



BERITA MPA NEWSLETTER

THE MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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FOR MEMBERS ONLY

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- International Pediatric Association (IPA)

The **Berita MPA** is published for members to keep them informed of the activities of the Association and to keep up with developments in paediatrics and child health.

The views and opinions in all the articles are entirely those of the authors unless otherwise specified.

We invite articles and feedback from readers – Editor <editor.bmpa@gmail.com>

7th Asia Dengue Summit 2024

Kuala Lumpur, 5-7 July 2024



Over 450 speakers & delegates from 20 countries participated in the 7th ADS

The 7th Asia Dengue Summit 2024 was held recently at Double Tree Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur from 5 to 7 July 2024. This summit follows the previous six held in Bangkok (2016), Manila (2017), Kuala Lumpur (2018), Jakarta (2019), Singapore (2022), and Bangkok (2023). The summit was officiated by **YB Dato Lukanisman Awang Sauni**, the Deputy Minister of Health, Malaysia. The theme for the current summit was 'Towards Zero Dengue Deaths: Innovation, Collaboration, Action in Asia'.

The summit began with Asia's first conference on the fight against dengue. **Dr Adi Utarini** of Indonesia presented encouraging results from a *Wolbachia*-based *Aedes aegypti* mosquito study in Yogyakarta, while **Dr Husnina Binte Ibrahim** detailed Malaysia's dengue prevention and control approach. **Prof Frances Edillo** remarked that the genetic structure of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in the Philippines may have an impact on vector control tactics in the face of global warming. Finally, **Dr Basu Dev Pandey** of Nepal emphasised the importance of genetic surveillance in both humans and mosquitoes for monitoring, preventing, and managing future dengue epidemics. **Dr Katie Anders** of the World Mosquito Programme emphasised the importance of integrating *Wolbachia* release and monitoring capabilities into existing public health systems or providing operational guidelines to local NGOs in order to scale up implementation of *Wolbachia*-infected mosquito releases for sustainable control of dengue and other arboviral diseases.

Takeda's industry symposium focused on the complex challenge of clinical dengue care and vaccine development. **Prof Eng Eong Ooi** studied the complexities of dengue pathogenesis, particularly antibody-dependent enhancement and virus genetics. **Dr Chow Ting Soo** argued for a more comprehensive approach to dengue therapy, highlighting the significance of including dengue in all fever patients and prioritising clinical symptoms over laboratory findings. **Dr Walid Kandeil** shed light on the problems of developing vaccines for this complex virus.

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MPA's Commitment to Care: Addressing Child Rights, Nutritional Initiatives & Enhancing Postgraduate Medical Training



Assalamualaikum & a warm welcome to everyone,

As the President of Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA), I am pleased to address you in this bulletin to update you on our ongoing efforts and initiative. At MPA, we remain steadfast in our commitment to enhancing paediatric healthcare services across Malaysia, ensuring equitable access and quality care for all children.

**MPA press-related statements
(please refer to MPA's official
website for the full statement):**

- 1. Equal opportunities for underprivileged and stateless children:** In light of growing issues related to stateless and underprivileged children in Malaysia, MPA has issued our concern on the future of these groups, as MPA strongly advocates for equal opportunities for children regardless of their status. We believe that providing them with these opportunities is not only a moral obligation but also an investment in our nation's future. By ensuring equal access to healthcare services and education, we can help mould these children into independent and productive assets for our country. We urge all stakeholders, including the government, NGOs, and the broader community, to collaborate in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for these children.
- 2. Supporting the Ministry of Health's initiatives in addressing the long-standing medical postgraduate education imbroglio:** MPA fully support the implementation of quality assurance programmes, particularly for new training programmes, and the maintenance of best practices and standards for ongoing training programmes. The decoupling of the MMC from the MQA and the introduction of the new Fourth Schedule will hopefully ensure a more accurate and structured listing of 'registrable specialist qualifications'.

**Launch event of '1000 Days of Life'
campaign by Ministry of Health**

MPA was invited by the Minister of Health, **Datuk Seri Dr Dzulki**

Ahmad, to a recent launch event held on 6 August 2024 at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC). I had the privilege of attending the event, which saw the participation of not only government representatives but also NGOs and private hospital delegates. One key highlight of the event was a *Pocket Talk* by **Professor Dr Muhammad Yazid**, a leading expert in the study of growth and development in children. During his talk, Professor Yazid underscored the crucial importance of adequate and optimal nutrition and health in mothers starting as early as the antenatal period and continuing until the postnatal phase.

The presentation highlighted alarming local statistics on the high prevalence of maternal anaemia, insufficient weight gain, and stunted growth among children during their first two years of life – the crucial 1,000 days. These issues captured the attention of the audience. A live dialogue session with the Minister of Health and the Director General of Health was particularly fruitful. Participants raised several important issues, such as the need for private partnerships with government agencies to improve data collection on poor growth among children, the empowerment of community nurses, and increased public education efforts, including information provision and roadshows, to address and raise awareness about the issues of poor growth among children.

**Our upcoming 16th ASPS, 3rd
Congress of the MAPS and 45th
Malaysian Paediatric Association
Congress**

We are just six weeks away from the highly anticipated 45th MPA Congress, and the responses from both local and international participants have been tremendous. To date, we have received over 100 abstracts, covering both surgical and medical perspectives. Preparations are well underway, with our committees working tirelessly to ensure the congress's success. Our Minister of Health has confirmed his attendance and will be officiating the event. We are confident that our planned social events, opening

ceremony, and comprehensive scientific programmes are designed to deliver an exceptional experience for all attendees.

It is worth noting that all our pre-congress workshops are nearly at full capacity. We are hoping to see even more registrations, particularly from local participants, for the main congress. You can be assured that our scientific programmes will not only provide you with new knowledge and experiences but will also enhance your practical skills in managing the well-being of paediatric patients.

