MEETING REPORT

Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention (APOCP) Founding Conference - ‘The APOCP and Regional Collaboration for Cancer Prevention’

Somyos Deerasamee

Introduction

On November 4-6th the APOCP staged its Founding Conference in the Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Pattaya, in the South-East of Thailand. A total of approximately 50 scientists from across the region gathered in a beautiful coastal setting to discuss establishment of a new organization to promote efforts in both primary and secondary areas of cancer prevention. Somyos Deerasamee, the Director of the National Cancer Institute of Thailand, as President of the conference, made the opening address. This was followed by a welcome address by Kazuo Tajima, Chief of the Epidemiology Division of Aichi Cancer Center Research Institute, acting Chairmand of the APOCP before the meeting got under way with the first session, the Cancer Epidemiology Research Forum.

This was followed by a general coverage of cancer prevention efforts in individual countries, at the end of which the Guest Speaker, Max Parkin of the International Agency for Research on Cancer gave an entertaining and informative talk on the role that descriptive epidemiology has and continues to play in the larger picture of cancer prevention. Last but not least, after a short break, the participants continued their discussions at the barbecue welcome party overlooking the bay. This was sponsored by the Japanese Committee for the UICC, a delicious lunch already having been provided courtesy of the National Cancer Institute, Thailand.

Program

Saturday 4th Morning : Cancer Epidemiology Research Forum

Chairs: Drs Tajima/Petcharin

DV Bala, Ahmedabad Breast Cancer Risk Factors
Yifu Deng, Beijing Molecular Epidemiology of Lung Cancer
Yu-Tang Gao, Shanghai Epidemiology Implications for Prevention
Keun-Young Yoo, Seoul Cancer Epidemiology in Korea - Breast

Chairs: Drs Gao/Yoo

Petcharin Srivatanakul, Bangkok Molecular Epidemiology of Liver Cancer
Kazuo Tajima, Nagoya Hospital Based-Epidemiology
Elmira Erkinbayeva, Bishkek Cancer Registration in Central Asia
Malcolm Moore, Nagoya Pathophysiological Epidemiology

Saturday 4th Afternoon : Cancer Prevention, Country Reports

Chairs: Drs Somyos/Parkin

Hiroshi Kobayashi, Sapporo Japan
Taik Koo Yun, Seoul Korea
Somyos Deerasamee, Bangkok Thailand
Magsood Siddiqi, Calcutta India
Yu-Tang Gao, Shanghai China
Soeripto, Yogyakarta Indonesia

Opening Address by the President

Guest Speaker, Max Parkin, IARC: Descriptive Epidemiology for Cancer Prevention

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On the Sunday morning, the program continued with a session on tobacco control, chaired by Drs Shastri and Varabhorn, then following an exhausting lunch-time (see Photograph 2), the discussion was extended to cover various aspects of toxicological pathology. For this the chairs were Drs Tsuda and Hutcha, then Soeripto and Ohshima, the session closing in the late afternoon to allow the scientists a free evening.

Monday morning was occupied with advances in chemoprevention, under the direction of Drs Ferguson and Surh, followed by Drs Das and Fukushima, with a wide range of agents, both natural and synthetic covered. The last session, devoted to screening and clinical intervention, respectively chaired by Drs Nair and Ishikawa, gave an all too brief introduction to these areas or secondary prevention, of especial interest to the clinician but clearly important for all cancer control programs now being developed across the Asian Pacific region.
Summary of the Founding Conference

To round off the Founding Conference, Dr Hiroshi Kobayashi gave the audience the benefit of his long and broad experience of cancer prevention, presenting a stimulating account of how the efforts of workers in the various fields involved might hopefully evolve as we progress into the 21st century. As Chairman of the APOCP, Kazuo Tajima then made some succinct remarks as to the success of the meeting and plans for the future. This only left Petcharin Srivatankul, in place of Somyos Deerasamee, the Conference President, to thank the participants for their co-operation and to Malcolm Moore, as APOCP Secretary and organizer, to apologise for shortcomings and promise to make substantial improvements in making preparation for the First General Assembly Conference to be held in Thailand in November 2001!

