Malaysian Paediatric Association

PERSATUAN PEDIATRIK MALAYSIA

25 years

SOUVENIR BOOK 2003

Edited by:
Dato' Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut
Professor Dr Zulkifli Ismail

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A 25th Anniversary publication by the Malaysian Paediatric Association

Malaysian Paediatric Association
PERSATUAN PEDIATRIK MALAYSIA

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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Much has been achieved in the last 25 years.

The MPA has matured into an association whose membership has increased in strength from a mere handful of paediatricians 25 years ago to nearly 400 members. The Annual Scientific Congress , the highlight of the activity of MPA, registers increasing number of participants every year. The quality of the scientific sessions and the free papers have continued to improve annually. Even the venue has changed, from the humble lecture halls of UKM to the Marriot of Putrajaya.

Due to uncertainties and difficulties brought on by the SARS epidemic, a few of our planned activities has to be put on hold. However the Pediatric Rendezvous in Lumut , Perak ,has been successfully organized in July.

Part of this year's programme include a road show on immunization. Jointly organized with state level Malaysian Medical Association, it was targeted at primary care doctors to create an awareness regarding the new Expanded Programme for Immunization. We managed to organize it in three states so far and hope to continue this project in the other remaining states.

A Mass Hepatitis B Immunization of Adolescence was done in 2 secondary schools in Kelantan. Targeted at children born before 1989, when infant hepatitis B immunization became part of our immunization programme, the project was very positively met with, initiating a chain reaction which created a lot of interest in other secondary schools around Kelantan. Another worthwhile project which should continue to cover as many unimmunised adolescents as possible.

This year the Positive Parenting Seminar was held in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, to a packed crowd of more than 400 participants. The book for parents titled `The Total Child` has been successfully completed and will be launched during our 25th anniversary celebration by Yg Berbahagia Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.This is all made possible through funding from a multinational company.

Working closely with the Ministry of Health has made some of MPA`s objectives achievable. One major step forward for MPA was the organization of the National Symposium on Adolescent Health with the Ministry of Health in January 2003.This was followed by a dialogue session where the MOH has agreed in principle to the formation of a ward specifically for adolescents. These adolescent wards will house adolescent patients from all specialties, and will be looked after by their respective doctors. We are also happy that a paediatrician has been sent for training in Adolescent Medicine.

This year's souvenir book is a commitment by the MPA to document history. This is not the final version of the history of Paediatrics in Malaysia but it is a step in the right direction. History is important. Knowing what has been achieved makes it possible to chart the future.

Lastly I would like to congratulate Dato' Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut and Prof Dr Zulkifli Ismail for completing this souvenir book - well done! Many thanks to the 2002-2003 MPA committee members, the organising committee of the Annual Congress and the 25th Anniversary Celebrations, the secretariat for all their tireless efforts in ensuring the smooth running of all our programmes and to all doctors and paramedical personnel who has contributed in making this 25th year of our society a truly memorable one.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to be the President of the MPA during our 25th Anniversary.

Thank You.

Dr Nazeli Hamzah
President 2002/2003

FOREWORD

This souvenir book has been published to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Malaysian Paediatric Association. The society was founded in 1979 and has grown by leaps and bounds. Many, many famous paediatricians have contributed to the growth and wealth of activities of the society and this book highlights the many activities that have been undertaken over the last 25 years. This book will be distributed at the 25th Annual Scientific Meeting to be held at the Marriot Hotel, Putra Jaya.

In writing this book, we are also able to document the activities and record them for historical purposes. This is not the official documentation of the history of Malaysian Paediatrics but is a step in that direction. Some of the articles have been reprinted from previous issues of our newsletter Berita MPA

This book starts with a look at MPA's activities and achievements. As our Annual Scientific Meetings are a yearly highlight, we have put together pictures of the souvenir programmes from the last 10 years. There are also articles on Berita MPA, various MPA publications and research efforts, our current MPA website and community activities.

There is also a section with brief comments from previous Presidents. We managed to bring many of the previous Presidents to a dinner at the Concorde Hotel early this year (2003).

During this meeting / dinner we were able to interview those that attended and have reproduced their comments for this book.

At the end, we have an article written by the current President, Dr Nazeli Hamzah titled "The way forward" and also 2 articles written by 2 eminent paediatricians and their concerns about adolescent health.

Lastly we hope that our senior colleagues will be able to document their efforts and submit them to us so that one day in the future we will be able to come up with a book which captures and documents the history of Malaysian Paediatrics.

The MPA would also like to thank Versacomm Sdn Bhd for helping us in putting this souvenir book together in such a short time. Thank You.

Dato' Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut
Prof. Dr Zulkifli Ismail

2002/2003 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sitting (L-R): Dr Norzila Mohd Zainudin, Assoc Prof Dr Tang Swee Fong, Dr Nazeli Hamzah, Dr Hussain Imam, Prof Dr Zulkifli Ismail, Dr Koh Chong Tuan

Standing (L-R): Dr Choo Keng Ee, Dr Selvakumar Sivapunniam, Dr Musa Mohd Nordin, Dr Thiyagar Nadarajan, Dato' Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut

Absent: Dr Patrick Chan, Dr Mohd Hanifah Mohd Jamil

ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS

The Annual Scientific Congress is an important part of the MPA calender of activities. Each year, without fail, the MPA has organised this meeting in venues throughout Peninsula Malaysia. The covers of the last 10 years (1993-2002) are shown.

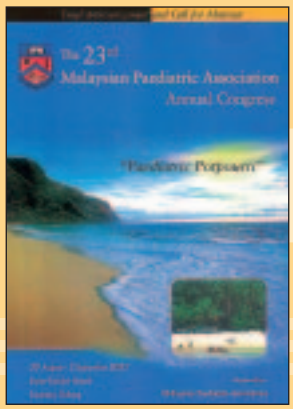
This scientific meeting attracts paediatricians and paediatric nurses from all round the country. (and a few paediatricians from neighbouring countries). One of our ambitions is to hold this meeting in either Sarawak or Sabah (East Malaysia), and we hope to do so soon.

Lastly the MPA would like to congratulate and thank previous organising committees for their good work. Without such active committees, the MPA would not be as dynamic as it currently is.