Hurry and register. Let's make this congress a memorable one. Looking forward to seeing all of you there!

Let us not forget to pray for our brothers, sisters, and children in Palestine and Gaza. We hope and pray for the end of their suffering and the end of the war.

Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): *"Whoever removes a difficulty from a believer while in this world, then Allah will remove a difficulty from him in the hereafter. Whoever covers the badness of a Muslim, Allah will cover his badness in this world and in the hereafter. Allah always helps a servant as long as the servant helps his brother."* (HR Muslim)

Wassalam.

Mohamad Ikram Ilias
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Registration to MPA Annual Congress for Senior Members

Decision by the Executive Committee on 3 December 2023:

At the last meeting it was decided on the following:

- 50% discount on registration fees for life members above 60 years old and who have been a life member for at least 10 years and;
- Free registration for life members aged 65 years and above who have been a life member for at least 10 years



Malaysia's First National Immunisation Summit

In conjunction with National Immunisation Week
Putrajaya, 13 May 2024



Launch of this year's National Immunisation Week 2024



The Minister of Health, Malaysia with the attendees of the National Immunisation Summit & National Immunisation Week ceremony

Since its launch in June 2013, the Immunise4Life (IFL) programme has served to continuously and consistently promote immunisation for all ages, in a bid to curb vaccine preventable diseases, build vaccine confidence, and support the introduction of new vaccines to effectively achieve optimal protection. IFL has entered its second decade with a renewed commitment to immunisation advocacy.

On 13 May 2024, IFL commemorated this milestone by jointly organising Malaysia's first "National Immunisation Summit" (NIS) with the Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia, in conjunction with National Immunisation Week. The summit was held at Zenith Hotel, Putrajaya, and was attended physically by 154 delegates and virtually by 733 delegates.

NIS served as a platform for MOH to present the National Immunisation Programme (NIP) achievements and outlook, as well as to discuss the state-of-the-art innovations in the fight against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The summit began with welcoming remarks and presentation on IFL by **Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Chairman of IFL. The summit was divided into three symposia: "Immunisation in Childhood", "Immunisation for Adults", and "New Horizons in Vaccination".

Below is the list of lectures covered under each symposium:

1) Symposium 1: Immunisation in Childhood

- **Success Factors in the National Immunisation Programme (NIP) for Children** – presented by **Dr Mohd Safiee bin Ismail**, Director of Family Health Development Division (FHDD), MOH
- **Optimising Post-Implementation Surveillance & AEFI Reporting** – presented by **Ms Norshazareen Abd Manab**, Senior Principal Assistant Director, Pharmacovigilance Section, Centre for Compliance & Quality Control, National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA), MOH
- **Emerging Opportunities in Maternal Immunisation** – presented by **Prof Dr Jamiyah binti Hassan**, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist (Fetomaternal)

2) Symposium 2: Immunisation for Adults

- **Influenza Vaccination: Enhancing Health & Well-being in Older Adults** – presented by **Prof Dr Tan Maw Pin**, Professor in Geriatric Medicine, UM
- **Preventing Pneumococcal Pneumonia Among High-risk Adults** – presented by **Dr Azureen binti Azmel**, Consultant Infectious Diseases Physician
- **COVID-19: Staying Ahead of the Shapeshifter** – presented by **Dato' Dr Suresh Kumar Chidambaram**, Senior Infectious Diseases Consultant
- **Burden of Shingles (Herpes Zoster) in Older Adults & the Role of**

Vaccination – presented by **Dr Terad Adnan Talmesany**, Family Medicine and Geriatric Consultant, Saudi Arabia

3) Symposium 3: New Horizons in Vaccination

- **Advancements in the Prevention of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection in Children** – presented by **Dato' Dr Musa Mohd Nordin**, Consultant Paediatrician & Neonatologist
- **Fight Against Dengue: Vaccination as a Novel Approach** – presented by **Dato' Dr Chow Ting Soo**, Infectious Diseases Consultant

The summit ended on a high note with the launch of National Immunisation Week, which was officiated by the Minister of Health, **YB Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad**. During the ceremony, the Health Minister presented a plaque to Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail in recognition of IFL's contributions to immunisation advocacy in support of the MOH over the past decade.

In the news conference that was held post-ceremony, the Health Minister announced that the government has approved Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine for expectant mothers, which is expected to roll-out at the end of 2024. He also highlighted that MOH is considering offering free influenza vaccination to the elderly, as part of the NIP, beginning next year. ☑

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The Road Less Traveled: From Paediatrics to Public Health



Dr Priya outside the WHO office in Papua New Guinea

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, some professionals choose a path that diverges from the conventional route. One such professional is **Dr B Priya Lakshmy T Balasubramaniam**, who began her journey in clinical paediatrics and is now a clinical governance and standards specialist in Papua New Guinea. Her transition from hands-on paediatrics to a role focused on the broader systems of healthcare delivery is both inspiring and thought-provoking. In this article, we delve into the questions that aim to uncover the reasons and motivations behind this significant career shift. Through these six interview questions, we explore not only her experiences and challenges but also the inspiration that guided her down this road less traveled.

1 Can you tell us about your journey from paediatrics to your current role in public health and international development?

I was a paediatrician in the public sector in Malaysia but was always interested in the “bigger picture” of how factors outside the hospital affected patients coming into hospitals and shaping the health service we were delivering. This was further enhanced by my work done in the humanitarian space while working with Reach Sarawak (a non-governmental organisation serving communities in rural Sarawak), Mercy Malaysia, volunteering at the Malaysian Field Hospital in Cox’s Bazaar, and co-founding with my fellow paediatrician, Dr Shamini Vellapandian, the Allied Health for Neglected and Abandoned Kids (ANAK), which ran health screening programmes for children in institutional care, migrant children, and the urban poor.