APOCP General Meeting

At the APOCP General Meeting, held during and after an excellent buffet lunch (see Photo 2), Hiroshi Kobayashi of Sapporo Cancer Seminar and Taik Koo Yun, President of the Korean Association for Cancer Prevention, chaired a lively discussion on how the organization should be constituted and what its representation should be. In response to a report by Malcolm Moore, Managing Editor of the APJCP and APOCP Coordinator for 2000, they directed that a number of items should be stressed to guarantee the success of the meeting, with reference to the general criticisms of conferences held in delightful spots raised by Ashton and Morris (2000) and already discussed in a commentary in the APJCP (Moore, 2000).

Decisions were therefore made regarding clearly spelled out outcome measures:

a) Decide who and what for the APOCP/APJCP

With regard to the target membership for the APOCP and the audience for the journal, it was proposed that these should be viewed as widely as possible while limiting the influence of industry which might have conflicting interests, like the tobacco case.

Target Members and Audience

Primary Prevention: Education, Epidemiology and Toxicological Pathology

Secondary Prevention: Screening and Clinical Intervention

Target Members and Audience

Secondary Prevention: Screening and Clinical Intervention
b) Decide the structure of the APOCP

Regarding the essential officials for the APOCP, Kazuo Tajima, Malcolm Moore and Petcharin Srivatanakul were respectively unanimously elected as the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. In addition it was proposed that a constitution be drawn up governing the actions of the Organization and providing for roles for country representatives in its direction.

c) Decide the practice and policy of the APJCP

Participating members were asked to give comments on the journal and its policy. One suggestion was that the countries of the Asian Pacific region should be highlighted on the cover. There appeared to be general agreement that the emphasis should continue to be on mini-reviews together with research communications. Provisionally the journal will be quarterly, although if there is an appreciable increase in the number of papers submitted it might be necessary to adopt a bimonthly schedule. Stress was laid on the Chief and managing Editors doing all in their power to apply for recognition by Medline and other international abstracting services as soon as possible.

d) Decide on the what types of membership there should be for the APOCP/APJCP

The categories proposed are: Personal - Institution - Research Group - Industrial - Government

d) Decide on the future direction of the APOCP/APJCP

As the next stage in establishing the APOCP it was proposed that an Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention Training Center be set up, located in Bangkok, Thailand, for geographical, logistic and financial reasons. The aims were formulated as follows:

The Asian Pacific Centre for Cancer Prevention (APCCP) is to act as a focal point to facilitate and coordinate activities of the Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention (APOCP).

Its main responsibilities are:

1. Produce the Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention (APJCP), provide translations of abstracts and supervise distribution of APOCP publications.
2. Periodically provide courses in practical aspects of cancer prevention.
3. Organise workshops and publication of updates in aspects of cancer prevention.
4. Provide courses for Scientific English Language Acquisition for workers in cancer prevention.
5. Offer a comprehensive publication service for those interested in furthering information exchange and collaboration between scientists active in the different areas of cancer prevention.
6. Maintain a library and contacts with other publishers, including IARC Press, to facilitate information access.
4) Conference financing and payments should be totally transparent

In line with the necessity for total transparency regarding the financial backing for the APOCP and the Founding Conference, Malcolm Moore provided a breakdown of the support received through 2000, with generous donations by Nobuyuki Ito and Kazuo Tajima, and contributions from the Japanese specialist editors of the APJCP, and the journal management. Special thanks are due to the Japanese UICC Committee for providing financial support specifically for the Founding Conference, and for the industrial members listed in the journal. In addition, thanks are due to Petcharin Srivatanakul, ?? and ?? of the National Cancer Institute, Thailand, for their assistance at the meeting. The President of the meeting would like to express his warmly appreciation to Hiroyuki Tsuda for the photographs illustrated here, and Malcolm Moore for his help with the organization of the Founding Conference and in drafting this report. Finally, many thanks also to all of the scientists from around the region, and Drs Parkin and Ohshima from IARC, who participated in this effort to launch our APOCP on its voyage in the new millenium. There is no doubt: ‘The APOCP and Regional Collaboration for Cancer Prevention’ was a fitting beginning for a very active role in the future.

References