24th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 6-8 Sept 2002
Theme Paediatric Chest
Venue E&O Hotel, Penang

Scientific Chair:
Dr Dan Giap Liang



23rd MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 30 Aug-2 Sept 2001
Theme Paediatric Potpourri
Venue Swiss-Garden Resort, Kuantan, Pahang

Scientific Chair:
Dr Zabidi Azhar Mohd Hussin

22nd MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting and Asean Paediatric Federation Conference

Date 1-4 June 2000
Theme Childhood Infections Beyong Y2K
Venue Shangrila Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

Scientific Chair: Dr Zulkifli Ismail

21st MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting and 6th Asian & Oceanian Congress of Child Neurology

Date 5-8 Sept 1999
Theme Challenges of Child Neurology in the Next Millennium
Venue Bayview Beach Resort, Penang

Scientific Chair: Dr Ong Lai Choo

20th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting and 1st Scientific Meeting Chapter of Paediatrics

Date 30 July-2 August 1998
Theme Emergency Paediatrics
Venue The Regency Hotel, Port Dickson

Scientific Chair:
Dr A.Rahman A.Jamal

19th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 5-8 September 1997
Theme Child Health: Vision 2020
Venue Perdana Beach Resort, Kota Bharu

Scientific Chair: Dr Choo Keng Ee

18th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting and the 4th International Congress of Tropical Paediatrics

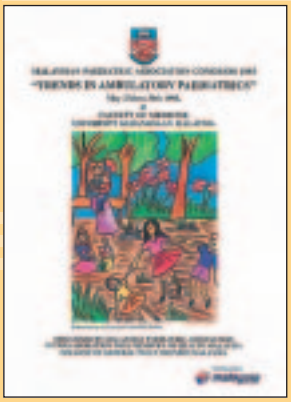
Date 7-11 July 1996
Theme Improving Children's Health In Tropical Countries: An International Commitment
Venue Shangri-la Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

Scientific Chair: Dr B.H.O. Azizi

17th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 2-4 June 1995
Theme Chronic Disorders in Childhood
Venue Renaissance Hotel, Melaka

Scientific Chair:
Dr Pyar Kaur & Dr Koh Chong Tuan



16th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 10-13 June 1994
Theme Paediatrics: Past, Present & Future
Venue Penang Mutiara Beach Resort, Teluk Bahang, Penang

Scientific Chair:
Dr Kuan Geok Lam &
Dr Wong Swee Lan

15th MPA Annual Congress & Scientific Meeting

Date 27-30 May 1993
Theme Trends in Ambulatory Paediatrics
Venue Faculty of Medicine, Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

Scientific Chair:
Dr Moti Lal s/o Tirath Ram

MPA LOGO

MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION

1978 to 2002

MPA's first logo was designed by Dr Paul Chen, a public health physician.

The book in the logo signifies knowledge. The hibiscus is our national flower and the aesculpian sign is depicted by the snake twining round the mace.

The baby in the prone position is significant as it shows progress and development - as all paediatricians should know, they were all sleeping supine at birth!

This logo served us faithfully for 21 years. Unfortunately, it does not look conspicuous enough because the words "Persatuan Pediatrik Malaysia" and "Malaysian Paediatric Association" are not clearly seen. Even from our time we agreed the infant was obese and had tapering extremities. The old 'school-badge' design is not in vogue any more and the design has been overtaken by time and progress.

Malaysian Paediatric Association

PERSATUAN PEDIATRIK MALAYSIA

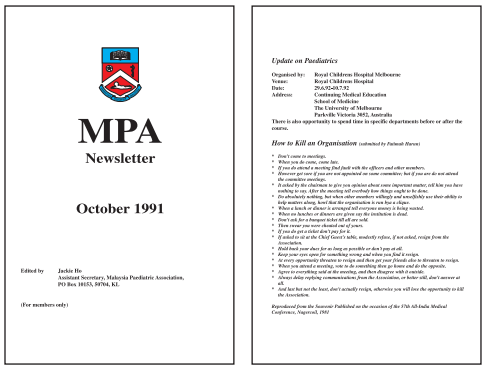
2003 and beyond

The Metamorphosis

It was time for a change. We needed a new logo emblazoned with the MPA name, depicting the work that MPA has been doing. A vote to change our logo was taken at the 2001 AGM in Kuantan.

The new logo is a modern take on the original design, while maintaining the identity of MPA. It is a conventional approach, using a sphere containing the traditional symbols to represent children, medicine, research and academia, and patriotism.

BERITA MPA



MPA
Newsletter

October 1991

Edited by Jackie Ho
Assistant Secretary, Malaysia Paediatric Association,
PO Box 10153, 50704, KL

(For members only)

Update on Paediatrics

Organised by: Royal Children Hospital Melbourne
Venue: Royal Children Hospital
Date: 29.6.92-30.7.92
Address: Continuing Medical Education
School of Medicine
The University of Melbourne
Parkville Victoria 3052, Australia

There is also opportunity to spend time in specific departments before or after the course.

How to Kill an Organisation (submitted by Fatimah Haron)

- *Don't come to meetings.*
- *When you do come, come late.*
- *If you do attend a meeting find fault with the officers and other members.*
- *However get sore if you are not appointed on some committee; but if you are do not attend the committee meetings.*
- *If asked by the chairman to give you opinion about some important matter, tell him you have no opinion. Then criticise the decision after words are said and done.*
- *Do absolutely nothing, but when other members willingly and unselfishly use their ability to help matters along, howl that the organisation is run for a clique.*
- *When a lunch or dinner is arranged tell everyone money is being wasted.*
- *When tea lunches or dinners are given say the institution is dead.*
- *Never accept an office lest people say you are sold.*
- *Don't create any new ideas of your own.*
- *If you do get a ticket don't pay for it.*
- *If asked to sit at the Chief Guest's table, modestly refuse, if not asked, resign from the Association.*
- *Hold back your dues for as long as possible or don't pay at all.*
- *Keep your eyes open for something wrong and when you find it resign.*
- *Never accept a nomination, but if you do and then get your friends also to threaten to resign.*
- *When you attend a meeting, vote to do something then go home and do the opposite.*
- *Agree to everything said at the meeting, and then disagree with it outside.*
- *Always delay replying communications from the Association, or better still, don't answer at all.*
- *And last but not the least, don't actually resign, otherwise you will lose the opportunity to kill the Association.*

Reproduced from the Souvenir Published on the occasion of the 37th All-India Medical Conference, Nagercoil, 1981

The Berita MPA is the newsletter of the Malaysian Paediatric Association. One of the first newsletters still available in our records dates back to September 1990 and was written by the then editor Dr Jackie Ho.

In those days, the newsletter was printed on both sides of an A4 page, later it looked like a brochure and by the early 1990s, it looked about what it looks like now. As you can see, the editors have made an effort to produce a colourful, simple-to-read newsletter. The continually-evolving look over the years reflect the changing times.

In the early days, the annual budget for the newsletter was RM141.50 and that included postage to members. Currently the newsletter has an annual budget of RM18,000 and is printed 4 times a year (without fail, but often late!). 1,000 copies are printed quarterly. The cost of the newsletters are financed by sponsorship from pharmaceutical companies.

Much of this commemorative book has been based on articles published in previous issues of Berita MPA. Clearly, the newsletter has proven to be a valuable source of historical information about our society.

The current newsletters provides information on activities, conferences, social events, movements of our colleagues and of course the President's thoughts. Wherever possible, the editors will try to fit in the latest scientific updates on paediatrics and medicine from our peers on the international front.