I thought it would be beneficial to be formally trained and was fortunate to be awarded a scholarship to pursue a Master’s degree in International Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom. While there, one of my theses supervisors, who was from the World Health Organisation (WHO), offered me to be a part of a COVID-19 incident management team that she was setting up in Papua New Guinea, as a case management focal point due to my clinical background and public health training. I have since transitioned to a new role in an advisory position for clinical governance and standards, and my previous role as a surveyor with the Malaysian Society for Quality in Health (MSQH) has greatly supported this. My

work is still very much with clinicians as I work with them on national level programmes on accreditation, referral pathways, and emergency preparedness. Due to my paediatric background, I have been roped in to do training for paediatricians in certain areas.

2 What motivated you to transition from clinical practice as a paediatrician to focusing on public health initiatives?

I believe that if a patient has landed in our health facilities, they have failed many check points in the health system in which the admission could have been prevented. These measures are more cost-effective than providing hospital-based care. Besides just treating patients who walk through our hospital doors, I feel that we, as paediatricians, need to have a more wholesome approach to managing patients, or better still, to prevent them from becoming prospective patients. This approach would involve more “upstream” measures including health promotion and preventative activities which fall in the domain of public health. Public health and clinical care are just a part of the continuum of our patient’s journey.

3 What have been some of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of transitioning from paediatrics to global health?

The most rewarding part of my transition is being able to work in a space I always wanted to be in, and that is working with underprivileged communities in resource-constrained settings. Since most of my work now is related to national level health care, I need to be able to look at the bigger picture. Having been in the paediatric

space for more than 15 years, the most challenging part was having to make a 180° turn and learn something totally new, but fortunately, it was an area I have always been interested in, which is global health. The other challenge is finding sustainable solutions for problems which are context- and cultural-specific and these solutions might differ from practices we are accustomed to.

4 In your current role, what are some of the key challenges you face when implementing health systems and clinical governance in resource-limited settings?

Health systems strengthening activities, particularly implementation of clinical governance activities, is an uphill task in any country, let alone countries that struggle with providing basic health care services. Trying to move away from a mindset of not just providing health care but providing health care that is safe and of a certain quality, is challenging when resources are lacking or mismanaged. This is made more arduous when general governance structures, not just in health care, are lacking. There are also many players in the international health space with their own well-intentioned agendas. Coordinating action between these players is another challenge.

5 How has your background in paediatrics influenced your approach to public health and your work with international health organisations?

When we train as clinicians, we are taught to analyse a problem methodically. This is an approach I carry into any problem and I feel that assists me in summarising issues and



With classmates from 26 countries in Oxford University



Visiting the mudmen of Asaro in the Papua New Guinea Highlands

prioritising, something that we do on a daily basis in our work in the hospitals. The short fall of this approach is when you have to deal with the unavoidable grey areas around human behaviour and social determinants that are part and parcel of health service delivery. Paediatric training teaches us to have an eye for detail and to be meticulous in the work we do. I also find that we are generally a compassionate fraternity and we carry that into other areas of our life and work.

6 What advice would you give to our young paediatricians?

My journey would not have been possible without the support of mentors like Dr Tang Swee Ping, Dr Hishamshah Mohd Ibrahim, Dr Mahathar Abdul Wahab and the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA).

My greatest conundrum while working as a paediatrician was that I had a variety of areas that I felt strongly about and that I could not find an avenue to merge these areas. I felt that I was being forced down a well-trodden route that did not quite suit me. The younger paediatricians would probably already have more exposure and access to the world around them and the possibilities that exist. What I wished someone had told me earlier was to have a real hard look at what I was passionate about and to not be afraid to take the steps towards achieving that, even if it meant having to unlearn and relearn something new. ☐

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The symposium, which featured **Dr Henrik Salje, Dr Kien Quoc Do, Dr Balvinder Singh Gill, Natthawut Ployngam, and Saubhagya Danasekara**, delved deeper into the emerging trends of dengue, discussing topics such as the complex immune drivers of severe dengue disease, a shift towards older demographics in dengue-affected populations, and the growing importance of data-driven prevention strategies. **Dr Adam Waickman** concluded the day by discussing the use of human challenge models to study the immune response to dengue, while **Dr Panisadee Avirutnan** presented findings from Thailand's Controlled Dengue Human Infection Model, and **Dr Shirin Kalimuddin's** presentation investigated the possibility of T cells controlling flaviviral infection (including dengue) in the absence of neutralising antibodies.

Aetiology and immunology

On Day 2, participants learned more about the aetiology and immunology of dengue, as well as how to effectively manage dengue cases in clinical settings. They also discussed the most recent advancements in dengue vaccine research and administration to support prevention efforts. Distinguished speakers include **Prof Eng Eong Ooi, Drs Shirin Kalimuddin, Leah Katzelnick, Ph.D., Shirir Einav, Prof Adam Waickman, Nguyễn Lâm Vương, Prof Jenny Low, Dr Giri Rajahram, Prof Somia Iqtadar, Dr Po-Ying Chia, Prof Tikki Pang, Louis Macareo, Prof Anavaj Sakuntabhai, Prof Chao Day-Yu, and Dr Ming Keong Wan**, among others.

On the final day, the audience participated in a range of insightful discussions, which included exploring the intricate world of vector biology to dengue prevention, the latest advancements in antiviral treatment and host-directed therapeutics offering new hope in the fight against dengue, and practical aspects of implementing strategies as we collectively strive towards the goal of zero dengue deaths, given by renowned speakers such as **Prof Zulkifli Ismail, Dr Katie Anders, Prof Lee-Ching Ng, Prof Paul Young, Dr Steven Lim, Prof Sazaly Abubakar, Isabela Ribeiro, Martin Hibberd and Prof Tikki Pang**.

