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## EDITORIAL

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# Postponement of the 2001 APOCP Conference - Apologies and Overcoming a Setback - Making the APJCP Available to Libraries of Medical Universities and Research Institutes across the Region

### Problems

Given the prevailing economic conditions, even in advanced industrialized countries like Japan, it is unfortunately the case that libraries of research institutes and medical universities are under great pressure to reduce the burden of journal subscriptions. Irrespective of the price, a new journal has therefore very little if any possibility of receiving a subscription. The situation is further complicated by the emphasis placed on the citation index and listing in Medline and other abstracting services. With new journals this hampers considerably their attempts to become established. In the first few years they need considerable financial support, either from a publishing house viewing the long-term, or some other sponsor. In the case of the APJCP, funded entirely by the APOCP membership, our main aim for the present is to continue to publish and gradually develop a readership and reputation.

It is therefore particularly unfortunate that for reasons of finance we have had to postpone the First General Assembly Conference of the Asian Pacific Organization for Cancer "Inflammation and Cancer" in conjunction with a UICC Symposium "Asian Cancer Prevention - Today and Tomorrow", originally scheduled for November of this year in Nagoya, Japan. It was hoped that this opportunity would allow us to cement the relationships formed at the Founding Conference in Pattaya in 2000 (see Deerasamee, 2000) and establish a firm foundation for our future efforts including access to relevant libraries. A conference at this time would especially have provided industry with a view to potential benefits of working together with the APOCP and advertising in the APJCP. It would also have been a valuable stimulus to building up the necessary membership in Japan to ensure continued success.

### Apology

It is therefore with many regrets that we hereby apologise for our inability to stage the meeting and for having caused disappointment to those who had planned to take part. We also wish to emphasise that all responsibility is borne by ourselves alone and that the other members of the organizing committee deserve no criticism.

### Solution

At the same time we wish to reassure interested parties that the meeting will definitely take place in 2002 (October 6-8th), hopefully with greater success because of the possibility of more comprehensive planning. We must, however, still find a solution to the major problem that still confronts us regarding distribution of our journal to the libraries where it can find an appropriate audience. If people do not know we exist then they clearly will not join our cooperative effort.

One means that has been adopted by journals to overcome the gap between the rich and poor countries in terms of information flow (Godlee et al., 2000) is to make available access to their electronic editions to scientists in the developing countries for free (Williamson, 2001). The APJCP would of course make use of this approach, given the wherewithal for going electronic. For the moment, however, this must remain a future option.

Another possibility that we are pursuing is to provide a number of copies free to the WHO regional offices in New Delhi and Manila and have them distribute to the libraries which they supply with WHO documentation on a regular basis. Clearly this would allow access to individuals in many countries of the world to which we cannot send the APJCP because of the prohibitive costs of postage (four times the cost of publication), but negotiations have proved to progress only very slowly and the outcome is uncertain. If interested parties would get in touch with WHO representatives in their countries directly to ask for this type of support it would be greatly appreciated.

We are also endeavouring to ally ourselves with other organizations interested in one or other aspect of cancer prevention and are hoping that it might be possible for the APJCP to become one of the official journals of the International Association of Cancer Registries, for example. No fewer than three of the papers included in the present issue are based on cancer registration data and we clearly would welcome playing an increasingly role in furthering the efforts of individuals involved in registries across the region (Gajalakshmi et al., 2001; Ngoan et al., 2001; Yeole, 2001). Similarly, we would be very interested in any opportunities to develop closer ties to those groups active in

**Table. Medical Schools and Cancer Registration Centres in Selected Asian Countries**

Country	Medical Schools	Registration Centres
Turkey	19	1
Israel	2	6
Egypt	11	NA
Saudi Arabia	1	1
Iran	9	2
Pakistan	2	2
India	56	6
Thailand	7	4
Vietnam	4	2
Indonesia	20	2
China	14	16
Korea	13	4
Japan	42	10
Malaysia	2	2
Mongolia	2	1
Philippines	10	4

NA: Not available, Data from “World of Learning, 1997”: Europa Publications Limited 1996, and the APJCP Supplement, “Cancer Registration in Asia in the year 2000, Past, Present and Future”, 2001

tobacco control and screening programs.

The situation now is that we have established an APOCP Japan which is gathering members who are willing to subscribe to the journal and provide the necessary financing for baseline publication. By supplying extra copies to our Japanese members we are hoping to be able to penetrate the Medical School Libraries across Japan who would otherwise have limited coverage of cancer prevention research (Moore, 2000). We are happy that Dr Soeripto in Indonesia and Dr Maqsood Siddiqi in India are actively taking on the responsibilities for setting up similar country based groups which might allow us to use relatively inexpensive national mail systems and save on costs by dispatching the APJCP internationally in bulk for each member state.

Ideally we will be able to set up an APOCP organization within each of the major countries of the Asian region who can then ensure that people in their research and public health communities become aware of the existence of the APJCP and have an opportunity to join its readership. An idea of the task that we have to perform can be gained from the Table, listing the number of Medical School Libraries and Cancer Registration groups which we should aim for as a minimum for our distribution.

This list is by no means complete since many of the institutions in question are not included in our source book. Furthermore, research institutes are excluded whether governmental or private, The very nature of the problems in generating a comprehensive list underlines the necessity for local input, the necessary information only being available to the body of scientists active within any one country. We

therefore appeal for your assistance in this effort.

We would like to stress that this is a non-profit making, non-government organization run on a volunteer basis. If you feel that the aims of the APOCP are worthwhile and the publication of the APJCP, warrants your help, then we appeal to you to join with your compatriots in forming a group to help ensure that the journal somehow finds its way into the libraries where it will have most impact.

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