

## The 34<sup>th</sup> Asian Medical Students Conference 2013 Malaysia (The Incoming Tide of Community Medicine)

Author: Justina Teh Soh Wen

The 34th AMSC 2013 Malaysia is an international medical students' conference, organized by Asian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). This conference is an annual event which its host right rotated among 20 regions that have AMSA Chapters. AMSA Malaysia won the host right from the bidding among Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea during the East Asian Medical Students' Conference (EAMSC) in January 2012 in Singapore.

Before we begin with the report about this event, let me introduce more about AMSA Malaysia. AMSA Malaysia is an international medical student association that started its operation in Malaysia since year 1985 and it is based in UKM Medical Faculty until today. Prof Dato Dr Lokman Saim, former dean of UKM Medical Center was the founder of AMSA Malaysia. Over the years, AMSA Malaysia had widen its membership from just UKM medical students to over 10 others medical faculties in Malaysia, including UPM, USM, UMS, IMU, Monash University Malaysia, UiTM, PMC, AIMST, UCSI, UTAR. The vision is Knowledge, Action and Friendship. Through local programs such as annual public health campaign "AMSA International Day" , "AMSA & Charity", we allowed medical students from various medical universities serve the community and at the same time, interact and share knowledge and bond friendship with one another. Besides that, we also organized various academic workshops and scientific competitions with the themes related to the incoming conferences. Throughout the history since 1985 until today, AMSA Malaysia had organized 8 international conferences. Last but not least, we are also a well-known chapter that always brings back trophies and prizes from the scientific competitions such as scientific paper, posters and public health video competitions organized during the international conferences.

The 34th AMSC was held on 3-10th July 2013. It was organized by 80 dedicated medical students from UKM, ranging from year 1 to year 5 and facilitated by 50 medical students from another 5 medical schools around Klang Valley (UPM, UCSI, UTAR, IMU, Monash Malaysia). The preparation took up to 18 months and it was supervised by Prof Noor Azah Abdul Aziz (Head of HEJIM PPUKM) and Dr Adli Ali (Advisor of AMSA Malaysia). Besides that, this event was under the patronage of YABhg Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and supported by Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. It was

participated by over 420 medical students from 19 chapters including Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom.

The theme of this conference is "The Incoming Tide of Community Medicine" with 4 sub-themes; Environmental Health, Occupational Health, Maternal & Child Health and Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases. Academic, social and cultural activities were incorporated into this conference with the objectives of increasing exposure and awareness of medical students towards importance of community medicine as well as to instill cultural diversity and appreciation.

In terms of academic programs, we were honored to have the infamous Dato Dr Narimah Awin, former World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Adviser to present an insightful topic "Emerging and Re-emerging Public Health Issues and Challenges in Asian Context" as our keynote address. Besides that, we were also delighted to have Prof Dato Dr Lokman Saim who was willing to share his time and knowledge to the students on the topic of "Medicine of Tomorrow" as well as Prof Syed Al-Junid from United Nation University- International Institute of Global Health (UNU-IIGH) who delivered "Improving Community Health-Multisectorial Collaborations" for the plenary sessions. In addition, we also had symposium sessions that focused more deeply on the 4 sub-themes mentioned above so that students can have a better understanding.

Other than mere lectures, we also brought the students to field trip to primary, secondary and tertiary care centers in Malaysia to show them the differences of community medicine in Malaysia and their countries. Students were separated to group and were brought to places like Klinik Kesihatan, Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah, UKM Medical Centre and Pusat Primer UKM. They were brought for a tour to observe the facilities and services provided in these places by the authorities there. Through this visit, students were able to understand community medicine and its importance as well as compare and contrast the health centers in Malaysia with those in their countries.

Moreover, we also organized a community service project in FELDA Soeharto that allowed students to further involve themselves in the community so that the level of awareness can be increased. Students were separated into groups to different locations such as home visit, clinical booth health screening, school health education, household risk assessment and occupational safety and health in palm oil plantation. Students were given the opportunity to interact with the community themselves and understand the role of doctors in providing primary care in rural areas. In the same time, students also had the chance to participate in Rewang and traditional game such

as galah panjang with the local communities in FELDA which at the same time promotes Malaysian culture.

Furthermore, we also provided hands-on opportunity to incorporate clinical practices that are related to our sub-themes in the academic workshops. 18 academic workshops were conducted by professors and doctors from UKMMC including immunization workshop, snake bites and management workshop, DM Type II management workshop, Pap smear screening workshop and many more.

No conference will end without scientific presentation from the delegates. In AMSC 2013, we had 4 categories of scientific competitions including scientific paper, scientific poster, public poster and public health video completions. Delegates carried out researches at their countries for the duration of 1 year and presented their researches in this conference. Judging was done by panels of honorable judges including Prof Shamsul, Prof Kashiwagi, Prof Noor Azah, Prof Sirjit Das, Prof Yasmin Anum, Prof Nabishah, Prof Tong, Prof Nasser, Prof Zafar and Prof Rizal. We were delighted that AMSA Malaysia had won champion in scientific poster and public health video competition.

Besides academic programs, we also instilled fun social and cultural activities during the conference which allowed delegates to have more cultural appreciation and promote Malaysian tourism. We organized street food fiesta at UKM KL campus which exhibited various local Malaysian delicacies including satay, nasi lemak, burger bakar, roti canai, teh tarik and etc that fulfilled delegates' gastronomical indulgence. Besides that, we also had sight-seeing activities in collaboration with ministry of tourism and Visit KL tourism office to Kuala Lumpur city and Putrajaya. No doubts that delegates enjoyed themselves during the sight-seeing program. Moreover, we also had cultural workshop that educated delegates on Malaysian unique culture practices and traditional arts, dances, costumes and handicrafts.

AMSC 2013 was served as a platform for delegates coming from different cultural background to show their unique cultures to other delegates. Through activities such as AMSA International Booth and Cultural Night where the former session allowed delegates to have a booth to showcase their country's famous or traditional snacks, arts, costumes and games whereas the latter allowed delegates to showcase their country's traditional performances to other delegates.

In a conclusion, the 34th AMSC 2013 was being successfully organized. Feedbacks from the delegates was, this conference was one of the most well-planned and educative conferences in AMSA International history. However, it would be possible without the helps and advices from many authorities especially from our host universities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and all departments and staffs that involved. Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to all parties that had

contributed directly or indirectly to the success of this conference and we hope that the experience and friendship gained will last beyond this conference and be useful to all our future endeavors.