The summit was a huge success, with 550 speakers and attendees from 20 countries, 13 symposiums, 74 posters, and 12 booths. The summit presented a glimpse of optimism for the future of dengue control, with informative discussions on the most recent vaccine and antiviral research, existing dengue prevention and control programmes, and creative dengue battle techniques. We're still fighting dengue fever, and our goal is to completely eradicate all dengue infections worldwide. ☐

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Paediatric Developmental Workshop & Autism Workshop

Transforming Disability to This-ability

Seremban, 17-18 May 2024

In this day and age, parents rely on parenting books, doctors and child experts, or input from friends, to monitor the health and development of their children. First time parents may find it confusing sifting through all the information. As healthcare workers, it is important for us to acknowledge when parents have developmental concerns about their children. Data suggest that early detection and intervention offers better long-term outcomes. It also allows for better family well-being. The Paediatric Department of Hospital Tuanku Jaafar Seremban (HTJS) and Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA) jointly organised a two-day developmental workshop from 17 to 18 May 2024. Day 1 programme was targeted towards healthcare workers, followed by a caregiver training programme on Day 2.

Day 1: Paediatric Developmental Workshop

We had a total of 90 participants on our first day. The group consisted of doctors and nurses from various hospitals and health clinics. Paediatricians from both government and private sectors, along with our Family Medicine Specialists and Medical Officers participated in our workshop. Nurses are often part of the front-liner team involved in screening for developmental issues, thus we were very pleased with their participation. The aim of the workshop is to equip participants with knowledge and to train them to use basic screening tools for detection of developmental delays.

Dr Aina Mariana, our very own Consultant Paediatrician, kickstarted the programme with an overview on normal development. She stressed upon developmental red flags for children of various age groups. Intervention should be started upon detection while investigating for the cause of the delay. Following that, **Dr Ong Jun-Jean** delivered her talk on Global Developmental Delay, touching also on Learning Disabilities and Intellectual Disabilities. Dr Ong is a Developmental Paediatrician and Senior Lecturer from International Medical University (IMU). She is deeply passionate about education and training, and she actively gives back to the community with her work related



Dr Aina Mariana and Dr Ong Jun-Jean delivering their lectures



Speakers in action: Dr Mastura, Pn Nor Zuhaila, Dr Michelle

to parental training and support. Her sharing was relevant to our local scenario and expounded on existing available resources in our system.

Subsequent sessions covered topics of Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. These were delivered by **Dr Mastura** and **Dr Michelle**, who are both Paediatricians from HTJS. These are the common neurodevelopmental disorders we encounter in our day-to-day practice. The role of an occupational therapist is essential in the management of children with developmental problems. **Pn Nor Zuhaila** is a Senior Paediatric Occupational Therapist, with 20 years of experience up her sleeve. She shared her experiences on the many areas that a therapist can assist our children with special needs. It was an eye opener for many, to be able to understand the strategies and measures that are employed to target different skill sets for these children.

The highlight of the workshop was the hands-on session. Participants had the opportunity to assess and score developmental milestones for our

little volunteers. Participants who are in the core Paediatric business were introduced to Schedule of Growing Skills-II (SGS-II). This is a developmental screening procedure for the age group from birth to 5 years of age. There are 8 areas which are evaluated.

The larger group is our primary health colleagues. This is a diverse group of Family Medicine Specialists, Medical Officers, Nursing Tutors and Nurses. The screening tool that we focused on was Denver II. Our enthusiastic and energetic team of Occupational Therapists were facilitators of these small groups, demonstrating the techniques and scoring method to our participants. Each group had the opportunity to assess a child for their milestones and interpret the scores. Our little volunteers were all excellent and cooperative to show off their skills. Our participants were keen observers, which also led to robust discussion.

It was a fruitful session for all participants where knowledge was put into practical use. We hope that this workshop can further empower our colleagues to be confident to screen



Various groups performing the Denver II assessment, facilitated by our energetic HTJS occupational therapists



paediatric group using the SGS tool



Group photo of Paediatric Developmental Workshop



Group photo of Parent & Caregiver Workshop on Autism on Day 2

and pick up development delays in our children. Through screening, we should be able to identify children with developmental concerns early, subsequently starting early intervention for the child, which will result in a more favourable outcome.

Day 2: Parent & Caregiver Workshop on Autism

Parents and caregivers are the child's first teacher. They play a fundamental role in providing care, protection and foundational skills for learning. If we want to support children to grow, develop and meet their potential, we must support their caregivers. With that in mind, we had a dedicated group of parents and caregivers deeply invested in learning about strategies and methods to care for their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The half-day Parent and Caregiver Workshop on Autism was packed with information and practical tips to support our families in need. Dr Mastura gave a brief overview of Autism as a spectrum disorder. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental condition involving persistent challenges with social communication, restricted interests and repetitive behaviour. There are, however, different degrees of impairment in functioning because these challenges vary between individuals.

Following that, we had sessions by various experts of their fields who shared practical tips for intervention

and training. **Pn Norashiqin Shaari**, our Speech Therapist, gave useful strategies to encourage communication with children with ASD. As parents and caregivers, we are encouraged to initiate and try to engage with our children, even if it meant mirroring their actions or inserting ourselves into their world. Children with ASD may perceive interaction and reciprocate differently, but that does not mean they do not have social skills. There was also a brief introduction on Alternative and Augmentative Communication modalities. Parents were also encouraged to plan out their therapy plans at home.

Parents often do not understand what therapy is and how it works for children with ASD. **Pn Nabila** is a passionate and experienced Occupational Therapist. She enlightened us regarding sensory integration and its importance. Parents gained understanding about graded activities by introducing a 'Just Right Challenge' to our children with ASD. She also highlighted the importance to connect through play rather than correcting their play to be able to engage with our children.

