlesi* among people who were at high risk.

“Understanding the behaviour and habitat of the mosquitoes in essential, therefore, it is important for people to take precautions when engaging activities at the forest or forest fringe.

“Traditional methods such as applying mosquito repellents and wear long clothes to cover our skin are still effective to prevent mosquito bites.

“It is also recommended that farmers or plantation workers who spend the nights at the farms should sleep under insecticide-treated bed nets,” he said.
Dr Paul advised those living in areas that were endemic for zoonotic malaria to be aware about the classical symptoms like fever, chills and rigours, and seek immediate treatment.

He called for further research to understand the biology of anopheles mosquitoes to control their abundance in the forest.

"Currently, a radiation technique that sterilizes male aedes mosquitoes is being tested in many countries as part of global health efforts to control diseases like dengue.

"Perhaps, similar technique can also be applied to anopheles mosquitoes for similar reasons," he said.

Dr Paul hoped that the discovery of a new malaria vaccine, Mosquirix, by the World Health Organisation, would be able to combat Plasmodium falciparum malaria.

"But will it work on monkey malaria?" he asked.

--------------------------------- THE END --------------------------------
PETALING JAYA: Proper understanding and knowledge are needed before any attempts are made to handle or rescue animals, says Malaysian National Animal Welfare Foundation (MNAWF).

MNAWF secretary Shrilan Sivagurunathan noted that the foundation had made it its mission to educate animal lovers and pet owners on animal care.

“Our aim is to promote a society that cares about animals and the environment around them. We want to create awareness towards responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.

“People may know a lot of things about animals. But when you come across an animal, be it a pet or a wild animal, you need to know how to deal with it, how to behave near it. When people treat animals and the environment with respect, you will not hear about animal abuse,” he said.

Shrilan explained that MNAWF launched a series of webinars aimed at educating animal enthusiasts about proper animal care.

Already in its second edition, the webinars feature experienced veterinarians who have spoken on various topics on animal welfare and pet care.

Yesterday’s webinar was presented by Dr Reuben Sharma, a lecturer at Universiti Putra Malaysia’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. The topic focused on “Initial Care and Management of Injured Stray Animals and Urban Wildlife”.

In the presentation, Dr Sharma shared the many different traits of domesticated and wild animals – from cats and dogs, to reptiles like snakes and monitor lizards.

“In the webinar, Dr Sharma tells the audience what they need to understand when coming across an injured animal. “How we behave around an injured animal is important, as it may trigger an unwanted reaction from the animal. This may cause harm to the animal or ourselves.

“As Dr Sharma explained, the mantra is always to cause no harm. If you are unsure of how to deal with an animal, but you want to help, the advice is to contact rescuers and authorities,” said Shrilan.

MNAWF will be organising more webinars every month, covering other topics about animal welfare.

“It is nice to see a good response from the audience. The amount of interest is quite encouraging. “The more people we inspire to think about animal welfare, the more we have made a difference and played our part,” said Shrilan.
It appears as though some elusive answers to difficult problems are written in an invisible ink. And along comes one man who is privileged to decipher and read this ... and whisper the magic word open sesame, if you like, and a discovery is made!

The cry of Archimedes of Syracuse, Greece would become the famous inspirational solution to a difficult problem. No one actually knows if he actually ran naked down the street shouting ‘Eureka’. But all scientist and creative people are happy ‘he found’ it!

Prof. Dr. Pakeer Oothuman Syed Ahamed
A JOURNEY TO EXPLORE MOSQUITOES: CREATE DENGUE AWARENESS AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

The SJKC Yuk Choi Sandakan organized a series of weekly webinar programmes entitled “Travelling During the Pandemic” throughout the month of November in order to celebrate Children’s Day. The programme was opened to all students and public via live in Facebook.

The organizers have invited a Mosquito expert from Universiti Malaya, Dr. Chen Chee Dhang, to present his webinar entitled “A Journey to Explore Mosquitoes”. Dr. Chen is a Scientist conducting research on medically important insects, and a specialist on mosquito and fly bionomics and vector control.

Dr. Chen serves as the President of the Universiti Malaya Administrators Association, Vice President of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine, and Managing Editor of a scientific journal the Tropical Biomedicine.

During the webinar session, Dr. Chen shared knowledge on species of mosquitoes found in the country, as well as how to differentiate the female and male mosquitoes, the feeding timing and life cycle of Aedes mosquito. In addition, Dr. Chen also educated the public on the symptoms of dengue fever, and effective ways to control mosquitoes using household insecticide.

Dr. Chen and the moderator, Ms. Chin Sien Yuk appealed to all students and parents to join the dengue awareness campaign, in order to prevent the transmission of dengue in the country.

“With the objective of promoting dengue awareness among the community, all stakeholders should, hand in hand, take the initiative to contribute positively towards the health situation in this country,” said Dr. Chen.

The school principal, Ms. Lee Wai Han is grateful to Dr. Chen for his kindness as speaker for this programme, and also appreciates Fumakilla Malaysia Berhad, for sponsoring gifts for Q&A session. The hard work and effort from teachers in organizing this program was deeply appreciated.