As always, the current editors (Prof Zul and Dato' Dr lean) would like to receive articles for publication from members throughout the country. I am sure there are many paediatricians with experiences or anecdotes that will both educate and entertain us all. It does not take too long to write a point of view and we hope that as long as the newsletter is published, there will be more articles flowing in from both junior and senior members alike.

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Malaysian Paediatric Association has always made the effort to accumulate and disseminate information which will be of benefit to its members in their professional development. Some of MPA's achievements in this regard include the publication of its own journal, large-scale studies, as well as academic publications.

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF CHILD HEALTH

MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF PAEDIATRICS AND CHILD HEALTH

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

CASE REPORTS

Official Publication of the MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION

VOL. 1 NO. 1 JUNE 1988

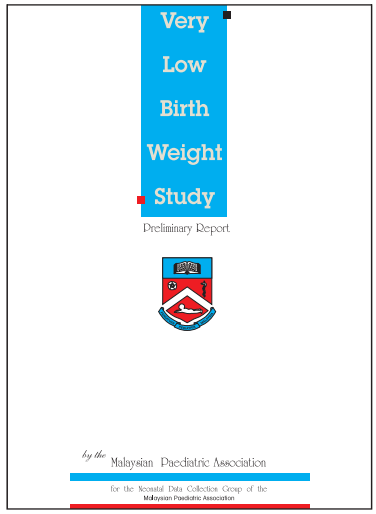
MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF CHILD HEALTH

Official Publication of the MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION

The Malaysian Journal of Child Health is the official publication of the Malaysian Paediatric Association. Many research articles on general paediatrics in Malaysia have been published in the journal.

The first issue was published in June 1988 under the capable hands of its editor, Dr D. Sinniah. The current chief editor is Professor Dr Zulkifli Ismail, and as with all previous editors, he welcomes articles for publication. The support of all paediatricians is much appreciated.

VERY LOW BIRTH WEIGHT STUDY



The Malaysian Paediatric Association has always strongly encouraged research. In the past, it has offered funds for research projects carried out by members and it has made payments to assist members who travel overseas to present scientific papers.

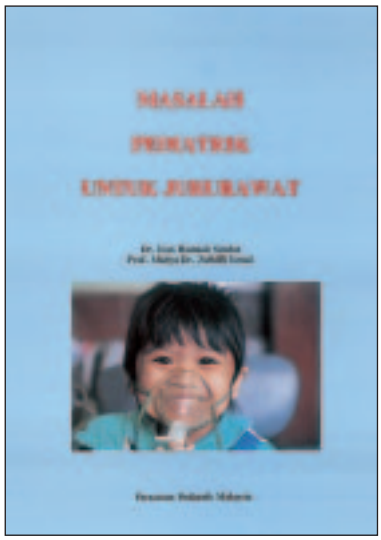
The Malaysian Paediatric Association Very Low Birth Weight Study represented a new dimension of involvement in research for the association, as it was the first study that the association itself had undertaken. Being in the position of representing the 3 sectors, namely the university, private and government, it offered a unique opportunity to do studies involving these 3 sectors.

The study was carried out by the Neonatal Data Collection Group, a sub-committee within the MPA. The group comprised Dr Jacqueline Ho as

the chairperson, Dr Lim Nyok Ling as the secretary, and its members, Associate Professor Boo Nem Yum, Dr Vasantha Mathews, as well as Dr Wong Swee Lan.

The general objective of the study was to examine the outcome of babies undergoing intensive care in Level 3 nurseries in Malaysian hospitals. The specific objectives were to examine the problems of very low birth weight babies (= 1500g), to study the complications of intensive care and their early morbidity and mortality, and to give a comparison on the outcome of neonatal intensive care between various centres, including government general hospitals, university hospitals and private specialist hospitals.

CONTINUING NURSES' DEVELOPMENT



Masalah Pediatrik Untuk Jururawat (Paediatric Problems for Nurses) was published in 1994. It is written in Bahasa Malaysia, as it was found that there were too few nursing textbooks written in the national language, much less paediatric nursing books.

There were over 20 contributors to this book, comprising distinguished local paediatricians. The book was written for our junior nurses so that they can understand paediatric problems that they face in the ward.

The second edition is due to be published in 2004. The editors are Dato' Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut and Profesor Dr Zulkifli Ismail.

MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC SURVEILLANCE UNIT

The Malaysian Paediatric Surveillance Unit (MPSU) was formed in 1994 and has been funded by grants from the Malaysian Paediatric Foundation and fees collected from researchers.

The MPSU was run by Dr Jackie Ho, Dr Amar Singh and Dato' Dr A. Jai Mohan from Ipoh until year 2000. The studies which were most helpful to the paediatricians in the country included the study on asthma deaths, acute liver necrosis and congenital heart disease in the newborn period.

Currently, the MPSU is being run by Dr Rowani Mohd Rahim and Dr Sharifah Ainon, from Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia, Kubang Kerian, Kelantan. The MPA would like to thank Dr Jackie Ho, Dr Amar Singh, Dato' Dr A Jai Mohan and their team in Ipoh, Perak for their good effort and hard work over the many years.

MPA GOES ONLINE

www.mpaeds.org.my

The official MPA website is the result of about four years of aspirations. It was an appropriate entrance for MPA into the new century. With the information and communication technology craze occurring all round us every day, the MPA cannot afford to be left behind.

The prototype of the website was started by Dr Syed Zulkifli Zakaria in 1997 but it did not progress. It was then taken up by Dr Iean Hamzah Sendut, who came up with the current functional and colourful site. The website was launched at the 2001 Annual Scientific Congress held in Kuantan, Pahang

The aim of the website is to record the history of the MPA, increase the contact of the society with the members and to provide a platform for our many educational activities. The website encourages feedback from members and visitors so that the society will continue to grow and promote child health in a more efficient and productive manner.

A GUIDED TOUR

The site is divided into several sections for easy navigation. On the left is a section for the president to ventilate his/her thoughts, membership applications, a bit about our secretariat, fellowships and awards (The Dr Siti Hasmah Research Award) available to members. Below this is data on our annual conferences and meetings. Lastly, the community activities for the year are highlighted.

In the middle are updates on coming events, excerpts from the past Annual Scientific Congress and slides from the Paediatric Infectious Disease Lecture Series (PIDS).

On the right are current child health and paediatric issues, a link to the Continuing Nurses' Education (CNE) website (which includes the nurses book 'Masalah Pediatrik Untuk Jururawat'), a historical perspective of MPA and information from APSSEAR.

It is hoped that the website will benefit more members and be a focus of chats among all paediatricians, especially once the e-group is set up. MPA's history will be properly archived and be available for all to access. There will also be special pages on information for the public and regular updates. Information to members will also be made quicker.

At present, the website is open to all, members and non-members, but there are plans to have a members-only page in the future. Lectures and excerpts from congresses will also be available online for doctors and nurses keen on distance learning to download.