Last but not least, **Ms Carmen** who is a Clinical Psychologist from Alister Centre Seremban, delivered a talk on positive behavioural strategies. Behaviour is often a major concern for parents and caregivers when dealing with a child with ASD. The rigidity and extreme interest for selected areas and items displayed by children with ASD may cause high tension and distress in social circumstances. Ms Carmen

made us ponder with a question: "Are we facing a challenging child or is the child having a challenging behaviour?" The audience learnt about possible reasons for challenging behaviours and how emotions come into play in such circumstances.

We wrapped up the workshop with a robust Q&A session. Parents had their queries and doubts answered by our panel of experts. Participating in such workshop not only encourages parents to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence, it also provides opportunity for parents to connect and network with one another. There were exchanges of encouragements, sharing of challenges and tips amongst the parents and caregivers. Many hope that there will be regular sessions of workshops as such for parents and caregivers in the future.

"There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more." As healthcare workers gain knowledge and insight to detect developmental problems, there should be a greater role to provide early intervention for this group of children. Parents and caregivers should be empowered to support their children with special needs. The goal is to integrate differently abled children back into the community, school, and society. Inclusion is within everyone's ability. 📧

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**Dengue
Prevention
Advocacy
Malaysia**

Lead by:



In collaboration with:



The 7th Asia Dengue Summit 2024

Towards Zero Dengue Deaths: Innovation, Collaboration, Action in Asia

Kuala Lumpur, 5-7 June 2024



Dato Lukanisman Awang Sauni, Deputy Minister of Health (Malaysia) delivering his speech & officiating the 7th ADS



Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Chairman of ADVA highlighting dengue as a global health threat during his opening speech

Dengue is now a real threat beyond the traditionally warm climates which include the Southeast Asia and some parts of Asia. Due to climate change, the dengue belt has expanded to temperate regions such as Spain, Italy, and Greece, putting 50% of the world population at risk. Last year, dengue cases reached a historic peak with over 6.5 million infections reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO). As of 30 April 2024, there has been a 17% increase in total cases, surpassing the annual high in 2023.

From 5-7 June 2024, Malaysia hosted the 7th Asia Dengue Summit (ADS) in Kuala Lumpur, bringing together over 450 dengue experts from 20 countries to address the growing threat of dengue. Co-convened by the Asia Dengue Voice & Action (ADVA) Group, Fondation Mérieux (FMx), Global Dengue and Aedes Transmitted Diseases Consortium (GDAC), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Tropical Medicine and Public Health Network (SEAMEO TROPMED), the International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ISNTD), and Dengue Prevention Advocacy Malaysia (DPAM), the summit was officiated by **Dato Lukanisman Awang Sauni**, Deputy Minister of Health (MOH), Malaysia.

Under the theme "Towards Zero Dengue Deaths: Innovation, Collaboration, Action in Asia", the summit opened with a speech by **Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Chairman of ADVA. He highlighted WHO's identification of dengue as one of the top ten threats to global health. He emphasised that "The Asia Dengue Summit offers a strategic platform for policymakers to network and learn from other countries' successful strategies in meeting WHO goals. Emerging advances in vector control, modelling methods, and dengue vaccines will enable new approaches to achieving these targets. Strengthening early detection and clinical management is essential to reduce case fatality rates, fulfilling a key objective."

Programme highlights

Day 1 (5 June 2024)

- Sharing of experiences on dengue prevention & control strategies in Asia
- Discussion on the complexities of dengue pathogenesis
- Challenges in vaccine development
- Immune responses against dengue infection
- Demographic shifts in dengue-affected populations

Day 2 (6 June 2024)

- Factors correlated with protection against dengue
- Key immunological characteristics of severe dengue
- Potential biomarkers for severe dengue
- Roles of immune cells in severe dengue
- Available & pipeline dengue vaccines

Day 3 (7 June 2024)

- Experiences & strategies of *Wolbachia*-infected mosquito deployment in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia
- Challenges and considerations in developing effective dengue therapeutics
- Dengue antiviral in the pipeline
- Alternative approaches of dengue control

National ASEAN Dengue Day 2024 Celebration

Kuala Lumpur, 8 June 2024



Panel discussion on "Roadmap to Zero Dengue Deaths", moderated by Prof Dr Tikki Pang with experts Dr Eggi Arguni, Dr Rosario Capeding, Dr Michael Macdonald, Dr Panisadee Avirutnan, and Datuk Dr Suresh Kumar



Winner of the inaugural Dengue Slayer Challenge, Wingward (Victoria Institution) from Malaysia

The summit ended with a panel discussion on the "Roadmap to Zero Dengue Deaths". During the session, experts highlighted the importance of early detection, community engagement, optimised clinical protocols, and public-private partnerships. **Prof Tikki Pang** concluded by emphasising the need for integrated planning, strong leadership, clear communication, and political commitment to effectively combat dengue.

Dengue Slayer Challenge

ADVA in collaboration with Junior Achievement organised the Dengue Slayer Challenge in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand. It was aimed at engaging youth, providing them with early exposure to international collaboration especially in developing innovative solutions and gaining a broader understanding of the dengue endemic. First-place winners from each country, chosen from 153 teams, competed in the Asia Pacific Grand Finals at the 7th ADS. Wingward, representing Victoria Institute, KL from Malaysia was crowned as the winner for their exceptional shoe mosquito repellent diffuser invention.