“As the number of cases carried by mosquito vectors has increased many folds over the years, programmes to create public awareness against dengue and its vectors are essential,” said Ms. Lee.

The principal also stated that “Joint programmes between school and professional bodies, should be encouraged to enable students to be exposed to the different fields of studies. This will greatly enhance their knowledge in the sciences which is in line with the current education policies of the 2025 School Transformation Plan (TS25).”
OBITUARY

IN LOVING MEMORY

DEMISE OF EMERITUS PROFESSOR DR. AKIRA ITO
Prof. Dr. Akira Ito
(1947-2021)

Prof. Dr. Akira Ito is an Emeritus Professor in Department of Parasitology, Asahikawa Medical University, Asahikawa, Japan. He is also a Visiting Professor in Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia and Honorary International Fellow of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. His main research was mainly on important helminths which are Echinococcus sp. Taenia sp. and Hymenolepis nana with over 420 publications. He also secured funds more than 10 million Japanese Yen from Japan and Internationally and has been an invited speaker for 147 talks in various events and conferences. Prof. Dr. Akira Ito is currently an Associate Editor for PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases and Editorial Board member of Acta Tropica, Parasitology International, Parasitology and Parasite Immunology. He has been invited as guest Editor-in-Chief for outstanding journals such as Parasitology, Parasitology International, Asian Parasitology and also an invited guest Editor for Acta Tropica.

We are all privileged and deeply honoured to have known, interacted, and learned from such prominent and exemplary scientists as Prof. Dr. Akira Ito. He has been an active member of the editorial board of Tropical Biomedicine for several years and given his time in reviewing scientific papers for publication. He has supported MSPTM events as he has been attending our annual conferences in 2001, 2012 and for the 50th year anniversary celebrations in 2014 as a participant and plenary speaker sharing his vast knowledge on Taeniasis, Echinococcus and tapeworm infections. He is much loved by colleagues in Malaysia.

God bless you Prof. Dr. Akira Ito, thank you for your scientific contributions, and for being such a great friend and mentor. The 58th MSPTM Council extends its deepest condolences to the family of Prof. Dr. Akira Ito. May his good soul Rest in Peace.

By,
Dato' Dr. Chandrawathani Panchadcharam
Explore our past newsletters!!!

WE OFTEN HAVE MOMENTS WHERE OLD AND SEEMINGLY FORGOTTEN MEMORIES POP BACK INTO MIND.

OLDER MEMORIES MIGHT BE RECALLED MORE OFTEN BY VISITING THE PAST MSPTM NEWSLETTERS.

Click on the links below to view the collection of past newsletters:

https://msptm.org/newsletter/
This is the 1986-1987 Council of MSPTM. Rarely such pictures taken within IMR. Many well known people in council. Most became Presidents. One MP.

(Seated from left: Mr. Sulaiman Abdullah—treasurer many times; Dr. Chua Sau Pheng; Dr. P.G. Joseph; Dr. Pakeer Oothuman; Dr. Vijayamma Thomas; Dr. Lee Han Lim, Standing from left: Mr. Loong Kok Poay; Dr. Shivaji Ramalingam; Dr. Khairul Anuar; Dr. Rehana A. Sani; Dr. Lim Thuang Seng and Dr. S. Vellayan)
Let's join our webinars!

Webinar Registration:
https://msptm.org/msptm-webinar-2022/
**Call for abstract!**

**58TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE OF THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF PARASITOLOGY & TROPICAL MEDICINE**

**21 - 22 March 2022**

Virtual Conference

Conference Theme

**SUSTAINABLE PANDEMIC PLANNING: TOWARDS A HEALTHY NATION**

**CALL FOR ABSTRACT!**


All abstracts will be reviewed and assigned to an appropriate session. Accepted abstracts will be notified of the mode of presentation as follow:

- Oral Presentation
- Rapid Oral Presentation (Non-Student)
- Rapid Oral Presentation (Student Competition)
- E-Poster Presentation

**Topics Covered**

- Malaria
- Dengue
- Covid-19
- Emerging Zoonoses
- Antibiotic Resistance
- Insecticide Resistance
- Veterinary Parasitology
- Vector Biology & Control
- Neglected Tropical Diseases
- Medical & Forensic Entomology
- Medical Microbiology & Parasitology
- Aquatic, Exotic & Wildlife Diseases
- General Topics

**Keynote & Plenary Sessions**

**CPD points will be awarded**

**Student Competition**

**Fees**

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>MSPTM Member</td>
<td>RM 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-MSPTM Member</td>
<td>RM 180</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN Association of Parasitology*</td>
<td>RM 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>RM 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Citizen (Age &gt;60)</td>
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*Indonesian Parasitic Disease Association
Parasitology & Tropical Medicine Association of Thailand
Vietnam Society of Parasitology
Vietnam Society of Infectious Diseases
The Philippines Society of Parasitology

Closing date: 5 March 2022

**Email:** msptmevents@gmail.com

Call for contribution:
NATIONAL PARASITE REFERENCE COLLECTION & PARASITOLOGY DATABASE

The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) is working closely with the Parasitology Laboratory, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, UPM to support the initiative for a National Parasite Reference Collection and parasitology database with the following objectives:

1. To establish a reference database of Malaysian Parasite fauna for the purpose of teaching, research and biodiversity cataloguing.

