

MSPP NEWSLETTER

July 2022



Editorial Message

Dear MSPP Members,

While writing this message nearing the end of our 2020/2022 term, I think back to the time when the committee was first elected. The MSPP Scientific Meeting in 2020 was postponed, hence the Annual General Meeting (AGM) during that year was held on its own, and for the first time held virtually on 10th of December 2020. Fast forward 2 years later, we are still via online platform. Not complaining though, as there are obviously huge advantages joining virtual meetings. Logistics and distance are no longer an issue, and we can join the sessions in the comfort of our own place 🏠💻

Throughout the past term, most of our programs were conducted virtually; we have successfully organized the 34th MSPP Scientific Meeting 2021, MSPP Young Investigator Award 2021, MSPP Young Teacher's Award 2021, MSPP Lecture Series, MSPP Refresher Course, Community Outreach Programs and MSPP Network Initiative, all through online platforms. The term will be closed with our MSPP Young Investigator and Young Teacher's Award 2022, and the 35th MSPP Scientific Meeting to be hosted by UiTM.

That being said, I'm pretty sure that we all missed mingling and chatting during coffee breaks, and making new friends and networking over lunch. Perhaps, hybrid mode is the way to go for future programs, as I look forward to meet eye-to-eye with all MSPP members very soon 🙏🙏

Don't forget to attend our 48th Annual General Meeting on the 26th July 2022 in conjunction with the 35th MSPP Scientific Meeting, to elect your next MSPP office bearers 🗣️

Till then, take care & stay safe! ❤️



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Izuddin Fahmy Abu
izuddin@unikl.edu.my

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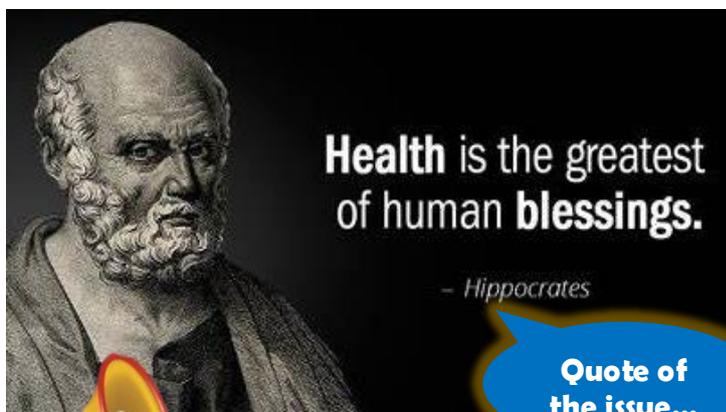
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 <http://www.mspp.com.my/>

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 [mspp.secretariat](#)



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Send your articles/write-up to us at:
mspp.secretariat@gmail.com

MSPP President's Special Feature



Academic Excellence in Malaysia

When talking about excellence in academia, we want everyone on board because we want to be different, we want to make a difference, we want to be talked about as the greatest example in history that was different and made an impact toward achieving excellence. 'We' refers to everyone in academia – public and private higher learning institutions – true there are some things we can't, and we may not want to share – not because of rivalry but because it keeps driving the competition to be the best going. Being excellent, like most things if not all, starts with a dream and it's the same with academic excellence – starts with a dream, heading assertively towards reality. Allow me to talk about a few things that matter to me and perhaps, my other friends in academia.

We aspire to have as many leaders of academic excellence. All of us here in the auspicious hall of academia laced with the spirit of achieving the best are at different levels of leadership which puts us in different roles. I am fascinated by human beings. What drives the world to move forward - is knowledge and the application of it and what is best to do this, if not at higher education, where opportunities are abound - at the leading edge to steer our community, individuals to drive the country forward which inspire me to do medicine and to be in higher education as my choice of profession. I chose pharmacology as I was fascinated by drugs. A scientist chooses science because we want to make it our profession, career, and passion.

Oscar Wilde once said that "Success is a science, if you have the conditions, you get the results". I prefer to make an amendment to this quote which reads as "Science drives success, if you *don't* have the conditions to get the results, we must have the motivation to find or create the conditions to get the results".

To create these conditions like the many paths in life, we cannot get through just by being alone- not only is it lonely but it's impossible. We need to work in a team, we need mentors, we need friends, we need not do everything ourselves each time - we must work or associate with brilliant people. Team up and get into teams within the country or outside the country. Always be open and receptive to questions but avoid the naysayers, cynics, and sceptics.