8th Asia Dengue Summit 2025

It was announced at the end of the summit that Philippines will host the next summit, and therefore attendees can look forward to more details regarding the event in the near future. ☑

**Dengue Prevention Advocacy Malaysia (DPAM)
Secretariat**



DPAM members, Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Prof Emeritus Lucy Lum Chai See, and Dr Ravindran Thayan, together with Datuk Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Minister of Health Malaysia and delegates from Asia Dengue Summit at the ASEAN Dengue Day 2024 Celebration

On 8 June 2024, Dengue Prevention Advocacy Malaysia (DPAM) was invited by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to commemorate the launching of Gotong Royong Mega Fight Aedes 1.0 National Programme, in conjunction with the National Celebration of ASEAN Dengue Day 2024. The event was officiated by the Health Minister **Datuk Dr Dzulkefly Ahmed**, and was held at the Armed Forces Family House (RKAT) in Setia Wira Village. It was co-organised by MOH and the Malaysian Ministry of Defense (MINDEF).



The Minister of Health (3rd from left) releasing Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes

Wolbachia mosquito operation in Malaysia

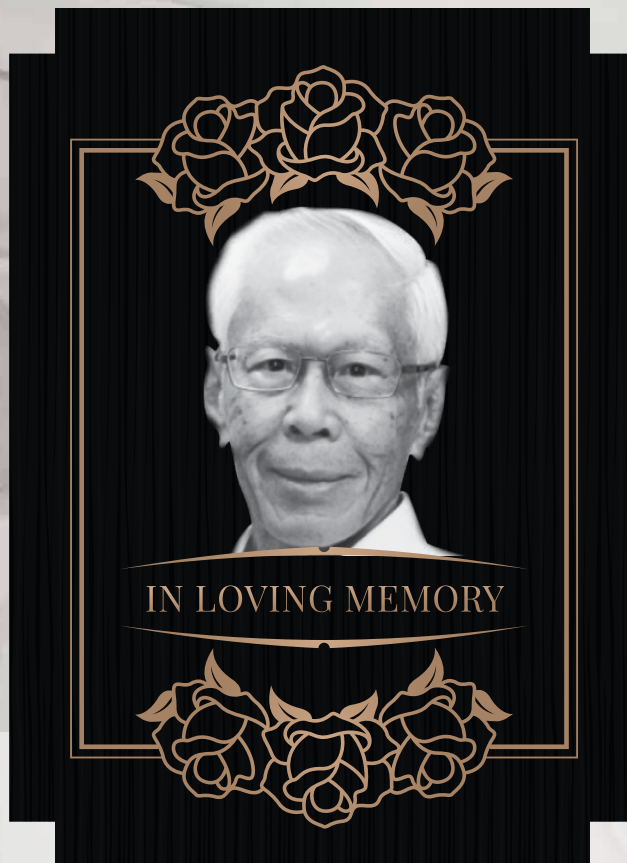
During the press conference, Datuk Dr Dzulkefly highlighted that since 2019, MOH has deployed Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes in 35 localities nationwide and reduced dengue cases by 45-100% in 19 assessable release localities. At the Setia Wira Village, an impressive 87.2% reduction in cases has been observed since its implementation in 2020. This year, the project will expand to 8 more localities, and MOH has requested funding for the Wolbachia initiative in the 2025 budget.

Dengue vaccine in Malaysia

Datuk Dr Dzulkefly also made a remark that despite the conditional registration approval for dengue vaccine for use in individuals 4 years and above, the government still needs time to consider the inclusion of the vaccine in the National Immunisation Programme. This was mainly due to the high cost of the vaccine.

He also emphasised the need for a united effort in the fight against dengue, calling on the federal government, NGOs, local governments, and local councillors to work together with MOH to combat the disease. ☑

**Dengue Prevention Advocacy Malaysia (DPAM)
Secretariat**



Obituary: Emeritus Professor Lam Khuan Leng (1933 – 2024)

Born on 14 August 1933, in Leeton, what is now the primary section of the Ipoh Convent School, **Lam Khuan Leng** was the fourth son in a family of 10 (four sons and six daughters). His father was **Dr Lam Hor Yin**, who married **Lee Sau Peng**, the daughter of a businessman in Ipoh. Khuan Leng attended Anglo Chinese School (ACS) Ipoh until the Japanese invasion in 1941, at which point the family escaped by car to Singapore, and subsequently sailed to Bombay, where they sought shelter until the end of the Japanese occupation. He attended St Xavier's High School, Bombay from June 1942 until January 1945. At the end of the war, he returned to Ipoh with his family to complete his secondary education at ACS Ipoh.

Upon completion of his Cambridge O Level Examinations, Khuan Leng obtained a place at University of Malaya, Singapore, to read medicine, graduating in 1958. He was a University Scholar (1953-1958) and Osteology Tutor (1956-1958). He completed his housemanship in Singapore, spending a couple

of years in Singapore Government Medical Service before venturing into paediatrics. He then headed west to the UK in 1962 where he received his DCH and MRCP from the Royal College of Physicians, Glasgow. He worked at Epping Hospital and Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, London, whilst studying for his professional examinations.

Upon his return, he continued his Singapore Government Service until 1967 when he returned to Malaysia to become the first local Malaysian as an academic staff at the Department of Paediatrics, the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. He met his future wife, **Dr Violet How Joo Looi**, that same year, at a wedding which neither of them were initially intending to attend. They had their first date a week after their first meeting and were married just over a year later in September 1968. Their eldest son, **Chee Kin** was born two years later, in October 1970. In 1972, Khuan Leng was appointed Associate

Professor, after which, another two sons followed, **Chee Leong** in May 1973 and **Chee Loong** in 1974. Professor Lam Khuan Leng was appointed Professor as well as Head of Department of Paediatrics in 1978, posts he held until his retirement in 1991. Khuan Leng became the first local Malaysian to be appointed a Professor of Paediatrics as well as the first Chair Professor in Paediatrics of an academic Department of Paediatrics in a local university in Malaysia.

Ward rounds

To many of his ex-students, ward rounds with him can be both scary and fun, yet the lessons learnt would often be unforgettable. He liked to use simple and vivid metaphors to explain a particular concept of disease. One notable example was when explaining the concept of low cardiac output. "Uncle! What happened to your car if there is no petrol?! The engine won't start, right?" He would shout at the top of his voice, his forehead veins clearly visible.

