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## ASIAN AND OCEANIAN CONGRESS OF NEUROLOGY 2014: INTRAREGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL SYNERGY

Asia, the world's largest continent, is located in the eastern and northern hemispheres and is home to approximately 4.2 billion people, 60% of the world's population. Oceania comprises the island groups within the central Pacific and south Pacific oceans and has a total population of 35.7 million. The burden of neurologic disease in Asia and Oceania is high and there is a shortage of neurologists, neurology training programs, and public awareness initiatives.

To promote education and research, and the exchange and diffusion of information and ideas relating to the nervous system on an international scale, the Asian Oceanian Association of Neurology (AOAN) was established on June 26, 1961. One of its activities has been the organization of the Asian and Oceanian Congress of Neurology (AOCN) once every 4 years. The AOCN was first held in the Nippon Teshi Center on October 7–10, 1962, under the leadership of Professor Okinaka and Charles Poser of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN). Since then, various countries have hosted the AOCN. The 12th AOCN was held in New Delhi from October 22–26, 2008, along with the 16th Annual Congress of the Indian Academy of Neurology. The 13th AOCN was held in Melbourne from June 4 to June 8, 2012, along with the Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists. The academic content and the number of delegates, representing countries from the region, have improved over the years.<sup>1,2</sup>

The 14th AOCN took place in Macao, March 2–5, 2014. This congress was organized by the Hong Kong Neurological Society and was the first biennial conference. It was spearheaded by the experienced Dr. Ping-Wing Ng, Dr. Ka Sing Lawrence Wong, and Dr. Leonard Sheung-Wai Li, and was attended by renowned national and international faculty and delegates. It provided a valuable opportunity to learn innovative advances in core neurology as well as allied subspecialties. Scientific Program Committee co-chair

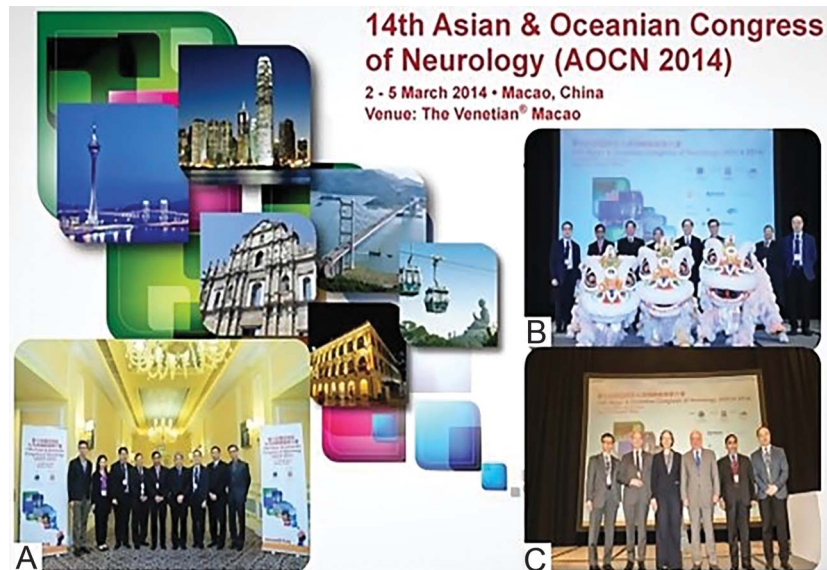
Dr. Ka Sing Lawrence Wong and Honorary AOAN Congress President, Prof. Man Mohan Mehndiratta, along with their team (figure), planned an academically rich and highly informative scientific program. Various preconference workshops were organized, such as the Movement Disorder Workshop, which was jointly organized with the Asian and Oceanian Section of the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society; the Epilepsy Workshop, which was jointly organized with the Commission for Asian Oceanian Affairs of the International League Against Epilepsy; and the Neurophysiology Workshop, jointly organized with the International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology–Asian and Oceanian Chapter. Regional and international experts conducted the teaching and hands-on programs. The workshops were beneficial for both practicing neurologists and neurology trainees.<sup>3</sup>

The preconference workshops were followed by the presidential symposium in which Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta, President of the AOAN, spoke on “Heterogeneity in Neurological Education in Asia and the Oceanian Region and the Way Forward.”<sup>4</sup> He emphasized the need for standardizing the quality of neurology training worldwide to improve the quality of patient care. He concluded that cooperation among governmental, international, and national neurology organizations is required to facilitate this standardization and that there is a need for improved health care infrastructure within the Asian and Oceanian region. Another thought-provoking presidential symposium was “Global Neurology: The Way Ahead,” by Dr. Raad Shakir, President of the WFN, who gave an overview of how the WFN serves as a link among national societies, their regional associations, and the rest of the world to foster quality neurologic services and training globally.