COMMUNITY & CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

MALAYSIAN PAEDIATRIC FOUNDATION

The Malaysian Paediatric Foundation was set up soon after the 5th Asian Congress of Paediatrics organised in Kuala Lumpur in 1985. The objective of the Foundation is to encourage research and teaching of paediatrics and child health, and provide financial support to paediatric trainees and paediatricians who wish to carry out research.
The Foundation is also extended to provide Malaysian APSSEAR fellowship for paediatricians from neighbouring countries to undergo training in sub-specialist paediatrics in Malaysia.
The Foundation is currently funded by proceeds from the annual congress.

The Rat Race, a fund-raising event organised by the Sun and the Edge newspapers, was one of the activities organised to raise funds for the Malaysian Paediatric Foundation (MPF). Funds collected were used to buy equipment, such as syringe pumps, infusion pumps, pulse oximeters and incubators, for children's wards in hospitals that need them.

The Rat Race, modelled after the annual event at Wall Street, became a reality on 19th September 2000 despite a heavy downpour. Companies around the Kuala Lumpur Golden Triangle area sponsored participants to take part in the run. It was participated by enthusiastic executives in their (soaked) office attire.

Thirty-one companies fielded two hundred participants in the event, which had to be delayed due to the heavy rain. The rain also made the organisers shorten the route from the original 4 km to 2.4 km. 173 participants completed the whole course (the 22 who did not report back at the finish line presumably stopped off at the many bistros and pubs along the way).

The total amount collected was RM354,000, and all this was done in just a little over a month. MPA thanks the Sun and the Edge newspapers for deciding to make the MPF the beneficiary of the first-ever Rat Race in Asia.

Our members working in all the hospitals certainly appreciated the equipment donated and its contribution towards improving the quality of care at their respective hospitals, throughout Malaysia.

A ceremony to present some of the equipment was held at Klang Hospital on 26th May 2001.

CHILDREN'S CANCER FUND

The Children's Cancer Fund began in 1984 with the hope of collecting enough money to start a halfway house for children with cancer in Hospital Kuala Lumpur. Although that ambition was never realised due to lack of sufficient support, the fund has helped many needy oncology patients over the years, particularly those in Institute Pediatrik.

Besides giving cash assistance to needy patients, the cancer fund has also enabled air-conditioning to be installed in Ward KK3 of the Institute, and provided much-needed equipment to the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at the start of the unit in 1994.

This year, Professor Dr Wan Ariffin takes over as the chaiperson of the fund (replacing Dato' Professor Dr Raja Khuzaiah).

RUMAH PENDIDIKAN KESIHATAN & PEMAKANAN, (RPKP)

Started during the International Year of the Child in 1979, the Sentul Project or Rumah Pendidikan Kesihatan dan Pemakanan (RPKP) (translated as Health and Nutrition Education House), which began in Kampung Tun H S Lee, provided useful health and educational services for the poor in Sentul. When the squatter settlement was moved to Bandar Baru Sentul in 1986, RPKP also moved to its present site on the ground floor of an 18-storey block of low-cost flats. RPKP at one time had a kindergarten, tuition classes, weekly voluntary clinics run by MPA members, regular games and other activities.

Initial financial aid was obtained from an American voluntary organisation, Children's Aid International. The main objective of starting the project was to uplift and improve the health and nutritional status of children in the area. Records from the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital at the time showed that many children from the area were admitted for various ailments, especially those related to nutrition and the environment. The initial concentration on basic health services soon blossomed into a more holistic approach involving the social, physical, environmental and educational needs of the community. Other local organisations which became involved were the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, National Population and Family Development Board, Kuala Lumpur City Hall, Rotary Club, Department of National Unity and another organisation called Service Civil International.

A similar project was started in December 1985 in another slum area at Selayang Bahagia situated about 12 kilometres from Kuala Lumpur. This project has since dwindled and is no longer in existence. The potential for research in this population was immense but there were few takers. One such research was an international survey to identify handicaps amongst children aged 3 to 9 years in 1982. Many of the severely handicapped found in this survey had not been previously identified by any agency and were not on any therapy. Health status of children and its various indicators are some of the research that had been carried out in the Sentul flats.

Objectives

The basic objectives of the project were to provide health, nutritional and social care for the disadvantaged population living in the area. The short-term objectives were to provide medical care, advise family members of affected children regarding their health, help improve academic performance and prevent dropouts by conducting classes for school children, organise classes for parents, and arrange talks, exhibitions, and discussions to increase the awareness in the community of their own problems. The long-term strategies include obtaining data on problems of health, poverty and ignorance, and to use the data to find effective solutions for the community's problems. The population was also used to get medical and other students to understand the medical and social problems faced by these socially-deprived societies.

Potential

The potential for research in this population was immense but there were few takers. One such research was an international survey to identify handicaps amongst children aged 3 to 9 years in 1982. Many of the severely handicapped found in this survey had not been previously identified by any agency and were not on any therapy. Health status of children and its various indicators are some of the research that had been carried out in the Sentul flats.

The Future

Plans laid out 20 years ago at its inception need to be looked at again. The only surviving project in RPKP is the weekly voluntary clinic run by paediatricians and doctors from the private sector, government hospitals and the universities. The classes have stopped, the games have greatly reduced, the talks are now non-existent and few volunteers come forward to sacrifice their Sunday morning once every few months to run the clinic. The apathy is also seen amongst the residents of Bandar Baru Sentul flats themselves.

There is still a wealth of information which can be derived from simple community-based research on the flat dwellers. All it needs is the idea and will to carry on with the research. At the moment, the original creators of the RPKP project, Datuk Dr Sam Abraham and Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Sham Kasim, are having a tough time trying to find young people in our profession who are interested in carrying the torches they have been carrying for the last 20 years. Perhaps the formation of a bigger committee involving the older and younger generations will help to perpetuate continuity of this highly worth-

---

POSITIVE PARENTING

The Positive Parenting programme is the MPA's first major, multi-faceted parent education programme. It was initiated in Year 2000.

Recognising the role of parents in raising healthy and well-adjusted children, the programme is aimed at generating greater understanding of children's health, safety, nutrition and well-being through practical information, advice and tips.

Starting with a series of educational newspaper articles, the programme went on to produce magazine articles, as well as radio and TV interviews. In 2001, a series of Positive Parenting seminars was held in various states, bringing together distinguished specialists in paediatrics, as well as notable experts from the fields of nutrition, psychiatry and child psychology.

In an effort to share the newspaper articles and seminar presentations with

even more parents, we produced the Positive Parenting booklet (volume 1 & 2). These booklets distilled the information from the newspaper series and the seminars into simple, practical and appealing articles. The booklets were distributed freely through MPA members and medical practitioners.

