

SINGAPORE FAMILY PHYSICIAN JOINS WESTERN PACIFIC REGION INDEX MEDICUS (WPRIM)

**2nd Joint meeting of the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) and the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME)
4th - 5th November 2009**

Dr Tan Tze Lee

SFP2009; 35(4): 4-6

INTRODUCTION

"The Singapore declaration on equitable access to health information in the Western Pacific Region: We, the participants in the joint meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME) and the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) held in Singapore from November 4 to 5, 2009," as APAME's Dr Jose Lapena Jr extolled these words at the opening of the SMJ's Golden Jubilee Conference on Medical Publishing and Medical Writing which was held from the 6th to 8th November 2009, all of us in attendance felt a shift in the winds of fortune for medical writing and publishing in our Asia Pacific region. This was especially for our own Singapore Family Physician (SFP), as we had at the second joint meeting of WPRIM and APAME held on 4th-5th November 2009, been admitted into WPRIM. This is a significant milestone for the SFP, and to put it into clearer light, I will need to explain what sort of organisation WPRIM is.

The Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) is a joint project of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific and Member States in the Region, its goal is to establish an online index of medical and health journals published in Member States.

To attain this goal, WPRIM has the following objectives: (1) to index medical/health-related journals in member countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region, (2) to create a bibliographic database containing records linked to their full-text, (3) to raise the level of journal publishing in the Western Pacific Region through a peer-review system, and (4) to build the capacity of participating health institutions. WPRIM is the contribution of WHO/WPRO (World Health Organization/Western Pacific Regional Office) to the Global Health Library (GHL) initiative which aims to extend to everyone the benefits of the knowledge that is essential to the fullest attainment of health. (Source: <http://wprim.wpro.who.int/SearchBasic.php>)

TAN TZE LEE, Honorary Editor, College of Family Physicians Singapore; Managing Editor, The Singapore Family Physician Journal



Singapore Family Physician Implements Web-based Article Submission and Peer Review System, Editorial Manager

EXCITEMENT AND TREPIDATION

I attended the second joint meeting of APAME (Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors) and WPRIM (Western Pacific Region Index Medicus) which was held in Singapore on the 4th and 5th November 2009 at Hotel Re with a degree of excitement and trepidation, I had been invited to present our College Journal, the Singapore Family Physician, for approval to be included into WPRIM. To be recognised as a peer reviewed journal worthy to be considered for inclusion into Index Medicus would have been a great step forward for the SFP, a true milestone as it would greatly raise its stature and impact factor.

Many journals were put up for selection, China had the most applications and there were two from Singapore, the Singapore Family Physician and SGH Proceedings. The deliberation by the selection committee proceeded in the afternoon, and by 3pm, we knew that the SFP and SGH Proceedings had been approved for inclusion into the WPRIM database. It was congratulations all round, and marks the beginning of what we hope to achieve with the SFP.

The next day's programme was filled with presentations by various members of APAME. Their enthusiasm, passion, and willingness to share knowledge and experiences were refreshing and very encouraging. One journal that caught my eye was the Papua New Guinea Medical Journal, which is published at a remote hilltop research centre (where the electrical supply is often unreliable and printing itself poses challenges we would not even think about). Despite this, the PNGMJ is regularly published, and has been indexed on PubMed for years. This is something we will be work towards in the coming year, even as we get our systems in place for inclusion into the WPRIM database.

The SMJ's Golden Jubilee Conference on Medical Publishing and Medical Writing was held from the 6th to 8th November 2009. The conference was opened by Prof Wilfred Peh, the SMJ Chief Editor, and after opening speeches by APAME president Prof CK Hahm, and Duke-NUS GMS Dean Prof Ranga Krishnan, APAME's SINGAPORE DECLARATION ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION was launched and read by Dr Jose F Lapena Jr. This document sums up the aspirations and values of APAME, of commitment to free and universal dissemination and access to quality health information through the WPRIM and the GHL [see attached].

ACQUIRING AN ONLINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM EDITORIAL MANAGER

Another related development for the SFP is the implementation of the online manuscript management system, Editorial Manager, which we have had up and running since 31st of January 2010. This new system is a great improvement on our current manual system, and will also greatly enhance our peer review process which will henceforth be blinded. My sincere thanks to all the many reviewers who have agreed to be on our peer review board.

TOWARDS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

With all these enhancements in place, the SFP will be an excellent platform for you to stretch your academic muscles, and put thought to research, thereafter pen to paper. I would like to encourage all of us to take advantage of all these new developments and write up that paper or case study or report, and submit it to the SFP for publishing. We are working for and counting on you!

SINGAPORE DECLARATION ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

We, the participants in the Joint Meeting of the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME) and the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM) held in Singapore from November 4 to 5, 2009:

CONSIDERING

That quality scientific and technical health information is essential for health policy makers, healthcare providers and health researchers to develop, improve, and implement efficient and effective healthcare systems and services;

That inequitable access to quality health information could result in poor health planning and healthcare delivery which adversely affect the health conditions of the public;

That surmounting this inequity requires public - private partnerships to facilitate equitable access to both production and consumption of health information for all;

That the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus (WPRIM), the Global Health Library (GHL), and the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Journal Editors (APAME) are important collaborative initiatives which are vital instruments to ensure the global accessibility and dissemination of quality health information in the Western Pacific Region;

CONFIRM

Our commitment to free and universal dissemination and access to quality health information through the WPRIM and the GHL;

Our commitment to pursue the goals and objectives of APAME by further building networks, convening conferences, and organising events to educate and empower editors, peer reviewers and authors in generating quality scientific and technical publications;

CALL ON

Member States of the Western Pacific Region, in collaboration with stakeholders from the private sector, to formulate and implement policies that endorse free and equitable access to quality health information;

Stakeholders from the public and private sectors, national and international organisations, to support WPRIM and the GHL in order to ensure the free and global accessibility of health research done in the Western Pacific Region;

Governments, the private sector and other editors' associations to support APAME in implementing various activities, guidelines and practices that would improve the quality of scientific writing and publications in the Asia Pacific Region;

COMMIT

Ourselves to persevere in the pursuit of the WPRIM and GHL initiatives through APAME, by encouraging peer-to-peer relationships that will allow editors, editorial staff and librarians to maintain balance, work out ideas and provide mutual support;

Our organisation, APAME, to building further networks, convening conferences, and organising events to educate and empower editors, peer reviewers and authors to achieve and maintain internationally acceptable, but regionally realistic, scholarly standards.

SINGAPORE FAMILY PHYSICIAN JOURNAL EDITORIAL REVIEW BOARD

EDITORIAL BOARD

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| 6. | Dr Jonathan Pang | Family Physician |
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| 8. | Dr Leong Choon Kit | Family Physician |

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