

8th AOTA Meeting in Philippines

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The Philippines Society of Nuclear Medicine and the Philippines Society of Endocrinology jointly hosted the 8th Congress of Asia Oceania Thyroid Association from 4-6 February 2007 at Manila. A total of 633 professionals belonging to nuclear medicine, endocrinology, internal medicine and other allied sciences from 28 countries of Asia, Europe, North America and Middle East Regions attended the three day congress (Figure 1). Thirty-eight distinguished speakers from 36 countries delivered plenary lectures. Besides, a total of 93 scientific papers (Oral=24; Poster=69), were also presented at various scientific sessions. The Chairman of the Organizing Committee Dr. Leilani Mercado-Asis, the Scientific Committee Chairman Dr. Emerita Barrechea and the Adviser to the Congress Prof. TOL San Luis (Figure 2) should be congratulated for producing such a wonderful scientific programme and bringing in so many speakers of outstanding quality to deliver invited lectures at the congress. The meeting by all standards was a great success, both academically and scientifically. However one thought that the distribution of scientific topics could have been more balanced. Thyroidology is a science with stake-holders from a number of clinical, para-clinical and laboratory medicine specialties like endocrinology, nuclear medicine, surgery, biochemistry, pathology, immunology, biotechnology, etc. However the meeting in Manila appeared to be too much biased towards Endocrinology. There were few lectures on radionuclide therapy and too few on surgical management. Secondly it was the meeting of the Asia Oceania Thyroid Association. But there were very few participants from Asian countries. Only a handful of countries from Asia

were represented in the meeting, these included countries like Japan, Korea, Singapore and Indonesia. India with a billion people was represented by only one person, while there was probably none from China. Overall it appeared that AOTA as an organization does not really represent the whole of Asia. It is hoped that the leaders of the AOTA would take appropriate steps to attract more countries and people of the Asia region to its fold to make it a more vibrant and truly Asian Professional Society. That would help AOTA to address some of the teething problems related to thyroid and thyroid disorders more effectively and promote the Science of Thyroidology among the clinicians and scientists of the region in a more meaningful way.

The Asia Oceania Thyroid Association (AOTA) has a history of more than three decades since its establishment in 1975. The AOTA is structured so as to foster scientific and educational activities relating the thyroid, from basic science to clinical investigation and new therapies. A lot of credit for the recent success story of AOTA should go to its very dynamic President, Prof. Junji Konishi of Japan (Figure 3). It is only hoped that with his vision and strong leadership qualities AOTA will grow both in stature and standing in years to come and would become an International Organization of outstanding quality and value.

It may be noted that the World Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Council (WRPTC), a subsidiary body of World Federation of Nuclear Medicine & Biology has grown in stature in a brief period of only five years since its inception at the Santiago World Congress of WFNMB in the year 2002. The major objective of the WRPTC includes setting



Figure 1. Dr. Furio Pacini (Italy) delivering a lecture at one of the Plenary sessions of the conference



Figure 2. Members of the core organizing committee of the 8th AOTA Congress in Philippines. From left to right: Dr. Leilani Mercado-Asis (Conference Chairperson), Prof. Junji Konishi (President-AOTA), Dr. Elizabeth Pacheco (Scientific Committee), Dr. Emerita Barrenechea (Chairperson, Scientific Committee) and Prof. TOL San Luis (Advisor to the 8th AOTA organizing Committee).



Figure 3. Prof. Junji Konishi (Left), President of AOTA talking to a conference delegate.

standards for provision of radiopharmaceutical therapy worldwide and promoting the widespread use of therapeutic nuclear medicine in a cost-effective manner. Understandably application of radionuclide therapeutic procedures in the treatment of thyroid diseases remains one of our (Council's) major activities. I as the present Chairman of the WRPTC would like to join hands with AOTA in the promotion of our activities related to the management of thyroid diseases in the Asia region. I can see a lot of commonalities in our approach for identifying problems and providing solutions, related to a number of thyroid disorders. Our combined activities would synergize the outcome of our efforts resulting in bringing benefits to a large number of needy and deserving patients throughout the world in general, and in the Asian Region in particular. Once again I would like to complement AOTA for creating

an excellent scientific body and sustaining it over the years; as well as the organizers of the 8th AOTA meeting in Philippines for organizing an outstanding congress.

It may be noted that the next congress of AOTA, the 9th Asia and Oceania Thyroid Association Meeting will be held in Nagoya, Japan in the month of November 2009. I hope that the Nuclear Medicine Community from all over the world in general and from Asia in particular would participate in this congress in a big way and make the scientific content and deliberations of the congress more balanced, comprehensive and meaningful.

Prof. Ajit Kumar Padhy MD, FAMS
Editor in Chief, WJNM