How can research and science drive industries, construct policies and change clinical guidelines – when we do this, then we can say Malaysians are not just recipients of development but a place where people are keen invest their time, knowledge and money. We must aim to be the ones that give birth to new ideas that can be industrialised, be part of the global community of brilliant people to deprescribe instead of prescribing medicines all the time. There is no fun or gratification in that. On top of that, we need to have ideas and the zeal or will to convert ideas into reality. We must be in the forefront of shaping clinical guidelines, propel industries forward and be known to the world that we have diligent and brilliant people in Malaysia. Be the investigator to initiate and lead clinical trials – be part of clinical trial but get a sizable number of patients and not just a handful then you'll be known and now people outside the country will want to work with you, industries will be looking for you. Convert ideas to realities – I think these are very important points in one's life.

To be great doctors and academicians, amongst other things we must have a dream and a heart of gold. I believe empathising with those in need is the core of human nature. Helping others gives us great joy and this is why we venture into this field. There are many ways to help and educate the community with information and provide them with choices. It need not be something huge to some but definitely impactful for others. For example, for a long time, we have been told that eating small meals 6 time a day has been said to be good for people with diabetes but when we know that science does not support this, we must be receptive and brave enough to make the change that would help our community. If not us, then who?

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We didn't know and some may still not know that not only diabetes mellitus type 2 can go into remission but also reverse or prevent the progression of its complications like fatty liver, diabetic kidney disease and others. We must progress and not regress. Medicine involves lifelong learning which means we have to unlearn, rethink and relearn. Only by doing so, we will not be left behind.

Next, what drives us to be involved in initiatives of sustainable development goals or SDG? SDG really is to bring value and meaning to higher education, to convert substance to forms. SDGs focus on big or small issues so long as it brings meaning to the community. We can't let just the people in the UN talk about world peace, harmony, hygiene, clean water, climate change and health, we too must play our part. Universities can lead SDG but we in the community of academia can realise them.

This is a very convenient way for us to bring the common man on board, so that each and every one of us have an important role to contribute or play in shaping the future. Together we say "it's" my house and I should be looking after my house and this house – what is bigger than my house, bigger than our village, district, county, country our city is the world but if everyone takes care of their own houses, the future will be brighter.

Academic excellence starts with having a desire to be excellent. We must have the desire to be different, make a difference, go beyond, be profound. We must all thrive, not just survive if we want to be spectacular, not just regular. This is what excites me in academia.

*By Prof. Dr. Nafeeza Mohd Ismail
MSPP President 2020/22
nafeeza06@hotmail.com*

MSPP Upcoming Signature Events

**MSPP
YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD
2022**

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE:

- Age 40 or younger on December 31 of the year during which the award is presented.
- Member of Malaysian Society of Physiology and Pharmacology (MSPP).
- Conducting research in any area of physiology or pharmacology.
- Currently domiciled and conducting research in Malaysia.

REQUIREMENTS DURING SUBMISSION:

- A full-length curriculum vitae, including the list of all publications (including IF of the journals in which articles have been published) and research grants.
- Total citations in the last three years.
- A synopsis of not more than 500 words on the research, its significance or its potential benefit to the society.
- Scopus ID, ORCID ID, Google Scholar ID must be provided on submission.
- Supporting letters from TWO (2) referees who are working within the disciplines of physiology or pharmacology.

EVALUATION:

- Evaluation will be made by the MSPP Young Investigator Award Committee that will be appointed by the MSPP EXCO.
- Shortlisted candidates will be notified in advance of the MSPP 35th Scientific Meeting 2022.
- All shortlisted candidates **MUST register to attend MSPP 35th Scientific Meeting 2022.**
- All shortlisted candidates will be required to make a 10-minute presentation (pre-recorded video) and 10-minute Q&A (live session) at MSPP 35th Scientific Meeting 2022.
- Evaluation shall include feedback from the MSPP Young Investigator Award Committee and the judges following the presentation at MSPP 2022.

SUBMISSION:

- Submission for participation is by nomination from either the head of institute/department, or another colleague from the same or any other institute, or self-nomination.
- Submission has to be made before the 17th of JULY 2022.

