

# PATH TALK



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

December 2013 Issue

Dear members,



### Pathology Subspecialty Fellowship

At the 10<sup>th</sup> MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013, we saw the conferment of the Fellowship for Plastic Surgery, FCSAMM (Plastic Surgery), for the first time by the College of Surgeons, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia. This is a Fellowship given to surgeons who have completed the subspecialty training in plastic surgery. In his message as the outgoing Master of the Academy of Medicine in Berita Akademi, Dr. Chang reported that AMM proposed to establish

a National Subspecialty Training Board under the auspices of the Malaysian Medical Council, regulated by the revised Medical Act. This is timely as currently, various professional organisations working with the Ministry of Health have been training subspecialty specialists, for example, the training programme by the Malaysian Society of Nephrology for the nephrology subspecialty, and the Malaysian Society of Haematology for the clinical haematology subspecialty. This Board would be able to unify all these subspecialty training programmes under one roof and trainees completing the 2 to 3 years of subspecialty training can be conferred a fellowship by the respective college of the Academy of Medicine. The Council of the CPathAMM in its recent meeting has explored this important direction. Professor Ainoon Othman would chair a committee to establish these subspecialty programmes, initially to focus on renal pathology as a subspecialty for Anatomical Pathology and haemostasis medicine, for haematology. Perhaps, we should also include transfusion medicine as it has been projected that we would need at least 80 transfusion medicine specialists by year 2020. Haematologists (post Master) who wish to sub-specialise in this area can take up further training under the College's subspecialty programme for transfusion medicine.

### MCPATH QAP – External Quality Assurance Programme (EQAP)

In assuring quality in the practice of pathology and laboratory medicine, seeking accreditation such as ISO15189 has become a necessity. Proficiency testing for each investigation such as participating in an external quality assurance programme is an important requirement. Currently, medical laboratories in Malaysia subscribe to foreign EQAP. These programmes are relatively expensive. In government laboratories, as an alternative to these foreign programmes, proficiency testing arrangements are made by such centres like the Institute for Medical Research and the National Blood Centre. Unfortunately, the EQAP is not their core business and that raises issues of sustainability (justification of budget) and conflict of interest (service providers also providing EQAP). CPathAMM has decided to take up this role and this year a not-for-profit company, named MCPATH QAP Sdn Bhd, has been formed. Members of the Board of Directors are Dr. Menaka, Dr. Leslie Lai and Prof. Yap Sook Fan. A pilot run for the EQAP will be carried out in early 2014 and once the teething problems associated with the operation are ironed out, a limited range of EQAP (haematology, clinical chemistry and serology) will be opened to the subscribers. This is an important milestone for CPathAMM. We look forward to all the Members and Fellows to come forward to support this activity, either as members of the advisory EQAP board for each discipline and "rain makers" in persuading your laboratories to subscribe to our own EQAP!



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### **Digitised Pathology and Its Implication**

In the old days, chest X-ray images were recorded on films. Today, the images are digitised. In recent years, images of HPE, blood films, bone marrow smears, cytology smears, karyotyping, FISH examination and so on are digitised. The age of virtual microscopy has finally arrived. It is thus not surprising to receive virtual slides for EQAP purpose; and digital images are commonly used for education and training purposes. Very soon, digital images for diagnostic consultation may become routine. By 2015, cross border pathology consultation would become a reality. Foreign pathologists may not even need to come to Malaysia to report the slides. Are we ready for this? Are we going to exploit the situation where we have a lead in this area? It is time for us to act.

### **Virtual Cell Counter**

If you walk into a haematology laboratory today, you will still hear the familiar ringing tone of the mechanical differential counter when a differential count on a bone marrow smear is completed. You do not hear of differential counting for full blood count anymore as differential counts are automatically generated nowadays by the haematology cell counters. Dr. Wong Wei Keong, a Malaysian haematologist, who is working in the United Kingdom, had worked with his colleagues to come out with a virtual cell counter to replace the mechanical one. On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013, while he was on home leave with his parents, he was invited to give a demonstration of his invention to our fellow haematologists. For those who have missed this demonstration, you are invited to visit the following website: [www.cellcountr.com](http://www.cellcountr.com) to download the virtual cell counter. It is free and very user-friendly. It can be customised to your need. Please give him feedbacks so that he can improve the device further (email address: wongweikeong@gmail.com).