And yet to many of us, he came across as a kind figure, especially during exam time. He would gently guide many poor souls, especially during the dreaded third and final MBBS exams. His kindness is still vividly remembered by many of his ex-students.

As the Head of Department then, Prof Lam, as he was affectionately called by his students, was instrumental in setting up the Master of Paediatrics programme at the Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya. Together with his colleagues in the Department, he published many sentinels' clinical papers in paediatrics, covering topics such as battered child syndrome (child abuse) and bacterial pneumonia in Malaysian children.

Emeritus professor

In recognition of his immense contribution to the Department of Paediatrics, University of Malaya, Prof Lam Khuan Leng was conferred the title of Emeritus Professor in 2004 by University of Malaya, becoming the first Emeritus Professor in Paediatrics in Malaysia. Prior to his conferment, the title was held by only 19 former academicians in the history of University of Malaya.

After retiring from government service, he established his own paediatric clinic in SS3, Klinik Kanak-Kanak Taman Universiti, operating it with his wife for over 20 years until 2018.

Healthy ageing

Khuan Leng was the image of healthy ageing, active right up until the end. He was playing tennis up until two weeks before his passing, stopped only by the lack of companions to play with. He loved the beach and the sea, and participated in activities such as spearfishing, diving, and windsurfing until the ripe old age of 86, when the pandemic began. He was an adventurous and outdoorsy man, with a love for excitement, having once said that he found golf to be too boring. He was also a dog lover, having owned many dogs throughout his lifetime, a

neighbourhood-famed gate climber included.

Emeritus Professor Dr Lam Khuan Leng died peacefully in his own home with his wife by his side on 21 June 2024. He is survived by his widow, three sons, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren.

Reminiscence by Emeritus Professor Lucy Lum

My colleagues and I then were the last batch of young specialists who spent our formative years under Professor Lam. It was Prof Lam who asked me in his usual manner when I bumped into him in 1989 in the Department of Paediatrics, University Hospital. "Do you want to come back to work? If you wish, I'll support your application."

So, this was how I started my career in University of Malaya in December 1990. I was posted to Paediatric Ward 1 (P1, the predecessor of PICU) or the acute care ward which had the sickest babies. The consultant then was Prof Lam. There were no PICU then, and the ones who needed critical care were transferred to the adult ICU under the Department of Anaesthesiology.

Apparently, most lecturers would only do a six-week rotation in P1. At the end of my rotation, Prof Lam asked me whether I wanted to continue working in P1. I remembered saying if it is OK with him, I would continue. He shot back saying, "At least you have common sense, and I don't have to do TDS rounds!" That statement eventually spawned my 30-year career in paediatric intensive care.

Reminiscence by University of Malaya MBBS Class of 1978-82

Tall thin taut muscle man with nary a pinch of fat. Sometimes his warrior stance and cutting glance seemed incongruous with that most gentle of disciplines: Paediatrics.

In Year 4 and 5, we used to dread his rounds which were frequent firework displays of extreme outrage at our ignorance. One day in typical fashion, we were cowering

in a semicircle before him, where he stood like a tightly coiled spring ready to be sprung. It was his style to raise a topic, and everyone, one after the other, had to name one feature. It is always better to be among the first respondents, before the features run out and you are left with nothing to say.

That day it was about the abnormalities in a peripheral blood film in thalassaemia.

So, the first few students started with 'hypochromasia' and so on, but soon the rest began to squirm. Finally, he pointed at a girl who said in a very soft voice: 'stomatocytes'.

"What!" Prof Lam exploded and glared dangerously. "Stomatocytes? You mean the bloody cells have mouths?"

We could tell from his high pitch tone of disbelief that he had not heard of this before.

Our heroine then shakily fished out a little book from her lab coat, pointed at the page, and there it was, printed in glorious black on white: 'stomatocytes'

I can't remember who the heroine was but if you are here, please raise your hand.

As soon as we closed the door after him, we laughed our hearts out in the chart room. We felt like we had just defeated a dojo master, indeed floored a professor.

Dear Prof Lam,

We suspected you knew we enjoyed your terror sessions. There was never a moment of doubt that you wished us well. Thank you and may you now rest well. ☞

Contributed by
the family of the late Emeritus Professor Lam Khuan Leng

Edited by
Lee Way Seah, Lucy Lum, & Azanna Kamar

Department of Paediatrics,
Faculty of Medicine
University of Malaya
leews@um.edu.my

Healthy Little Bloomers (HLB) Programme

MPA joined forces with 10 Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) organisations to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of children



JGB in-class materials



JGB materials for parents



Roadshow at Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)



Training for ECCE operators and staffs

The HLB programme is an educational initiative with the long-term goal of promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of young children through ECCE centres nationwide. The program is developed by the Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA) in collaboration with ten leading ECCE organisations across Malaysia, namely, **Early Childhood Care & Education Council Malaysia (ECCE Council)**, **Malaysia Association of Professional Early Childhood Education (MAPECE)**, **Social Welfare Department (JKM)**, **Department of Community Development (KEMAS)**, **National Association of Special Education (PPKK)**, **Malaysian Council for Child Welfare (MKKM)**, **Association of Registered Childcare Providers Malaysia (PPBM)**, **Malaysian Association of Kindergartens (PTM)**, **Kindergarten Association Sabah (PTS)**, and **Association of Kindergarten Operators Sarawak (AKO)**.

On 15 September 2022, Malaysia's former health minister, **YB Tuan Khairy Jamaluddin**, officiated the launch of the HLB programme. **Professor Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail**, Chairman of HLB, emphasised that while the maiden campaign themed "Junior Germ Busters" (JGB) focuses on infectious disease awareness and prevention, the programme is meant to cover key domains of child health, safety, and wellbeing in a holistic manner.