REGISTRATION FEE
NO FEE

FORMAT
20 MINUTES OF PRE-RECORDED TEACHING VIDEO
10 MINUTES OF LIVE Q&A SESSION

LIVE JUDGING SESSION: 21ST JULY 2022 (THURSDAY)
9.00 am - 1.00 pm
Physiology - Breakout Room 1
Pharmacology - Breakout Room 2 **zoom**

REGISTRATION DEADLINE
17TH July 2022

REGISTER NOW!
<https://tinyurl.com/msppya2022>

All submissions for MSPP Young Investigator Award 2022 must be forwarded to:

MSPP Young Investigator Award Committee
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Roslina Abdul Rahim
Kulliyah of Medicine,
International Islamic University Malaysia
e-mail: roslinaar@iiu.edu.my
Office Number: 09-5704414

MSPP 35th SCIENTIFIC MEETING 2022
From Omics To Organism : Linking Basic Research With Healthcare Enhancement
26-28th JULY 2022
<https://medicine.uitm.edu.my/mspp35thscientificmeeting/index.php>

**MSPP
YOUNG TEACHER'S AWARD
2022**

AIM
To promote excellence in pharmacology and physiology teaching amongst young MSPP members.

CRITERIA
MSPP members who are a PhD holder with not more than 5 years teaching experience.

TOPICS
PHYSIOLOGY
Ventilation and Perfusion
PHARMACOLOGY
Current Modalities Treatment for Asthma

REGISTRATION FEE
NO FEE

FORMAT
20 MINUTES OF PRE-RECORDED TEACHING VIDEO
10 MINUTES OF LIVE Q&A SESSION

LIVE JUDGING SESSION: 21ST JULY 2022 (THURSDAY)
9.00 am - 1.00 pm
Physiology - Breakout Room 1
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REGISTRATION DEADLINE
17TH July 2022

REGISTER NOW!
<https://tinyurl.com/msppya2022>

MSPP Networking Initiative

The first MSPP Networking initiative was held on the 13th of May 2022. It was a virtual event hosted on Zoom, and was attended by 8 MSPP members from various universities all over the country. We actually had 19 registrations, but only 8 attended on the actual day. The event was entitled “Bringing Medical Education to Life: Using Digital Technology in the classroom”, and aimed to combine 2 elements – a chance for the participants to listen to brief updates on current topics in medical education as well as to network and share ideas.

This format and theme for this event came about based on the results of a survey conducted earlier in 2021, which showed that our members were keen to have opportunities to network, and also to get updates on various topics of interest. Among all the topics polled, about 45% of respondents indicated an interest in medical education hence our choice of topic for this inaugural session.

The event was co-hosted by Monash University with 2 speakers from the Monash Malaysia School of Medicine giving short talks. Associate Professor Arkendu Sen shared some cutting edge technology currently being incorporated into medical education in his talk on “Applications of Augmented Reality in Medical Education”, while Dr Priya Pusparajah shared “Making the most of interactive polling in the classroom”.

The event ran from 2.30 – 4pm and was accredited 1 CPD point by the Malaysian Medical Association. The event was graced by our President, Professor Nafeeza Mohd Ismail who graciously agreed to give a short opening speech to start things off.

MSPP Networking Series

A virtual event
Free for MSPP members
Non MSPP members: RM 20

13th May 2022
2.30-4.00pm

1 CPD point will be awarded

Bringing medical education to life: Digital technology in the classroom

Applications of augmented reality in medical education
Associate Professor Arkendu Sen, Monash University Malaysia.

Making the most of interactive polling technology in the classroom
Dr Priya Pusparajah, Monash University Malaysia.

Talks will be followed by break out room sessions for further discussion and networking opportunities



The 2 speakers then gave their talks for approximately 15 minutes each, following which all participants were invited to participate in an open discussion and networking for the remaining time. We had some interesting questions and answers and got to hear from the members who attended what sort of digital technology they are using and the discussion among all was very helpful to provide ideas of what else can be done moving forward in this space.

Hopefully this will only be the first networking event and more will be organized around different topics in the future to bring our members together and encourage more collegiality and collaboration.

By Assoc. Prof. Dr. Priya Pusparajah
priya.pusparajah@monash.edu



MAPEL LAB @ School of Medicine, Monash Malaysia

A suite of AR educational tools were developed at Monash Malaysia

- MARALO: Monash Augmented Reality Anatomical Learning Objects (MARALO):**
 - Mobile based high resolution AR rendered anatomical and pathological cadaveric specimens
- CAROPE: Clinical Augmented Reality Objects in Physical Examination**
 - superimpose body organs and skin manifestations of clinical signs.

MSPP Undergraduate Student Chapter Program

This is a first and foremost program held by MSPP that recruits potential undergraduate candidates to serve as MSPP undergraduate representatives for academic events and programs organized by this society. The aim of this program is to provide information, support and resources to help students and college officials share knowledge and have successful academic, extracurricular and research experiences; and also aids in the mission by which the ambassadors could provide their time, assistance and influence for MSPP initiatives.