BORDERLESS PAEDIATRICS

In 1999 and 2000, our members travelled to war-torn countries, including Kosovo and Afghanistan, to help the children and families. We say "syabas" to those who risked their personal safety and spent their own leave to help the less fortunate. The paediatricians who have dedicated their time to these humanitarian missions are:

1. Dr Amin Tai, Consultant Paediatric Surgeon, Ampang Puteri Specialist Hospital, KL
2. Dr Juriza Ismail, Paediatric Postgraduate Medical Officer, HUKM
3. Associate Professor Dr Wan Ariffin, Consultant Paediatric Oncologist, University Malaya Medical Centre
4. Associate Professor Dr Zabidi AM Hussin, Consultant Paediatrician & Deputy Dean, HUSM
5. Dr Tan Poh Tin, Consultant Paediatrician, Private Practive, Kuching, Sarawak

"An Experience Of A Lifetime"

"Majority of the patients were aged below 20 with around 6% below 5 years old...posttraumatic stress disorder was another major problem, even the children were deeply affected. The adults would complain of all sorts of bodyaches. The children mainly presented with nightmares, mutism, poor concentration in school, etc. When gently probed, their stories came pouring out. Although we had to use interpreters for communication, their pain, sadness, anguish, horrors and despair came across strongly to us. The children were encouraged to draw their fears. The finished drawings were full of tanks, soldiers, refugee camps, etc. One even drew how he witnessed his uncle being slaughtered, while another drew how a Serb soldier shot one of his friends while they were playing football outside his house. It was when listening to harrowing tales like these that your vision started to blur, a lump in your throat would form and a strange numbness would occupy your mind. You wanted to do so much but you had not the time nor the place to do so. In the end, all you could do was prescribe some antidepressants, anxiolytics, and offer them spiritual solace."

Dr Juriza Ismail, in the 5th MERCY mission to Kosova (29 Nov-16 Dec 1999)

"Welcome to Afghanistan"

"Hearing I was a doctor, two of the Afghani immigration and customs officers talked about their family members who were unwell. They were very pleased to be given the medicines, as they were just expecting a prescription. A doctor's (private) consultation alone cost US$0.66, slightly more than a 1.5 litre bottle of Coca-Cola, imported from Pakistan. The doctor who worked with us was paid US$5 a day....We spent four nights out in a small clinic (manned by one doctor), travelling out to run mobile clinics. We covered five villages and gave medical treatment to 1,350 people and dewormed and gave Vitamin A to 1,400 children."

Dr Tan Poh Tin, in a humanitarian mission to Afghanistan

REGIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The Association of Pediatric Societies of the Southeast Asian Region (APSSEAR) was first formed on 25th April 1974 by a group of Asian paediatricians with visions of unity and were keen to have a regional organisation. APSSEAR became affiliated with the International Paediatric Association (IPA) and eventually became "one of the most effective regional paediatric associations in IPA" (quote from Professor Michael Gracey, President of IPA).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

In the 26 years of its existence, the President changed with each Asian Congress of Pediatrics (ACP) - the last ACP saw the transition from Dr Chok-Wan Chan (Hong Kong) to Dr Hung-Chi Lue (Taiwan). The only constant executive committee members were the Secretary-General, Prof Perla Santos Ocampo and the Treasurer, Dr Lino Edralin Lim from the Philippines. Dr Santos Ocampo was assisted by Dr Lulu Bravo, also from the Philippines. During the loth ACP, Dr Santos Ocampo ended her tenure as Secretary General and was nominated as Honorary President and affectionately called the "Mother of APSSEAR by Dr Chok-Wan Chan. The newly elected Secretary-General is Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Sham Kasim. He will be assisted by Prof Zulkifli Ismail, and the Treasurer is Dr Koh Chong Tuan. With this announcement, the APSSEAR secretariat will move from the Philippines to Malaysia. In addition to the honour of being the secretariat, we also have a great responsibility in trying to continue the good work of the Philippines - all eyes will be on us for the next few years and the yardstick of measurement is the secretariat in the Philippines.

MEMBER COUNTRIES

APSSEAR member countries total 20 with New Zealand being the eastern-most and Pakistan in the west. Brunei is set to join as the 21st member country. With such a wide geographical distribution, there was a resolution to change the name to encompass other countries not in the Southeast Asian region. We'll just have to wait for the decision of a select committee of past presidents led by Dr Perla Santos Ocampo to see what new name will replace the familiar APSSEAR. Among the Past-Presidents is our own Dato' Dr Sam Abraham.

APSSEAR CONTRIBUTION

APSSEAR organises the Asian Congress of Pediatrics every three years. It has also published a silver jubilee book (Challenges and Opportunities for Child Health in the New Millennium) on APSSEAR over the last 26 years. Three editions of "The State of Asian Children" have also been published with the third edition being released at the loth ACR Pre-Congress workshop recommendations are sent to various agencies through the International Paediatric Association (IPA) so that they can be made accessible to all and implementation can be effected.
A newsletter is also sent to all member countries.
A new journal tentatively named Asia-Oceania Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health will be launched soon. With the move of the secretariat to Malaysia in the beginning of the 21st century, the support of all paediatricians is sought to make it a success.

APSSEAR OUTSTANDING PAEDIATRICIAN FOR ASIA 1997

On 23 March 1997 at the 9th Asian Congress of Paediatrics in Hong Kong, 10 paediatricians from twenty countries were honoured with the APSSEAR Outstanding Paediatrician for Asia Award. One of the ten was our own Dr Mohd Sham Kasim, the Senior Consultant and Chief Paediatrician in the Ministry of Health. How well do we know this man who has achieved so much in the promotion of paediatrics both within and outside our borders?

Born on 15 March 1944, Sham (as we all know him) lived his childhood exploring and enjoying the rural environment of his birth place, Kampung Mungkal in Negri Sembilan. He had his secondary education at the Royal Military College in Sungei Besi, Kuala Lumpur from 1960 where he was first exposed to urban culture. This followed a second culture shock when he went to Sydney University in 1965 on a Colombo Plan Scholarship to study Medicine. He graduated with the MBBS in 1971 and proceeded to work at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital.

In 1973, Sham joined the newly-formed Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and was abruptly sent to the Royal Children's Hospital, Yorkhill, Glasgow on a British Council scholarship from 1973 to 1975. He obtained the Diploma in Child Health (DCH) in 1974 and became a member of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) in 1975. In 1987, he became a Fellow of the same College. In 1978, he became a member of the Academy of Medicine, Malaysia and was conferred a Fellow of the same Academy in 1996.

While in UKM, he was appointed to the post of Deputy Dean between 1979 and 1982. He became an Associated Professor in 1980 and was Head of the Department of Paediatrics for two sessions from 1983 to 1985 and from 1988 to 1990. In 1989, he became the first local to be appointed Professor of Paediatrics.

It was during his days in UKM that he developed an interest in various aspects of social issues in paediatrics, starting with the plight of the Orang Asli and proceeding on to child abuse and neglect. He has also taught, counselled and seen hundreds of medical students who were frequently invited to his house for meals after each posting. He was in a group of a handful of senior lecturers who saw a need to conduct our own training programme and examination style to cater to our own needs. Being a member of the Postgraduate Committee, he was in the group which started the Master of Medicine (Paediatrics) Training Programme. As a member of the Ministry of Health's Code of Ethics Committee on Infant Formula Products from 1980 and the Ministry of Social Welfare Services' Nursery Care Act Formulation Committee, he strongly voiced support and encouragement for full breast feeding.