Activities of the JGB campaign conducted include:

1. In-class materials (lesson plan and talking points for educators, story lesson slideshow and activity sheets for students)
2. Informational materials for parents and primary caregivers
3. Roadshow at Projek Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)
4. Training for ECCE operators and staffs
5. Facebook ads

The JGB maiden campaign was supported by educational sponsorships from Clorox, Pfizer, and Takeda. Upcoming campaigns under the HLB programme is currently under development and discussion.

For further information regarding the HLB programme and to download the materials, please visit <https://healthylittlebloomers.my>.

Should you have any enquiries, please contact the HLB secretariat at secretariat@healthylittlebloomers.my.



Facebook ads

Zulkifli Ismail

Chairman, Healthy Little Bloomers Programme
zul.paed@gmail.com

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News & articles



Open Letter to The Top Bureaucrat in MOH (Part 1)
Dr Musa Mohd Nordin
CodeBlue



Open Letter to The Top Bureaucrat in MOH (Part 2)
Dr Musa Mohd Nordin
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Change Begins from Within
Dr Musa Mohd Nordin & Prof Dr Azizi Haji Omar
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Malaysia Needs Dengue Vaccine but Will the People Accept It?
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7th Asia Dengue Summit Sets Sights on Achieving Zero Dengue Deaths
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Astro Awani



A Shot in the Arm, A Pinch of Doubt
The Star

Videos



14 Jun 2024 - SPM - Kesedaran Bahaya Denggi
Berita RTM YouTube



WMO berjaya kurangkan kes denggi antara 45 dan 100 peratus
BERNAMA TV YouTube



Guess Who?

Do you know who this is? How has he/she contributed to Malaysian and regional paediatrics?

Tune in next issue for the answer.



Announcements

**All details are correct at the time of printing. Please refer to respective event websites for latest updates.*

Local Events

18th International Congress of the Asian Society Against Dementia in conjunction with 32nd Malaysian Society of Neurosciences Annual Scientific Meeting (MSN 2024), 6th Malaysia Stroke Conference (MSC 2024), 12th Malaysian Paediatric Neurology Update Meeting & 6th BRaINs (BNC Research and Innovations in Neuroscience)

Date : 15-17 August 2024
Venue : Setia SPICE Convention Centre, Penang, Malaysia
Email : secretariat@asad2024.com
Website : <https://www.asad2024.com/>

Annual Scientific Meeting on Intensive Care (ASMIC) 2024

Date : 6-8 September 2024
Venue : Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur
Email : secretariat@msic.org.my
Website : <https://www.msic.org.my/asmic-2024/>

5th BCM-CUHK-UM Joint Symposium in Clinical Genetics 2024

Date : 21-22 September 2024
Venue : The Vertical, Connexion Conference & Event Centre, Kuala Lumpur
Email : BCM2024@acadmed.my
Website : <https://www.obg.cuhk.edu.hk/symposium/bcm-2024/>

45th Malaysian Paediatric Association Annual Congress 2024 & 3rd Congress of the Malaysian Association of Paediatric Surgery in conjunction with 16th Congress of the ASEAN Society of Pediatric Surgery

Theme : Different Perspectives, One United Vision
Date : 26-28 September 2024
Venue : Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur
Email : secretariat@asps2024.org
Website : <https://www.asps2024.org/>

Regional Airway Meeting (RAM) 2024

Date : 27-29 September 2024
Venue : Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching, Sarawak
Email : info@regionalairwaymeeting.com
Website : <https://regionalairwaymeeting.com/>

International Paediatric Events

5th Paediatric Flexible Bronchoscopy Course

Date : 14-15 September 2024
Venue : Bangkok, Thailand
Email : Jason_WY_POH@nuh.edu.sg

10th Congress of the European Academy of Pediatric Societies (EAPS 2024)

Date : 17-20 October 2024
Venue : Vienna, Austria
Website : <https://eaps2024.kenes.com/>

2024 World Pediatrics Conference (WPF)

Date : 18-19 October 2024
Venue : Osaka, Japan
Email : peditrics@epirus.org
Website : www.peditrics.epirus.org

27th Biennial Conference of Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA)

Date : 31 October-3 November 2024
Venue : Lahore, Pakistan
Website : www.paedscon2024.com

12th Singapore Paediatric and Perinatal Annual Congress (SiPPAC) 2024

Theme : Navigating Paediatric Care in an Uncertain World
Date : 7-9 November 2024
Venue : Grand Copthorne Waterfront, Singapore
Email : SiPPAC.2024@ams.edu.sg

18th Asia Pacific Congress of Pediatrics (APCP) 2024

Theme : Redesigning the Horizon of Pediatric Healthcare in the Asia Pacific
Date : 14-17 November 2024
Venue : Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, Cebu, Philippines
Email : secretariat@apcp2024.org
Website : <https://apcp2024.org/>

9th International Neonatology Association Conference (INAC 2024)

Date : 5-8 December 2024
Venue : Berlin, Germany
Email : secretariat@worldneonatology.com
Website : www.worldneonatology.com/2024

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- Dr Junice Oi Ai Wei (1314)

NEW ORDINARY MEMBERS

- Dr Lavinkumar (1315)
- Dr Nalini M Selveindran (1316)

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References: 1. Influvac Tetra Malaysia Prescribing Information, November 2023. 2. Halal certification from IFANCA (Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America), March 2023. 3. Van de Witte SV, et al. *Trials in Vaccinology*. 2012; 1: 42-48.

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[^] The vaccination course should be completed by the age of 24 weeks;

* Efficacy against any RVGE; ** Efficacy against severe RVGE.

RVGE: rotavirus gastroenteritis.

Reference: 1. Rotarix Prescribing Information

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