Aligned with current curricular needs in developing students beyond their academic achievements; those that join will benefit from leadership opportunities, professional networking and development, community outreach experience and working with a diverse population.

Through this initiative, apart from building up their transferable skills, we hope these programs can create awareness and provide early exposure to undergraduate students who are interested in research and wish to enhance their knowledge in the related field of interest.

Good news for those keen, the joining fee is waived for the student ambassadors as well as other students joining the society. They may also participate in the society in several ways, including attending our annual scientific meetings and physiology and pharmacology refresher courses.

Up to date, we received 13 potential interested candidates from several local universities with MBBS and health sciences-related backgrounds. We hope this program brings benefits for the students as well as the society and we are looking for more potential candidates in the future. More activities await!

By **Dr. Noor Azlina Abu Bakar**
noorazlina@unisza.edu.my



Assoc. Prof Dr. Wan Amir Nizam Wan Ahmad
wanamir@usm.my



ITS OPEN NOW!

DO YOU HAVE WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BECOME A LEADER

INTRODUCING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

GET TO KNOW MSPP HERE

MSPP.COM.MY

REGISTER HERE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Is a program that recruit potential undergraduate candidates to serves as MSPP undergraduate representative for important academics events and programs. This program aids in the mission by which ambassadors could providing their time, assistance and influence for MSPP initiatives.

BUILD IMPORTANT SKILLS

- Leadership
- Professional networking & development
- Resume & carrier prospect
- Build up transferable skills for future such as Communication skills, Confidence, Presentation skills, Public speaking & Ability to work in a team effectively.

INCENTIVES

- Bursaries attending MSPP Scientific Meeting and Courses.

Leadership

Motivation **Goals** **Success** **Contribution** **Teamwork** **Support**

MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF PHARMACOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY (MSPP)

MSPP NEWSLETTER

July 2022



35th MSPP Scientific Meeting 2022 (Final Announcement)



MALAYSIAN SOCIETY
OF PHARMACOLOGY
AND PHYSIOLOGY
(MSPP)



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
MARA

MSPP 2022

35th Annual Scientific Meeting for Malaysian Society of Pharmacology and Physiology (MSPP)

FROM OMICS TO ORGANISM: LINKING BASIC
RESEARCH TO HEALTHCARE ENHANCEMENT

<https://bit.ly/MSPP2022Home>

OFFICIATING SPEECH

by Prof Dato' Dr Husaini Omar
(Director-General of Higher Education)



KEYNOTE SPEECH

by Prof. Emerita Datin Dr. Asma Ismail
(President, Academy of Sciences Malaysia and
Ibnu Sina Professorial Chair in Medicine, IIUM)



26-28 JULY 2022

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
via  **Airmeeet**

[https://bit.ly/
MSPP2022register](https://bit.ly/MSPP2022register)



REGISTRATION FEES
Registration ends on **15 July 2022**

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✉ mspp@uitm.edu.my

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MSPP 2022

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

DAY 1 (26 JULY 2022)

TIME	PROGRAMME
08:00 - 08:30	Registration
08:30 - 09:15	Opening Ceremony Welcome Remark by Prof. Dr. Nafeeza Mohd Ismail President of the MSPP Opening Remark by Prof. Ts Dr. Roziah Mohd Janor Vice-Chancellor, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia Officiating Speech by Prof Dato' Dr Husaini Omar Director-General of Higher Education, Malaysia
09:15 - 10:15	Keynote Lecture TBA Prof. Emerita Datuk Dr. Asma Ismail President, Academy of Sciences Malaysia and Ibnu Sina Professorial Chair in Medicine, IIUM, Malaysia
10:15 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 - 11:30	Plenary I Recognizing the role of leptin in disease Prof Dr. Harbindar Jeet Singh <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i>
	Symposium 1: Natural Products Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mahmoud Ahmed Alafeefy
	Symposium 2: Neuroscience Chairperson: Prof. Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Abdul Majeed
11:30 - 11:55	Carbonic anhydrases inhibitors: Theragnostic agents for hypoxic tumor Prof. Dr. Claudiu T. Supuran <i>University of Florence, Italy</i>
	The role of dopamine in therapeutic effects of deep brain stimulation Prof. Dr. Javad Mirnajafi-Zadeh <i>Tarbiat Modares University, Iran</i>
11:55 - 12:20	Characterisation of Asean Honey & its potential Medicinal Benefits: A sustainable research Prof. Dr. Gan Siew Hua <i>Monash University, Malaysia</i>
	The role of PKC epsilon-mTORC2 interactions in alcohol withdrawal-induced hyperexcitability Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jaya Kumar Murthy <i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia</i>
12:20 - 12:45	Parkia speciosa Hassk.: A potential phytomedicine for cardiovascular disease Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kamisah Yusof <i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia</i>
	Disease-modifying drugs in Alzheimer's disease: what's on the horizon? Prof. Dr. Igor Iezhitsa <i>International Medical University, Malaysia</i>
12:45 - 13:10	Product development of natural products: Facing-up to the challenges Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurazlina Abdul Karim <i>Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia</i>
	Bisphenol A and memory function: Is BPA predominantly related to behavior? Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosfaizah Siran <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i>
13:15 - 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 - 14:45	Plenary II Current state of omics in gastrointestinal disorders Prof. Dr. Raja Affendi Raja Ali <i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia</i>
14:45 - 16:15	Young Investigator Award Presentations
16:15 - 17:00	Tea Break
17:00 - 19:00	MSPP Annual General Meeting
19:00	End of Day 1