Thank you.

### **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !**

*Emeritus Professor Cheong Soon Keng  
President.*



## **NEWS & EVENTS**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Malaysia Lymphoma Network Meeting**

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**Hospital Ampang**

The College of Pathologists and the Malaysian Society of Haematology Oncological Society jointly organised this meeting with the support of Roche (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

This one day educational meeting, as part of the Continuing Medical Education (CME), included lectures and case discussions on various types of lymphoma cases. This also aimed to serve as a platform for interactive sessions between the pathologists and haematologists with regards to the diagnosis and management of lymphomas.

The panel of experts invited for this meeting consisted of:

- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tan Soo Yong (National University of Singapore)
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Noraidah Masir (UKM Medical Centre)
- Dr. Ng Soo Chin (Sime Darby Medical Centre)
- Dr. Gracieux Y. Fernando (Manila Doctors Hospital)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tan Soo Yong delivered two lectures on “Pitfalls in the Diagnosis of Aggressive B-cell Lymphoma” and “Pitfalls in the Diagnosis of T-cell Lymphoma”. Other topics covered included “Molecular CLL” by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Noraidah Masir, “Challenges in Managing Low Grade Lymphoma in the Rituximab Era” by Dr. Ng Soo Chin and “G-CSFs for the Prophylaxis and Management of Chemotherapy-induced Neutropenis” by Dr Gracieux Y. Fernando. The meeting also included 7 case presentations from various hospitals from around Malaysia.

### **Considerations in Advanced Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) Treatment in Malaysia Meeting**

**19<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

The College of Pathologists and Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia jointly organised this meeting with the support of Astra Zeneca Sdn. Bhd.

This educational and non-promotional meeting aimed to increase awareness of all physicians involved on changes in lung cancer treatment and the importance of EGFR mutations, to provide updates on NSCLC treatment guidelines and to highlight the emotional journey of lung cancer patients. In addition, the meeting also aimed to create awareness in multidisciplinary doctors on different considerations in lung cancer through patient’s journey.

The panel of experts invited for this meeting consisted of:

- Prof. Dr. How Soon Hin (International Islamic University Malaysia)
- Dr. Mukarramah bt Che Ayub (Hospital Raja Perempuan Zainab II)
- Prof. Dr. Biswa Mohan Biswal (Hospital USM)
- Dr. Richard Lim (Hospital Selayang)

Two case presentations from Hospital Sultanah Nur Zahirah, Kuala Terengganu and Hospital USM was carried out during the meeting. The meeting was attended by chest physicians, pathologists, oncologists, medical officers, palliative and pharmacists from Kelantan, Terengganu and Kuantan.



### **3<sup>rd</sup> UTAR Seminar on Stem Cell & iPSC Research: Basic & Translational Aspects**

**Faculty of Medicine & Health Science, UTAR**

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013**

UTAR Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR) organised the “3<sup>rd</sup> UTAR Seminar on Stem Cell and iPSC Research: Basic & Translational Aspects” with College of Pathologists, Academy of Medicine Malaysia as the co-organiser at the Sg.Long Campus on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013.

With emphasis on the basic and translational aspects of stem cell research, including induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSC), the seminar attracted participants from both the academia and the industry. There were local and foreign researchers, representatives, staff and others from thirteen (13) institutions which included research institutions such as Institute of Medical Research (IMR) Malaysia, Cancer Research Initiatives Foundation (CARIF), stem cell companies; Cryocord Sdn Bhd, Cytopeutics Sdn Bhd and universities including Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), International Medical University (IMU) and more, just to name a few.