2. To establish a National Parasitology Museum.

This initiative will provide below benefit which were:

1. Malaysian Parasite Reference Collection

2. National Parasitology Museum

Therefore, we would like to ask any member who is interested in joining hands together and contributing to this initiative to contact us and discuss. We would also like to welcome everyone from research institutions or government sectors and also private laboratories to join us and make this initiative possible. Please feel free to distribute this information to those who you think related to the field.

Further details on this initiative are as attached. Please contact secretary MSPTM at secretarypsptmegmail.com or 016-3406313 for further information.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nomination of
SANDOSHAM GOLD MEDAL 2021

The Sandosham Medal shall be awarded under the following conditions:

1. The medal shall be awarded biannually to a living person in recognition of original and outstanding contributions in the fields of parasitology and tropical medicine in Southeast Asia.

2. Candidature shall be open to members of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine. A candidate should have been a member of the Society for at least two (2) years preceding their candidature.

3. Consideration for the award will be based on the candidate's work and accomplishments without restriction as to period during which the contributions were made.

WHO CAN NOMINATE?

Any member who has subscribed to the Society for TWO FULL YEARS shall be entitled to nominate a candidate.

HOW TO NOMINATE?

The proposer of the candidate shall deposit with the Honorary Secretary (secretarymsptm@gmail.com) not later than 31st December 2021, detailed reasons for this nomination and the claims of his nominee, giving the following details:

1. The full name of the candidate and the candidate's curriculum vitae, which should include the candidate's academic achievements, professional appointments and other contributions at national or regional level.
2. A full list of the candidate's publications, including paper accepted for publications.
3. Reasons why the proposer feels that the candidate is worthy of consideration for the medal.

Alternately, kindly visit the MSPTM website https://msptm.org/nominations-for-medals/ for more information.
Nomination of
NADCHATRAM SILVER MEDAL 2021

The Nadchatram Silver Medal shall be awarded under the following conditions:

1. The medal shall be awarded annually to a living person in recognition of outstanding scientific contribution in parasitology and tropical medicine in Southeast Asia.
2. Only members of 45 YEARS OLD OR BELOW shall be eligible.
3. There shall be no restriction as to sex or profession of the candidates, nor as to the period during which the research was conducted.
4. Please refer to the criteria needed in the ASSESSMENT RUBRICS attached for Nadchatram Silver Medal.

WHO CAN NOMINATE?

Any member who has subscribed to the Society for TWO FULL YEARS shall be entitled to nominate a candidate.

HOW TO NOMINATE?

The proposer of the candidate shall deposit with the Honorary Secretary (secretarymsptm@gmail.com) not later than 31st December 2021 detailed reasons for this nomination and the claims of his nominee, giving the following details:

1. The full name of the candidate with satisfactory evidence of the date of birth and the candidate's address, qualifications and academic distinctions.
2. A list of the candidate's publications, including papers accepted for publication.
3. Reasons why the proposer feels that the candidate is worthy of consideration for the medal.

Alternatively, kindly visit the MSPTM website http://msptm.org/nominations-for-medals/ for more information.
Call for Application: MSPTM Community Fund 2021 (Deadline Extended)

The Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine (MSPTM) is delighted to offer the MSPTM Community Fund 2021 for activities which can improve the quality of life, health and well-being. A total of three projects with RM1,000 - RM5,000 funding each, are available to support local charities and community projects throughout Malaysia. The application deadline has been extended to 24th December 2021.

The MSPTM Community Fund is seeking to support projects working within a range of themes as set out below:

✓ Community involvement projects
✓ Community safety projects
✓ Community health and well-being projects
✓ Projects to develop skills, education & employment support

Who can apply? This grant is open to all MSPTM members with the following criteria:
✓ Malaysian citizen
✓ Project duration: 1-2 years
✓ Amount: up to RM5000

How to apply?
✓ Submit the completed “MSPTM Community Fund Application Form” to secretarymsptm@gmail.com (BEFORE 12 noon, 24th December).

When to apply?
✓ Closing date 12 noon, 24th December of the year.
✓ Result will be announced via email.

What happens after I apply?
✓ All applicants will be notified about their outcome in writing. If your application fits the MSPTM Community Fund priority areas, it’ll be shortlisted.

What happens after the grant is awarded?
✓ All successful applicant must present their progress once a year. An oral presentation at MSPTM annual conference AND submission of a paper to reputable ISI-indexed journal such as Tropical Biomedicine acknowledging the funder is mandatory.
Call for Life Membership Application

We are glad to announce that the life membership is now open for members’ applications.

WHO TO APPLY?

Ordinary Member who has subscribed for at least 5 years continuously.

HOW TO APPLY?

Fill in the online application forms: https://msptm.org/members/

WHEN TO APPLY?

Application is open throughout the year.

HOW MUCH TO PAY?

The subscription for life members payable in advance shall be RM1,000.00.

ENQUIRY?

Please email us: secretarymsptm@gmail.com
Thank you to our corporate partners

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