MSPP 2022

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

DAY 2 (27 JULY 2022)

TIME	PROGRAMME	PROGRAMME	PROGRAMME
	Oral presentation Session 1	Oral presentation Session 2	Oral presentation Session 3
08:00 – 10:00			
09:00 – 09:45	Plenary III Adjuvanted protein-based COVID-19 vaccine: opportunities for broad and long-term protection Prof. Dr. Igor Smolenov <i>Senior Vice President, Global Clinical Development, Clover Biopharmaceuticals, USA</i>		
09:45 – 10:30	Plenary IV Renal function and other parameters in patients with diabetic kidney disease following a low carbohydrate diet - a pilot study Prof. Dr. Nafeeza Mohd Ismail <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i>		
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break		
11:00 – 12:45	Symposium 3: Reproductive Physiology Chairperson: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Damayanthi Durairajanayagam		Symposium 4: Open & Distance Learning (ODL) Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Nor Ashikin Mohamed Noor Khan
	11:00 – 11:30	11:00 – 11:25	11:00 – 11:25
	Male Reproductive Abnormalities Associated With Diabetes Mellitus: Role Of Propolis In Animal Study Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mahaneem Mohamed <i>Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia</i>	Teaching Physiology Online - A Sharing Experience Dr. Rafidah Hod <i>Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia</i>	
	11:30 – 12:00	11:25 – 11:50	11:25 – 11:50
	TBA Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuraliza Abdul Satar <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i>	Flexibility in Online Team-based Learning: A Sharing Experience Dr. Noor Akmal Shareela Ismail <i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia</i>	
	12:00 – 12:30	11:50 – 12:15	11:50 – 12:15
	Understanding paternal factors in recurrent pregnancy loss through the proteome profile of seminal extracellular vesicles Prof. Dr. Luna Samanta <i>Ravenshaw University, India</i>	Taking case based integrated physiology and pharmacology teaching online: experiences and outcomes Dr. Priyia Pusparajah <i>Monash University, Malaysia</i>	
		12:15 – 12:40	12:15 – 12:40
		Online Physiology laboratories support students conceptual learning and research skills development Assoc. Prof. Dr. Julia Choate <i>Monash University, Australia</i>	
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch Break Symposium 5: Regenerative Medicine Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Ahmad Nazrun Shuid		Symposium 6: Drug Discovery Chairperson: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Krasilnikova
14:15 – 14:45	Multifunctional-Natural Biomaterials for Cutaneous Tissue Engineering: Conventional Vs Additive Manufacturing Technology Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Fauzi Mh Busra <i>Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia</i>		Development of novel uracil derivatives as potential antiviral agents Prof. Dr. Mikhail Novikov, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elena Gureeva <i>Volgograd State Medical University, Russia</i>
14:45 – 15:15	Immune modulation as a therapeutic strategy in bone regeneration Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurul Asma Abdullah <i>Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia</i>		Collaborative discovery of the magic bullet targeting pancreatic cancer Dr. Mai Chun Wai <i>Shanghai Jiao Tong University affiliated Renji Hospital, China</i>
15:15 – 15:45	Precision biomaterial design for sustainable TERM Prof. Dr. Antonella Motta <i>University of Trento, Italy</i>		Safety and efficacy of an rAd26 and rAd5 vector-based heterologous prime-boost COVID-19 vaccine (Gam-COVID-Vac, Sputnik V) Prof. Dr. Sergey Zyryanov Assoc. Prof. Dr. Olga Butranova, <i>RUDN, Russia</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Oral presentation Session 1	Oral presentation Session 2	Oral presentation Session 3
17:00	End of Day 2		