In his welcome speech at the seminar, the chairperson of the organising committee Prof. Dr. Choo Kong Bung who is also the chairperson of UTAR CSCR said, “We not only have distinguished speakers from Australia and Singapore and two local senior stem cell scientists to update us on the current trends in stem cell research, we also have the pleasure of having six young scientists to be our speakers to present their recent works.” He added that the 3-session seminar would serve as a useful platform for active engagement with participants from different institutions and the training of research students in the art of effective presentations. Prof. Dr. Shelly Soo was the master of ceremony for the seminar.

The seminar commenced with the keynote lecture in the first session by Prof. Dr. John Rasko AO who is an Australian pioneer in the application of adult stem cells and genetic therapy and heads the Gene and Stem Cell Therapy Program at the Centenary Institute in the University of Sydney, Australia. His topic was the hidden layers of gene expression control with focus on microRNAs; the mechanisms and the therapeutic strategies in the control of cell mutations. The next presentation was by Dr. Thamir Selvee Ramasamy, Imperial College London, UK & UM, Malaysia on her research finding about ‘Multiple signaling pathways regulating definitive endoderm differentiation from human embryonic stem cells.’

Highlight of the second session was the presentation by Prof. Dr. Seow Heng Fong from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and Institute of Bioscience, Universiti Putra Malaysia on the relevancy of tumorshperes as *in vitro* models for studying chemo-resistance of cancer stem cells with references to the Cancer Stem Cell (CSC) Theory. Showcasing their current findings in stem cell research were the presentations in the same session by post graduate researchers; Teoh Hoon Koon, PPUKM-MAKNA Cancer Centre & Universiti Putra Malaysia on ‘Inhibition of U266 cell growth by human mesenchymal stromal cell-mediated siRNA silencing of interleukin-6’, Dr. Tan Sik-Loo, UM, Malaysia on ‘Growth differentiation factor 5-induced human bone marrow-derived mesenchymal cells (hMSCs): an imaging analysis via confocal laser scanning microscopy and atomic force microscopy’ and K. Shri Hymavathee from UTAR CSCR on ‘Oxidative stress-induced pre- mature senescence in Wharton jelly-derived mesenchymal stem cells.

Of equal interest in the final session were the talks on adipose tissues as potential sources for metabolic reprogramming by Assistant Prof. Dr. Shigeki Sugii from Singapore Bioimaging Consortium, Singapore and the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore and the targeting cancer cells with genetically engineered mesenchymal stem cells by Emeritus Prof. Dr. Cheong Soon Keng who is UTAR’s Dean of Faculty of Medicine &

Health Sciences. The other two presentations were 'In vitro expansion of hematopoietic stem cell (HSCs) without stable genetic modification' by Dr. Fazlina Nordin, King's College London, UK & UKMMC, Malaysia and 'An investigation to determine the chondrogenic differentiation potential of bone marrow and peripheral blood-derived mesenchymal stem cells in vitro' by Dr. Chong Pan Pan, UM, Malaysia.

The question and answer session after each presentation saw a lively interaction between the presenter and the participants. The seminar concluded with the presentation of tokens of appreciation to the four invited speakers and six researchers. In his closing address, Prof Dr Choo said that the seminar has grown relatively bigger with the addition of young researchers and expressed his appreciation to all the invited speakers, advisors, participants, the organising committee and the sponsors (Bio Diagnostics, Cryocord Sdn Bhd, Matrioux Science, Research Instruments and Team Medical and Science) for making the seminar a success.



The panel of speakers at the seminar. From left; Prof. Dr. Shelly Soo (Organising Committee), Prof. Dr. Choo Kong Bung (Chairperson, Organising Committee), Dr. Tan Sik Loo, Dr. Thamil S Ramasamy, Asst. Prof. Dr. Shikegi Sugii, Prof. Dr. Seow Heng Fong, Prof. Dr. John Rasko AO, Emeritus Prof. Dr. Cheong Soon Keng, Dr. Fazlina Nordin, K Shri Hyamavathe, Teoh Hoon Koon and Dr. Chong Pan Pan.



