Combat against cervical cancer-challenges in Asia Oceania: 5th Biennial Conference of the Asia Oceania Research Organization on Genital Infections & Neoplasia (AOGIN)

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ABOUT AOGIN

Cervical cancer poses serious threat to the life and health of women and high prevalence is observed in the Asian-Pacific region. A multi-disciplinary expert network has been developed within the region, along the lines of European Research Organization on Genital Infection and Neoplasia (EUROGIN)/European Course on HPV Associated Pathology Virus (ECHPV), as developed for Europe and, more recently, Latin America. AOGIN works with health care workers and the public, particularly those involved in women's health with the goals of collaboration and research, education and training, sharing of scientific information, surveys and audits. Asia Oceania Research Organization on Genital Infections & Neoplasia (AOGIN) brings together clinicians and scientists whose work is related to genital infections and neoplasia.

VISION AND MISSION

AOGIN's vision is to reduce the burden of disease caused by reproductive tract infections, especially human papillomavirus (HPV), in the Asia, Oceania and Pacific region. Furthermore, AOGIN's mission is to work with governments, non-governmental organisations, learned societies, health care workers and the lay public, to communicate, cooperate and share information and tools in order to reduce the burden of disease caused by reproductive tract infections, especially HPV, in the Asia, Oceania and Pacific region.

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AOGIN 2012 CONFERENCE

The theme for the 5th Biennial Conference was "Combat against cervical cancer-challenges in Asia Oceania". 797 participants from 36 countries, including 69 invited speakers from 20 countries worldwide met to discuss the latest development in issues related to cervical cancer carcinogenesis, prevention, detection and treatment during a 2 day conference held at the Li Ka Shing (LKS) Faculty of Medicine, University of Hong Kong on 14-15, July 2012. Similar to previous AOGIN biennial conferences, three pre-congress workshops took place on 13 July 2012. The colposcopy workshop, coordinated by Dr. Karen Chan and Dr. Jeffrey Tan, facilitated by Dr. Walter Prendiville, Dr. Swee-Chong Quek and Dr. Neerja Bhatla, allowed ample opportunities for interactive case discussion and hands on practice on large loop excision of the transformation zone (LLETZ) and cryotherapy on specially designed models under colposcopic guidance. The cytology workshop, coordinated by Dr. Philip Ip and Dr. Annabelle Farnsworth had 7 talks on various aspects of cytological and HPV testing followed by an afternoon of clinic-pathological conference. The oncosurgical workshop, coordinated by Dr. KF Tam and professor Sheng Keng provided a good platform for sharing of surgical techniques for cervical and vulval cancer with video demonstration.

The main conference kicked off with the keynote lecture given by professor Harald zur Hausen, Nobel laureate in Physiology or Medicine 2008, titled "Persistence of putative tumor-viruses in human cancer cells: mechanisms and perspectives", which gave good insight into the future identification of possible viruses as causes of various common malignancies. Professor Hextan Ngan delivered the presidential lecture highlighting the challenges of cervical cancer prevention. The conference had 7 plenary sessions and 5 sponsored symposiums, covering topics from epidemiology and carcinogenesis to prevention and management of cervical cancer as well as

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a session on infections in pregnancy. There was also an ISSVD Symposium on vulval diseases and a IARC-PATH symposium on cervical cancer prevention with HPV testing in low-resource settings. The AOGIN education session emphasized the psychosocial impact of HPV infection and cervical cancer.

Apart from offering the latest updates in all aspects of cervical cancer, the conference provided the platform for international collaboration and exchange of new research ideas and directions. Young health care workers and investigators also had much opportunity in presenting their works and ideas. There were 43 poster and 29 oral presentations. Ten prizes

were given, including 4 young investigator travel award (US \$2,000 each), 3 awards for best oral presentations (the AOGIN Dr. Jian Zhou award, the AOGIN Hong Kong award and AOFOG education award) and 3 awards for best poster presentations (AOGIN professor Harald zur Hausen Award, AOGIN Hong Kong award and AOFOG education award).

AOGIN has continued to serve its role in bringing together clinicians and scientists in the fight against genital tract diseases, particularly against cervical cancer. The next biennial conference will be held in Beijing, China in 2014.