MSPP 2022

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

DAY 3 (28 JULY 2022)

TIME	PROGRAMME
08:30 - 09:30	Poster Rapid Fire Session (10 presentationS)
09:30 - 10:15	Plenary V Pharmacology of the endothelium; Linking laboratory to clinical practice Prof. Dr. Aida Hanum Ghulam Rasool <i>Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia</i>
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 - 12:00	Forum Current Trends in Pharmacology and Physiology Education Moderator : Dr. Nurul Alimah Abdul Nasir <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i> Panelists : Prof. Dr. Nafeeza Mohd Ismail <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i> Dr. Htet Htet <i>International Medical University, Malaysia</i> Dr. Mona Mohamed Ibrahim Abdalla <i>International Medical University, Malaysia</i>
12:00 - 13:00	Gold Sponsor Talk by BPS Assessment
13:00 - 13:30	Closing Ceremony Awarding Ceremony Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anna Krasilnikova <i>Head of the Scientific Committee of MSPP2022</i> Closing Remarks by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fazah Akhtar <i>Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia</i> & Dr Muhammad Huzaimi Haron <i>Chairperson of MSPP2022</i>
13:30	End of Day 2

NOTICE ON THE 48TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF PHARMACOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Please be informed that the 48th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Malaysian Society of Pharmacology and Physiology (MSPP) is scheduled as follows;

Date : 26th July 2022 (Tuesday)
Time : 5.00 – 7.00 p.m.
Venue : Airmeeet platform (link will be emailed near to the AGM date)

The agenda of the AGM are as follows:

1. President's address
2. Confirmation of minutes for the 47th AGM 2021
3. Secretary report
4. Treasury report
5. Election
6. Matters arising

MSPP Executive Committee 2020/2022 Thank You Notes



Prof. Dr. Nafeeza Mohd Ismail
MSPP President, 2020/22

The purpose of our MSPP Lecture Series (previously known as Global Lecture Series) is to share the vast and interesting knowledge from various fields, while providing a sense of community, allowing the opportunity for faculty from various disciplines to gather, and providing faculty the chance to learn about other disciplines. In the past two years, MSPP has organised 6 lectures given by outstanding speakers from universities such as Harvard. In future, depending on the topic, MSPP can open the series to the community and the public providing an opportunity for all to listen to experts speak on a variety of issues, offering a platform for intellectual discourse and lifelong learning. It is hoped that members will actively participate in this venture as speakers or participants.

Realising the disconnect or the gap between knowledge, old or new generated by current research, the society also launched our Outreach Program to somewhat narrow the gap and bring the public up to speed to better understand their health. The outreach program is conducted for public in simple language to allow for everyone to understand. In the past two years, the society has conducted three such programs. The feedback from the identified community has been good. Technology is put to good use as the talks are delivered online with public listening from the comforts of their home or they are gathered in a community hall or religious venues.

I would like to express my great pride in the strides the MSPP has taken and regretfully announce my decision not to contest once again as the President. Other academic responsibilities which require my involvement and service have led me to move away from the helm of the MSPP but that being said, I will always support the many people who have made MSPP what it is today and will continue to support the society in any way required.

Serving as the MSPP President many times over has been a humbling experience and one of the most rewarding jobs of my life. I have truly enjoyed getting to know so many of you over the years as we worked together to improve the standing of the society. I believe our efforts these past years have laid a strong foundation upon which a great many reputations of academicians and researchers will continue to be built on in years to come. I hold MSPP close to my heart and will offer my service in ways that the society needs!

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wan Amir Nizam Wan Ahmad
MSPP Vice President, 2020/22



I hold MSPP in high regard. I continue to learn about networking and leadership in the MSPP society. Events such as the Young Teacher's and Young Investigator Awards emphasised how important MSPP is to Malaysian physiology and pharmacology. With members from every state and region, MSPP has progressed its visibility on a national and international scale. Needless to say, I have appreciated having the opportunity to represent the MSPP on the exco, and I want to thank you for that. MSPP, keep up your stride!



Dr. Azlini Ismail
MSPP Secretary, 2020/22

I consider myself extremely lucky to be granted the chance to serve on the Malaysian Society of Pharmacology and Physiology's Executive Committee. The MSPP Refresher Course, MSPP Young Teacher's Award, MSPP Young Investigator's Award, and MSPP Network Initiative were just a few of the fantastic events I helped to plan for the society. Being part of this society has also expanded my networking and collaboration opportunities as well as connected me to the network of pharmacologists and physiologists across Malaysia. Looking forward to more involvement with MSPP later!