A section of the 93 participants at the seminar.

**Breast Pathology Seminar  
6<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013  
UKM Medical Centre**

In conjunction with the visit of RCPA Visiting Professor 2013, Prof. Dr. Sunil Lakhani, the College of Pathologists and Department of Pathology, UKM Medical Centre jointly organised a one day seminar on breast pathology.

Prof. Dr. Lakhani is the Head of the Academic Discipline of Molecular and Cellular Pathology. He is also Head of the Breast Group at UQ Centre for Clinical Research, Site Director, Anatomical Pathology, The Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital and State Director, Anatomical Pathology, Pathology Queensland. Prof. Dr. Lakhani is trained in medicine, pathology and molecular pathology in London, UK and was Professor of Pathology at the Institute of Cancer Research and the Royal Marsden Hospital, London, UK, prior to his move to Brisbane. His current research interests include lobular carcinoma and its variants, tumours with a basal phenotype, mechanisms of distant metastases and familial breast cancer. He is also the series editor for the WHO Tumour Classification book and volume editor for the WHO Breast Tumour Classification 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2012).

This seminar was attended by histopathologists and trainees in anatomical pathology. The seminar aimed to provide the participants with an update on the recent advances in breast cancer pathology and the latest WHO classification of breast cancer pathology. The topics covered by Prof. Dr. Sunil Lakhani in the seminar included:

- Update on WHO classification of breast cancer
- Update on molecular pathology of breast cancer
- Update on lobular neoplasia on breast

<b>DATE</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
<b>28 Sept</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Malaysia Lymphoma Network Meeting	Hospital Ampang
<b>19 Oct</b>	Considerations in Advanced NSCLC Treatment in Malaysia	Renaissance Hotel, Kota Bahru
<b>6 Nov</b>	Breast Pathology Seminar	UKM Medical Centre
<b>2 Dec</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> UTAR Seminar on Stem Cell & iPSC Research	UTAR, Bdr. Sg. Long Campus

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### **Formation of the Phlebotomy Association of Malaysia**

The College of Pathologists is pleased to announce the formation of the Phlebotomy Association of Malaysia (PAM) on 22<sup>th</sup> June 2013 this year.

The establishment of PAM is to raise the quality and standard of phlebotomy service in Malaysia which impacts the quality of laboratory results and therefore closely associated with laboratory medicine. An inaugural conference and AGM will be held in Kuala Lumpur in March 2014.

### **2014 International Congress of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine**

**26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014, Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur**

This meeting is jointly organised by the College of Pathologists and Academy of Medicine of Malaysia with the participation of World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (WASPaLM).

The theme for the meeting is "Personalised Diagnostics: From Bench to Bedside" to highlight the increasing awareness of the importance of personalised care in modern medicine. This meeting is suitable for all pathologists, clinicians, trainee medical and scientific officers looking to update themselves in this field.

Among the scientific highlights include: Biomarkers in Transplantation/Use of Endogenous Biomarkers to Achieve Personalised Immunosuppression, Clinical Applications of Next Generation Sequencing in the Management of Cancer, Targeted Genomic, Ethical Issues in Personalised Diagnostics, Forensic Cardiopathology, Personalised Diagnostics in Infectious Diseases, GIT Pathology, Challenges in Cytology, Emerging Paradigm of Genomic- and Proteomic-based Microbiology and many more.

For additional information, please visit <http://www.icpalm2014.com> or contact the meeting secretariat via email at [admin@icpalm2014.com](mailto:admin@icpalm2014.com) or via telephone at (603)40234700, (603)40254700 or (603)40253700.

### **Renal Pathology Update**

**4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2014, Monash University (Johor Bahru)**

The College of Pathologists together with Monash University and Anatomical Pathology Unit, Hospital Sultanah Aminah, Johor Bahru will be co-organising this seminar at Clinical School Johor Bahru Monash University (Malaysia).