In the MPA, Sham became a member in 1978. He was elected Honorary Secretary 1979-81 and served as Vice President 1982-84 and as President in two sessions (1984-85 and 1987-88). In 1991, when nobody wanted to be the Honorary Secretary, he volunteered his services. When Malaysia hosted the Fifth Asian Congress of Paediatrics in August 1985, Sham was the Honorary General Secretary. He chaired the 10th International Congress of Child Abuse and Neglect in Kuala Lumpur in 1994. He has chaired 11 other conferences, initiated and been involved in the organisation of numerous others. He is Vice-President of the Malaysian Council of Child Welfare from 1982, a base from which he has organised many workshops and conferences. In the international arena, he served as President of the ASEAN Paediatric Federation 1990-92, President of the International Society of Tropical Paediatrics 1996-99 and President-Elect of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) 1996-98. He will be President of the latter from 1998 to the beginning of the next century.

He took over as editor of the Malaysian Journal of Child Health in 1993 and has consistently managed to publish two issues per year. He has 40 publications to his credit and many more other abstracts presented in international and locally-organised conferences.

As a person, we all know Sham as a jovial man who has the tenacity, diplomacy and stamina to pursue a vision despite all odds. The man with the easy style and smile, and an infectious laugh was once described by Datuk Dr Sam Abraham as the man least likely to get a heart attack!" Although some may think of Sham's working style as unconventional, he has managed to strike an even balance between all his activities and his family by getting all of them involved in the things he does. Being the Chief Paediatrician in the Ministry of Health since 1991, he has not forgotten his roots and the people who inspired him in the early beginnings, especially Dr H K Virik and Datin Dr Rebecca George.

The MPA congratulates Dr Mohd Sham Kasim.

REMINISCING... WITH DATUK DR SAM ABRAHAM

Datuk Dr Sam Abraham is a known figure in the medical community of Malaysia, particularly amongst paediatricians as one of the key founders of the Malaysian Paediatric Association. We thank him for taking the time to talk to us about the early days of MPA.

How did the MPA get started?

The MPA originally started as the Paediatric Society of the Malaysian Medical Association back in 1963. Many of the original minutes of the society are kept at the MMA House. Original members included Drs Gwen Smith, H. Virik, Chin YH, KL Lam, Sham Kassim , Lee Eng Lam, Rebecca George, Kumaradeva Param, Alan Dugdale and myself.

Who was the first president?

Perhaps the first Pro-tem President of the Malaysian Paediatric Association was Professor Max Robinson, who was then Professor of Paediatrics at the University Hospital Kuala Lumpur. He was the MPA President before the society formally had a constitution. After the MPA had its own constitution, the President was myself (1979).

Tell us about the RPKP project.

One project that started in the early 1970s and lasted to almost 2000 was the RPKP. This clinic was started because Drs Sam Abraham, Rebecca George, Prof Malek and Sham Kassim noticed that many admissions to GHKL came from the Sentul area. This was a poor area where many races intermingled and lived together. There were basic amenities such as water and electricity, and yet patients still required admission to GHKL. A primary health clinic was set up in Sentul and at its peak, almost 30-40 patients used the clinic facilities per session. The New Zealand High Commission gave books whilst the Australian High Commission donated equipment. The above 2 pioneers were also helped by Prof Malek (UKM) and Rebecca George.

Tell us about APPSEAR.

Another early achievement of the MPA was setting up academic links with neighbouring ASEAN countries. Drs Parameswaran, Mahinder Singh, KL Lam, Lee EL, Lin HP, Raja Khuzaiah and Sham Kassim all played a role in the early days and later the South East Asian network became APPSEAR - this culminated in KL hosting the 5th APPSEAR Meeting in 1985, a meeting opened by the Hon Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.
In 1992, I was awarded the APPSEAR Gold Medal.

Editors' Note: The information / write up above was obtained from Datuk Dr Sam Abraham and we hope we have included all the relevant persons. Any acts of omission are deeply regretted.

OUR PAST PRESIDENTS

The Malaysian Paediatric Association has grown under the leadership of many illustrious presidents. The association has achieved a great many things under these dedicated men and women during their time of rule. We caught up with some of our former presidents at a special meeting on 11 January 2003 in Kuala Lumpur.

Datuk Dr Sam Abraham

1979-1981

"MPA is the offshoot of the paediatric society of Malaysian Medical Association. We wanted to identify ourselves and focus our attention on paediatrics, so we formed the MPA. It was not easy in the early days, because we were scattered all over the country and there were not many paediatricians at that time.

We felt that we ought to start our own association, get our members together and be focused on issues facing children. In the beginning, the emphasis was on working closely with our general physicians and obstetricians to get paediatrics off the ground. We got off quite well and in 1979, we started our own association.

The challenge then was to get enough trained paediatricians and paediatric nurses. We were keen to establish different disciplines within paediatrics, such as cardiology, nephrology, or neonatalogy.

Our achievements have been extremely good, because we've established paediatricians in universities, government hospitals and we're looking now at some important issues of training and academic work."

Dr Lam Khuan Leng

1981-1983

"When I was a professor of paediatrics, there were only a handful of paediatricians in the country. It was very urgent that we train more paediatricians locally. When you train locally, you can train more at a time. Now, there are so many members, and a majority of them are locally trained.

One of the issues that MPA focusses on today is establishing standards of practice and behaviour. We have to standardise practices, such as treatment of asthma, in stages to avoid any confusion. If we can get this knowledge to the GPs, it would benefit the whole population."

Datuk Dr Mohd Sham Kasim

1985-1987, 1989-1990

"MPA has organised a lot of conferences, meetings, workshops and this has helped increase the understanding of our professionals - the

paediatricians, paediatric nurses and others - towards improving the care of our children. There has been an improvement in the services we provide, and this is especially so in terms of subspecialty care, such as for neonates, patients with respiratory problems, renal problems, cancer, leukemia and so on.

In terms of social problems, such as child abuse, we have organised meetings in which we help our colleagues to identify, treat and suggest ways in which this could be prevented from recurring.

We have also been active in getting our other colleagues, such as nutritionists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, involved in the care of special children and community-based rehabilitation of disabled children."

Dato' Dr Jai Mohan
1990-1991

"The MPA, in association with regional organisations for child health or paediatric bodies, have worked together in developing child health policies to be adopted by governments in South Eest Asia as well as at the international level.

The MPA has contributed towards upgrading and improving the quality of child health services in the country in a number of ways. One of its major roles has been the education of its members as well as other healthcare practitioners, through training programmes, supporting them in preparing for their post-graduate exams and developing sub-specialty programmes."

Dato' Professor Dr Raja Khuzaiah
1991-1992

"I've been in MPA since its early days. Back then, there were very few paediatricians in the country and the association really had to do everything on a small scale. I must say that paediatrics was not really taken seriously as a specialty in the medical profession.