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dharmani A/P Murugan
MSPP Treasurer, 2020/22



I had the chance to serve as a part of MSPP exco for the last four years as the treasurer. This chance has given me the opportunity to meet and interact with people from other university and beyond my own research field. Being a part of the exco has allowed me to learn more about the working of a society and being a part of the activities organized by MSPP has been worthwhile and fulfilling. I am very thankful to all who have helped me throughout this journey. This rewarding feeling is something I will always cherish and I am happy being a part of MSPP.

MSPP Executive Committee 2020/2022 Thank You Notes



Dr. Nurul Alimah Abdul Nasir
MSPP Exco, 2020/22

I am grateful for the opportunities to be appointed as MSPP exco member since 2017. Through this society, I get to build networking with the pharmacologist and physiologist in Malaysia. When being appointed as MSPP exco member, I get to learn more about the society. Throughout my appointment, I get to organize or co-organize various MSPP activities such as Young Teacher's Award, Refresher Course, and Young Investigator Award. The experiences conducting those activities were truly valuable and meaningful. I wish the best for the upcoming MSPP exco members. Enjoy yourself and get the best out of this experience!

Assoc. Prof. Dr. William Lim Kiong Seng
MSPP Exco, 2020/22



I was elected as EXCO member in 2020, the first from Sarawak. I have facilitated my university staff in joining the Society and participating in MSPP2021. As a newer member myself, I suggested a mechanism for new members to be introduced to the research interests of the membership to facilitate networking. I was then assigned to be EXCO representative to our subcommittee involved in bidding to host the 16th meeting of the Asia Pacific Federation of Pharmacologists (APFP2028). We liaised with the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau and our appointed videographer to produce a video for our bid during APFP2021.



Dr. Noor Azlina Abu Bakar
MSPP Exco, 2020/22

A big thanks to MSPP for giving me the opportunity to be part of the exco team. It's a pleasure to work with wonderful colleagues and a great leader who encourages and motivates me to be active and effective, especially in managing my work and organising my time. While with MSPP, I have been given trust in conducting a new program, the undergraduate chapter. What I can say, this program not only intended to polish students' soft skills and bring benefits to those involved, but it did as well for me. I strongly hold the phrase spoken by Mrs president that having the exco position is not only putting my name on the board, but it comes with the immense responsibility that should benefit others. Not least of all, I have gained a lot of experiences, including establishing my networking and working with people other than those in my institutions. I hope I can still serve MSPP in the future.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Helmy Mokhtar
MSPP Exco, 2020/22

Firstly, I am very honoured to have the opportunity to serve as the EXCO of the Malaysian Society of Pharmacology and Physiology for two consecutive terms. Being part of the MSPP EXCO is a great opportunity for me to learn about the management of an organization. During my tenure as EXCO, I have had the chance to lead several activities, including the MSPP Young Investigator Award and the MSPP Young Teacher's Award. In addition, I am also the webmaster for the MSPP website. It is hoped that more activities can be carried out in the future that will benefit all MSPP members.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Roslina Abdul Rahim
MSPP Exco 2020/22



Alhamdulillah, I'm so blessed to be in the Malaysian Society of Pharmacology and Physiology as an Executive committee member. All the team members are outstanding and proactive. The MSPP Refresher Course 2021, MSPP Young Investigator Awards 2022 are the events that I'm involved in. I'm also honored to be the abstract reviewer for MSPP 2021. While in the society, I have managed to expand my networking and research collaborations with other universities and institutions. Insyallah looking forward to serving more for MSPP in near future.



Assoc Prof Dr. Priyia Pusparajah
MSPP Exco 2020/22

I feel very fortunate to have been part of the EXCO of the MSPP. This is my second time around, with the first being 2016/2018. Being part of the Exco for a vibrant and active society like this has been an amazing experience, especially as an opportunity to work with the incredible academics from all over Malaysia. I had the chance to lead a medical education focused networking initiative this year in response to our members' responses to a survey. Thank you MSPP for the amazing opportunities and memories.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Izuddin Fahmy Abu
MSPP Exco, 2020/22



It has been an immense pleasure to serve in the MSPP Executive Committee for two consecutive terms since 2018. I am extremely proud to sit amongst renowned academicians and researchers in the field of Pharmacology and Physiology. To have the opportunity to learn from them and contribute more actively to the society is such a blessing and humbling experience. And as the MSPP newsletter editor for this term, I thank everyone from the committee and all MSPP members for your contributions. It brings me great joy to deliver you the news and updates from our beloved society. All the best to the next MSPP office bearers for the 2022/24 term. You will surely gain an amazing experience and memories of a lifetime ♥

COVID-19 News

COVID & Smell Loss: Answers Begin to Emerge

Researchers are finally making headway in understanding how the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus causes loss of smell. A multitude of potential treatments to tackle the condition are undergoing clinical trials, including steroids and blood plasma.