The goal of the workshop is to provide recent advances and insights in renal pathology with emphasis on recognition of the common histological patterns in renal biopsies. Difficult and complex cases will also be covered in the discussion. At the end of the workshop participants will be able to comfortably recognise histopathological characteristics of frequently encountered cases as well as rare renal diseases.

The 2-day workshop will focus on topics divided with didactic lectures and interactive discussion with case presentations. Among the distinguished speakers invited for this event are Dr. Stewart Fleming (University of Dundee, Ninewells Hospital, UK), Datuk Dr. Looi Lai Meng (University of Malaya & WASPaLM President) and Dr. Tan Puay Hoon (Singapore General Hospital).

Practising pathologists, pathology fellows & residents, nephrologists, nephrology trainees and clinicians managing patients with renal pathologies are invited to participate in this seminar.



### **Diagnostic Cytopathology Workshop**

**23<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2014, Singapore**

The Department of Pathology, National University Hospital of Singapore is organising a workshop on Diagnostic Cytopathology. This workshop aims to provide in-depth and updated review of important areas in gynecological and non-gynecological cytopathology through lectures, slides demonstrations, case presentations, interactive small group breakout sessions, slide self-review and MCQ self-assessments. The focus will be on recognition of diagnostic problems and pitfalls, approaches to resolving differential diagnostic dilemmas and best practices in diagnostic cytopathology.

This workshop is suitable for pathologists, cytologists, cytotechnologists and residents. Clinicians with special interests may also find this workshop educational. Participants are encouraged to present their work through a poster platform. The Call for Abstracts is available on the website. An art competition entitled "Art in Cytopathology" will also be introduced for the first time at this workshop.

Registration is limited and confirmed on a first-come first-served basis. Early Bird Registration Deadline: 31st March 2014. For additional information, please refer to <http://www.med.nuhs.edu.sg/path/cytopath2014/registration.html> or contact Ms. Yong Siew Hong/Ms. Erika Zornosa at [cytoconf\\_sec@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:cytoconf_sec@nuhs.edu.sg) or (65) 66011238/ (65)66011217.

### **Tenure-Track Clinical Assistant Professor in Haematology**

**(Ref.: 201300960)**

Applications are invited for appointment as Tenure-Track Clinical Assistant Professor in Haematology in the Department of Pathology from January 1, 2014, on a four-year fixed-term basis, with renewal possibility.

Applicants should possess a medical qualification registrable with the Hong Kong Medical Council, and preferably have obtained a professional qualification in Pathology (HKCPATH, MRCPATH, FRCPA or equivalent, such as an American Board certification). They should have a solid track record of clinical services, some teaching experience, and interest in developing medical research. The appointee will take part in clinical services, participate in undergraduate teaching and engage in academic research. He/She is expected to demonstrate a commitment to teaching, assist in the supervision of postgraduate students and administrative duties at Departmental and/or Faculty level. Information about the Department can be obtained at <http://www.patho.hku.hk/>. Enquiries about the post should be sent to [enquiry@pathology.hku.hk](mailto:enquiry@pathology.hku.hk).

A globally competitive remuneration package commensurate with the appointee's qualifications and experience will be offered. At current rates, salaries tax does not exceed 15% of gross income. The appointment will attract a contract-end gratuity and University contribution to a retirement benefits scheme, totalling up to 15% of basic salary, as well as leave, and medical benefits. A monthly cash allowance subject to the Rules on Prevention of Double Benefits on Housing will be offered to the successful candidate.

Applicants should send a completed application form together with an up-to-date C.V. to [enquiry@pathology.hku.hk](mailto:enquiry@pathology.hku.hk). Application forms (341/1111) can be obtained at <http://www.hku.hk/apptunit/form-ext.doc>, and further particulars can be obtained at <http://jobs.hku.hk/>.