

# Asia Pacific Primary Care Research Conference 2012

by Dr Chng Shih Kiat, Chairperson, Organising Committee, APPCRC 2012

The 4th Asia Pacific Primary Care Research Conference (APPCRC) was held in the new Centre for Translational Medicine (Block MD6) in Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS) on 1 – 2 December 2012. The pre-conference Research Championship workshop was held on 30 November 2012.

This year's conference received overwhelming support from international medical communities with participants coming from 16 countries, representing 42 organisations. Participation from the medical students as well as our residents from the 3 Family Medicine Residency Programmes was encouraging, with 60% of the conference posters coming from these aspiring Family Medicine doctors.

The pre-conference Research Championship workshop allowed young, budding Family Medicine researchers to develop their research ideas under the guidance of experienced primary care researchers. This year's Research Championship attracted 8 participating teams. The workshop facilitators from the Family Medicine communities of Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong attended a briefing conducted by the Conference Research Chairman, Dr Tan Ngiap Chuan. This was followed by dinner at The Rice Table where the facilitators had a wonderful opportunity to catch up with one another and foster closer ties. The Research Championship started with each team giving a presentation of their proposed research projects. The facilitators then met their respective teams and had a full day of teaching and refining of the proposals. The refined proposals were presented at the end of the day and 4 teams



*Group photo of APPCRC 2012 participants.*

were selected by a panel of judges to present their ideas on the second day of the conference to compete for the overall Research Championship trophy.

The Conference was officially opened with a welcome speech given by the organising chairman, Dr Chng Shih Kiat. This year's conference included 4 plenary lectures delivered by both local and overseas experts in primary care research. Professor Wong Yeung Shan Samuel from The Chinese University of Hong Kong gave an interesting lecture on Innovative Interventions for Anxiety and Chronic Stress in Primary Care, carried out in Hong Kong. Associate Professor Ng Chirk Jenn from University of Malaya spoke on the challenges that the Malaysian primary care researchers experienced prior to the setting up of the Family Medicine Research Network. He urged those present to take up the challenge and pass on the passion to advance the scope of primary care research. Professor David Matchar from Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore highlighted



*Conference participants attending the workshops.*



Prof Samuel Wong, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Tan Ngiap Chuan and A/Prof Ng Chirk Jenn joining the Zumba dancers on stage during the Gala Dinner.



Teams in discussion during the pre-conference, Research Championship and group photo of Research Championship coaches and participants.



the importance of health services research in the primary care setting. Professor Gwee Choon Eng Matthew from Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS introduced the idea of how a mundane teaching activity can be translated into a peer-reviewed scholarly pursuit.

3 workshops were organised for the conference. The Biostatistics workshop was helmed by Associate Professor Koh Choon Huat Gerald with the assistance from Biostatisticians from Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS. The workshop allowed the participants to have hands-on experience using the SPSS programmes in the Computer Laboratory at Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health. The participants had the opportunity to work through scenarios on statistical analyses. The workshop on Medical Writing was facilitated by Professor Teng Cheong Lieng from International Medical University and Associate Professor Ng Chirk Jenn. The principles of medical writing were shared and the workshop finished with a questions and answers session where interesting topics such as ethics in medical writing

were discussed. The workshop conducted by Professor Gwee Choon Eng Matthew and Dr Dujeepa D Samarasekera from the Medical Education Unit, NUS was on Enhancing Scholarship of Teaching-Learning in the Primary Care Setting. The workshops equipped participants with ample practical tools for future use in research.

As in all conferences, the participants had sumptuous tea breaks. They were also treated to a Lunch Symposium sponsored by AstraZeneca where Dr Daniel Wai, endocrinologist practising at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, gave an interesting talk on the safety of the use of statins for cholesterol management. The Gala Dinner held in Kent Ridge Guild House was a highlight of the conference. During the dinner, we had excellent performances from Zumba dancers and belly dancers. Professor Wong Yeung Shan Samuel, Associate Professor Goh Lee Gan, Associate Professor Ng Chirk Jenn and Dr Tan Ngiap Chuan were invited on stage to dance with the Zumba dancers. Their performances entertained and

thrilled everyone present! Dr Peter Moey from SingHealth Polyclinics added to the highlight of the night by getting everyone present to participate, playing the guitar and drums using their smartphones while he played the tune of Pachelbel's Canon in D minor on his violin. The Gala Dinner brought conference participants together having fun interacting with one another.

The conference drew to a close after the award presentations for Best Poster, Best Oral Presentation and the Research Championship. The conference was a resounding success, thanks to the relentless support from the secretariat staff of the College of Family Physicians Singapore and the selfless contributions of all the members of the organising committee. It has been a wonderful learning experience for everyone and it is our sincere hope that we see the Asia Pacific Primary Care Research Conference scale to greater heights in furthering primary care research in the days to come.

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