Over the years, MPA has grown to what it is today and I would like to say that one of its biggest contributions would be its success in bringing the paediatricians together. With the strength of paediatricians today, MPA has been able to address many issues which are relevant and important to child health. Not only has it made paediatrics a specialty which people recognise, but more importantly, has been able to serve children in a more effective manner."

Dr S. Balakrishnan
1992-1993

"In the 70's and early 80's in Kelantan, the nutrition of infants and children was pretty bad. We used to see a lot of malnutrition. Compared to those days, we have now come up very well and we don't see those things anymore. This is purely because we have trained our staff in the public health area as well as our doctors in the hospitals. Today, infant nutrition in our country is very much better than compared to any other countries in the world."

Dr Koh Chong Tuan
1995-1996, 1999-2000

"Raising adequate funding to organise medical meetings, congresses, medical education & public acitvities is always a big challenge.

MPA has been fortunate, to get the support of MOH, the members' cooperation and the support of pharma companies, medical equipment companies and nutrition companies."

Dr Choo Keng Ee
1996-1997

"Before the 1990s, there was little research on paediatrics in Malaysia. Things have improved in the last 5 to 7 years. The MPA annual congress has organised a number of things to encourage research. One of them is free paper sessions, which over the years, have increased in quantity and quality.

The MPA annual congress has also organised the

Young Investigator Award. There are more and more papers competing, and more quality papers, especially from doctors doing their Master of Medicine degrees."

Dr Azizi bin Haji Omar
1997-1998

"I'm quite pleased to see that the MPA has actually done quite a lot to improve the skills and knowledge among paediatricians, beyond the normal doctoring. I can see that doctors, paediatricians and paediatric nurses are becoming involved in learning skills such as organisation skills, social skills and more recently, skills with regard to research and publications.

Over the years, more and more has been done, but there is still more that needs to be done. Our participation in conferences, smaller activities such as workshops and community activities, are all important contributions towards the development of our skills and knowledge."

Professor Dr Zulkifli Ismail
2000-2001

"The MPA has produced various publications to promote the professional development of its members. In recognition of paediatric nurses as our partners in the care of children, we published 'Masalah Pediatrik Untuk Jururawat' in 1994.

The MPA also has its own official journal, the Malaysian Journal of Child Health, which caters to the needs of local as well as foreign paediatricians. Our newsletter, Berita MPA, is an essential link between the committee and the members. It is published to keep members informed of the association's activities.

We recognise that parent education is an important aspect in the promotion of child health. With that in mind, the MPA has initiated various community projects, including Rumah Pendidikan Kesihatan dan Pemakanan, Positive Parenting and BRIGHT START Nutrition, for Malaysian parents and families."

Dr Hussain Imam
2001-2002

"Over the years, the MPA has worked in many areas with the Ministry of Health to bring about improvements in the healthcare system for children as a whole. Recently, for example, we worked with the MOH to review the EPI for the country. Malaysia became the first country in Asia to introduce immunisation against haemophilus influenza meningitis. We've also reviewed the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) schedule, and all this has come about because of very active interaction between the professionals in paediatrics and the doctors working with the MOH."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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  Selangor

- **Dr Mahinder Singh**
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- **Datuk Dr Mohd Sham Kasim**
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- **Dr Chin Yoon Hiap**
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- **Dato' Professor Dr Raja Khuzaiah**
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- **Dr Hussain Imam**
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  50586 Kuala Lumpur

- **Dr Nazeli Hamzah**
  Klinik Perdana
  Wisma Suara Muda
  15000 Kota Bharu
  Kelantan

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Malaysian Paediatric Association's secretariat is the nucleus of our association. Decisions made by the exco are often left to the staff to be implemented. Much of the mundane (but very important) tasks are left to Datin Saadiah and her team. Without her leadership the MPA would not be an active and dynamic NGO. In our commemorative book, we choose to highlight our staff who help with the day-to-day work of the MPA.

THE PEOPLE

Datin Saadiah Ahmad runs the day-to-day show in the secretariat. Her role is an important one, as she is the middle-person bridging the gap between members and the committee, as well as between international organisations and the MPA. She is also in charge of the membership database and carries out arrangements for the Annual Scientific Congress every year.

When you call the secretariat, you will probably speak to Noor Faridah Bajuri, who is employed to assist Datin. Quiet and patient Faridah assists with the typing and other secretarial work required by the MPA. She will often be seen at major MPA conferences, handling the registration, distributing conference bags and lending a helping hand.

Shahida Musa and Zaimah Zainal Abidin are two other familiar faces in the secretariat. Both women are particularly valuable during conferences, because of their versatility and ability to adapt in handling problems.

OUR HOME OVER THE YEARS

For the first 21 years, the MPA did not have a home to call our own until 1 January 1999. In the early years, the secretariat moved with the president and executive committee, from University Hospital, to Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and then to the Paediatric Institute (from 1992 till the end of 1998).

We owe a debt of gratitude to these institutions who have allowed us to establish firm footing before moving on.

The search for the new secretariat was a long and trying one. But finally, after negotiations between Datuk Dr Sam Abraham and Dato' Dr S.K. Dharmalingam, President of the National Cancer Society, we managed to secure rental of an 800 square feet office space in the National Cancer Society building in Kuala Lumpur.

We moved lock, stock and barrel on the first day of 1999 with a 2-year rental agreement with extensions. With our new home, the MPA hopes to provide better and more personal service to members. Maintenance of the secretariat in terms of rental, water, electricity and salary for the executive secretary is partially met by subscriptions received from all categories of members.

THE WAY FORWARD

For MPA, much has been achieved in the last 25 years from the combined efforts of the previous presidents and their committees.

However there are many areas that MPA can improve. With a stronger membership and a more mature organization MPA should be the opinion leader in all issues related to child health. It should be THE professional organization that advocates for the children of Malaysia. This is in relation to not only health issues, but pertaining to social issues and current controversies. It should flex its muscles for the rights of the child. Issues of advertising targeted at children and adolescents , issues of unsuitable TV programs for viewing, issues of young criminals and their rights, issues of substance abuse and cigarette smoking, and many more. These are major issues requiring time and commitment, not achievable within one year term of the president. Many past presidents would agree that one year is not enough. The presidency should be increased to a two year term for the president to leave his mark and for MPA to be a more effective organization.

The health status of children in Malaysia has improved tremendously over the last 25 years, in tandem with the improvement in the health status of our country. No doubt there would be profound changes in the years to come.

The change in demographics with smaller family units, longer life span and change in disease patterns would all affect children and their peaditricians. Adolescent medicine would undoubtedly be a specialty of its own .The longer life span would clearly define each phase of our lives into childhood, adolescents, adulthood and geriatrics. Lifestyle diseases would be more prominent especially in the adolescents. Risk taking behaviours in this age group will have its consequences.Psychosocial illnesses maybe a major health problem.