The AOCN 2014 espoused an intraregional (within the Asia-Oceanian region) and interregional synergy to promote the advancement of neurologic awareness and education in Asia and the Oceania

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(A) From left to right: Dr. Colin Hui-Tung Lui (local organizing committee member), Dr. Winnie Wing-Yin Wong (local organizing and scientific program committee member), Dr. Nelson Yuk-Fai Cheung (local organizing and scientific program committee member), Dr. Leonard Sheung-Wai Li (Vice President, World Federation of Neurorehabilitation [WFNR], and local organizing committee co-chair, Asian Oceanian Association of Neurology [AOAN]), Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta (President, AOAN), Dr. Chin-Ion Lei (Director, Government of Macao Special Administration Region–Health Bureau), Dr. Jonas Hon-Ming Yeung (local organizing and scientific program committee member), Dr. Wai-Sin Chan (Deputy Director, Government of Macao Special Administration Region–Health Bureau), Dr. Ping-Wing Ng (planning and local organizing committee co-chair, AOAN). (B) Opening ceremony: Asian and Oceanian Congress of Neurology (AOCN) 2014: From left to right: Dr. Jonas Hon-Ming Yeung (President, Hong Kong Neurology Society), Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta, Dr. Wai-Sin Chan, Dr. Chin-Ion Lei, Dr. Patrick Chung-Ki Li (International Advisory committee co-chair), Dr. Ping-Wing Ng (planning and local organizing committee co-chair, AOAN), Dr. Leonard Sheung-Wai Li, and Dr. Ka Sing Lawrence Wong. (C) Plenary AOCN 2014: From left to right: Dr. Ping-Wing Ng (planning and local organizing committee co-chair, AOAN), Prof. William Carroll (Vice-President, World Federation of Neurology [WFN]), Prof Stephanie Clarke (President, WFNR), Dr. Raad Shakir (President, WFN), Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta, Dr. Ka Sing Lawrence Wong.

region. The various symposia were organized through the collaboration and cooperation of various local and regional specialty societies (table).<sup>3</sup>

One of the attention-grabbing topics was “Past, Present and the Way Forward for Developing Organizations in the Asian and Oceanian Region, like the Indian Academy of Neurology.”<sup>5</sup> The President of the AOAN highlighted the role of the Indian Academy of Neurology in the structural and organizational evolution of the field of neurology in developing countries like India. Dr. Raad Shakir also presented a symposium on “Neurology in the Developing World: WFN Perspective,” urging the need to train general practitioners and paramedical staff in neurologic care, in order to help overcome the shortage of trained neurologists in developing countries.

To encourage young neurologists, 8 free paper presentation sessions were conducted, which provided a warm atmosphere and an interactive platform for exchange of experiences. A significant contribution was made by the grant-giving organization, Guangdong Yu Foundation, established on August 6, 2012, which

primarily focuses on youth participation in public welfare activities. In 2013, the Yu Foundation donated HK \$2 million to the Hong Kong Neurological Society for advancing the development of neurology. At AOCN 2014, HK \$372,950 was given in scholarship and travel grants to support neurologists from low and middle income countries in attending this congress. Ten neurologists from China, 14 from India, 2 from Indonesia, 2 from Iran, 4 from the Philippines, and 1 from Sri Lanka received a scholarship; travel grants were awarded to neurologists from Georgia, India, Mongolia, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Thus AOCN 2014 witnessed the establishment of intraregional–interregional collaboration networks. A comprehensive scientific program was prepared and executed through the dynamic contribution of experts and close synchronization with regional societies. This effort has paved the path for future meetings and also allows a direct connection between the AOAN and the regional specialty societies for the growth and development of neurology in the Asian and Oceanian region. The 15th AOCN is scheduled to be held in 2016 in Malaysia and will surely be a

**Table** Various titled symposia, reflecting collaboration within the region and with world organizations (intraregional-interregional societies), are shown below

Intraregional-interregional societies	Titled joint symposium	Topics covered
Pan-Asian Committee on Treatment and Research of Multiple Sclerosis	Multiple sclerosis	Treatment of neuromyelitis optica: update and evidence, diagnosis and clinical spectrum of neuromyelitis optica: therapeutic implications, multiple sclerosis disease-modifying therapies
Commission for Asian-Oceanian Affairs of the International League Against Epilepsy	Epilepsy	Candidacy of epilepsy surgery, presurgical evaluation, neuromodulation therapy
International Headache Society-Asian Regional Committee for Headache	Headache and pain	Headache in Asia, reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome, treatment of headache
Asian Society Against Dementia	Dementia	Familial Alzheimer disease in China, therapies for Alzheimer disease, amyloid imaging
Movement Disorder Society-Asian and Oceanian Section	Movement disorders	Pathogenesis and genetics of Parkinson disease, biomarkers of Parkinson disease, management of Parkinson disease, parkinsonism plus syndromes
World Federation of Neurorehabilitation	Neurorehabilitation	Cognitive rehabilitation, approaches to motor relearning, neurorehabilitation in developing countries
The Asian Pacific Stroke Organization	Stroke	Uncommon causes of stroke in Asia, intracerebral hemorrhage, intracranial atherosclerosis thrombolytic therapy, interventional therapy in thrombolysis of ischemic stroke, secondary stroke prevention
International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology-Asian and Oceanian Chapter	Neurophysiology	Differential diagnosis of facial palsy, electrodiagnosis of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, achievements and challenges of myasthenia gravis

resounding success with further intraregional and interregional interaction and collaboration.

By utilizing its existing and potential capabilities, along with the continuing involvement of regional and subregional organizations in conducting workshops and symposia, the AOCN can reach unprecedented heights and lessen the burden of neurologic disorders.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta conceived and designed the manuscript and conducted data acquisition and critical review of the manuscript. Dr. Ryuji Kaji reviewed the manuscript. Dr. Ka Sing Lawrence Wong reviewed the manuscript. Dr. Ping-Wing Ng reviewed the manuscript. Dr. Natasha Singh Gulati redrafted the manuscript and conducted the database search.

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#### DISCLOSURE

M. Mehndiratta is President of the Asian and Oceanian Association of Neurology. R. Kaji is Chair of the Asia Initiative, WFN. K. Wong,

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