Once a tell-tale sign of COVID-19, smell disruption is becoming less common as the virus evolves. A study which surveyed 616,318 people in the USA who have had COVID-19 found that, compared with those who had been infected with the original virus, people who had contracted the Alpha variant — the first variant of concern to arise — were 50% as likely to have chemosensory disruption. This probability fell to 44% for the later Delta variant, and to 17% for the latest variant, Omicron.

But the news is not all good: a significant portion of people infected early in the pandemic still experience chemosensory effects. A 2021 study followed 100 people who had had mild cases of COVID-19 and 100 people who repeatedly tested negative. More than a year after their infections, 46% of those who had had COVID-19 still had smell problems; by contrast, just 10% of the control group had developed some smell loss, but for other reasons. Furthermore, 7% of those who had been infected still had total smell loss, or ‘anosmia’, at the end of the year. Given that more than 500 million cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed worldwide, tens of millions of people probably have lingering smell problems. For these people, help can’t come soon enough. Simple activities such as tasting food or smelling flowers can be “really emotionally distressing”.

Scrambled nuclei

A clearer picture of how SARS-CoV-2 causes this disruption should help to create better therapies for the condition. Early in the pandemic, a study showed that the virus attacks cells in the nose, called sustentacular cells, that provide nutrients and support to odour-sensing neurons. Since then, clues have emerged about what happens to the olfactory neurons after infection. Researchers at Columbia University in New York City examined people who had died from COVID-19 and found that, although their neurons were intact, they had fewer membrane-embedded receptors for detecting odour molecules than usual. This was because the neurons’ nuclei had been scrambled. Normally, the chromosomes in these nuclei are organized into two compartments — a structure that enables the neurons to express specific odour receptors at high levels. But when the team looked at the autopsied neurons, the nuclear architecture was unrecognizable.

Other studies suggest why only some people experience long-term smell loss. A research team reported finding a genetic mutation in people that was associated with a greater propensity for smell or taste loss. The mutation — a change to a single ‘letter’, or base, of DNA — was found in two overlapping genes, called UGT2A1 and UGT2A2. Both encode proteins that remove odour molecules from the nostrils after they have been detected. But it’s not yet clear how SARS-CoV-2 interacts with these genes.

There is also evidence of lasting changes to the brain for people with smell loss. A study involving 785 people in the UK had their brains scanned twice. About 400 people became infected with COVID-19 between scans, so the scientists were able to observe structural changes. The COVID-19 survivors showed multiple changes, including markers of tissue damage in areas linked to the brain’s olfactory centre. It’s not clear why this was the case, but one possibility is lack of input. When input was cut off from the nose, the brain atrophies.

Treatments in testing

Many treatments are being explored, often in small clinical trials. But it’s still early days, so the only thing that most researchers recommend for now is smell training. Patients are given samples of strong-smelling substances to sniff and try to identify, with the aim of driving the restoration of olfactory signalling. However, the method seems to work only with people who have partial smell loss. That means it helps about one-third of people who experienced a chemosensory disruption after COVID-19.

To find treatments for everyone else, many researchers are exploring steroids, which reduce inflammation. COVID-19 is known to trigger extensive inflammation, which might play a part in smell disruption. So, in theory, steroids could help — but, in practice, the results have been disappointing. For instance, a study gave smell training to 100 people with post-COVID anosmia. 50 of them also received a nasal spray with the steroid mometasone furoate, while the other 50 did not. There was no significant difference in outcome between the two groups.



Another therapeutic possibility is platelet-rich plasma; this is made from patients’ own blood and is rich in biochemicals that might induce healing. A pilot study followed 7 patients who had platelet-rich plasma injected into their noses: 5 showed improvement after 3 months. Similarly, a study which followed 56 people found that platelet-rich plasma made them more sensitive to smells.

Unlike COVID-19 vaccines, which were tested at unprecedented speed because of tremendous government support, treatments for post-COVID chemosensory dysfunction are plodding along. A small study of vitamin A, which previous experiments have suggested could help with other forms of smell loss is in the early stages, and may a year before data can be analyzed and reported.