Our battle with the microbes would be a never ending one. As new therapeutic agents are being developed there would undoubtedly be emergence of new diseases. We had a taste of this with SARS.

For the paediatricians the way forward is to anticipate all these changes and equip ourselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet its challenges. More research at local levels will help us deal with local problems better. As disease pattern changes the curative aspect of medicine may be less prominent compared to preventive measures. Advances in technical and surgical skills, sophisticated lifesaving procedures, will all result in prolonging lives of children with congenital illnesses into adolescence and adulthood. This brings with it the psychological problems of the chronically ill child. Training modules will have to be tailored to these changes. The art of medicine will slowly turn into the science of medicine, but the doctor has to maintain his role as a healer of physical as well as psychological illnesses. In our quest to give the best to our patients, let us not forget the human within us, and continue to treat our patients with respect and compassion. The deepest touch of all will still be the human touch, no matter which century we practise medicine.

Dr Nazeli Hamzah
President 2002/2003

ADOLESCENCE AND THE WAY FORWARD

Adolescence is often seen as a period of turmoil, of redefinitions and readjustment, of having to cut the mental and social umbilical cord, of coming to terms with sexuality and assuming greater responsibility for one's life. However, in recent years, the issue of adolescence has become the focus of another kind of jostling, namely that of ownership between paediatrics and internal medicine. At last, it appears that the local authorities are taking the cue from experience elsewhere and have been giving paediatricans greater responsibility in adolescent issues. This year, a scholarship was awarded to a paediatrican to specialise in adolescent medicine.

The MPA has now set up a subcommittee under Dr Nazeli Hamzah to look into this area, with a stress of issues related to physical health and diseases of lifestyle. It is hoped that we can implement preventive strategies that will bear fruit in years to come. This move appears to coincide with regional concerns. In the forthcoming ASEAN Paediatric Federation meeting in Bali, all member countries have been invited to nominate speakers for a plenary session related to adolescence. Hopefully, the many colleagues who have worked so hard to change the mindset of the policy makers will now contribute their ideas and energy to the new subcommittee.

The last year has witnessed many workshops and brainstorming sessions related to future developments in paediatrics. The need to create a pool of well-rounded general paediatricians, while not neglecting sub-specialty development, is an area of concern for all. In the same vein, we need to select the right way forward in order to ensure a balanced growth of services. There are so many competing areas - prenatal genetics and screening for inborn errors of metabolism, the care of the child with special needs, epilepsy surgery, cardiac surgery, chelation for thalessaemics and new vaccinations, to name a few. In reality, there is a scarcity of resources, both in manpower and funding, and every area is important for the affected children and their parents. The MPA can be a useful forum for all pediatricians to make their contributions in helping planners draw up priorities. We now have a website to facilitate such an exchange of ideas, hopefully substantiated by data.

Our founding fathers got it right when they stressed on primary health and primary education. They were not distracted by the lure of building glamorous hospitals for a few to the neglect of basic care for all. We must build on this tradition.

Dr Hussain Imam
President 2001/2002

WHY THE PAEDIATRIC AGE LIMIT MUST BE RAISED TO 18 YEARS IN MALAYSIA

1. WHO has officially defined a Child as one who is below the age of 18 years. This definition has been applied globally to all their programmes.

2. In most countries in the world, the paediatric age limit has been set at 18 years. This is not only true in western countries in Europe, North America and Australia but also in Asia, eg. Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. Unless we want to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world, it is only a matter of time before Malaysia follows suit. Why not NOW?

3. Adolescents in Malaysia need interested specialists who will dedicate their time and energy to address important issues relating to their health and to advance their interests through continuing clinical care, research and international collaboration. Paediatricians in Malaysia are sensitive to the needs of adolescents and are interested to specialise in adolescent medicine, now a recognised subspeciality under Paediatrics in all western countries (also in Hong Kong and Singapore). As far as we know, adolescent medicine is not a sub-specialty in internal medicine. Any further delay in designating paediatricians to care for adolescents would be against the best long-term interests of this group of patients.

4. We are already continuing to look after many adolescents, following them up from their childhood illnesses, many beyond the Malaysia 'cut-off point' of 12 years, eg. thalassaemia, cerebral palsy, congenital and rheumatic heart diseases, epilepsy. Following them up only to the 'legal' age in Malaysia of 12 years is often insufficient and many parents have requested that paediatricians continue to look after their children well beyond the age of 12 years. But trying to get some of them admitted for hospitalisation has often put paediatricians in trouble with the Administration.

5. The problems of adolescents are more allied to those of paediatrics and therefore paediatricians are in a better position to look after them compared to adult physicians. Many of these are of a psycho-social nature, eg, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, smoking, family, school and other social issues. For example, adult physicians at present are generally very uncomfortable with and are reluctant to look after cases of 'Child and Sexual Abuse' that are presented to them after the age to 12 years. Most have referred them to paediatricians who are more familiar with the care of such cases. This surely is tacit acknowledgement that paediatricians are better trained to manage adolescents.

6. Gathering of paediatric health statistics; the whole world collects health statistics for children by 5-year age groups up to at least 15 years. Malaysian paediatric statistics would not be comparable with those of the rest of the world if our paediatric age limit is set at only 12 years. Right now there is no designated group collecting such statistics on adolescent health in Malaysia, mainly because this group ofpatients belongs to nobody. Adolescents have special requirements in the design and construction of physical facilities in clinics and wards relating to their unique needs. Paediatricians, being sensitive to their needs, are in the best position to attend to these.

Berita MPA Jan 2000

Footnote: This issue has been brought up by Prof Lin Hai Peng with the then DG of Health, Tan Sri Abu Bakar and the College of Physicians.

APPENDIX

MPA AWARDS

Young Investigator Award is to encourage young investigators to participate in the proceedings of the Annual MPA Congress. This is in recognition of outstanding original work and consists of RM1000/- and a certificate of merit.

Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali Research Award is given to a young researcher who submits a research proposal relating to paediatrics and child health. This is to encourage medical officers and paediatric trainees to carry out research. A maximum of RM10,000 can be applied for and the recipient will be announced at the MPA Annual Congress.

MPA Postgraduate Merit Award is open to all candidates of MMed (Paed) enrolled with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia or MRCP candidates.

MPA Merit Award For Nurses is open to any nurse (whether in public/ private sector/ hospital/ public health) who has contributed significantly to child health.

MPA LIFE MEMBERS

MPA membership fees are now RM100 per annum for ordinary members and RM1,000 for life members. Life membership payment can be made in 3 easy instalments. Associate members (nurses, medical students and paramedical staff) pay a subscription fee of RM30 per annum.

LIST OF MPA LIFE MEMBERS

Prof A. Rahman A. Jamal
Dato' Dr. Abd. Halim Abd. Jalil
Dr Abd. Rahman Noor
Dr Abdul Razak Mohammed
Dr Abdul Razif Abdul Razak
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