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Dr. Fang Seng Kheong,  
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Dr. Muiz Mahyudin,  
MSJOC’s Organizing  
Chairperson

## Recent MSO Meeting Highlights the Importance of Paramedical Staff in Providing Basic Eye Care in East Malaysia

One of the longest running ophthalmic meetings in Southeast Asia, the Malaysia-Singapore Joint Ophthalmic Congress is alternately hosted by the Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology (MSO) and the Singapore Society of Ophthalmology (SSO).

This year hosted by MSO, the recently concluded 31st Malaysia-Singapore Joint Ophthalmic Congress (MSJOC) held in Pullman Kuching, Sarawak, highlighted the need for more ophthalmology work in East Malaysia.

MSO President, Dr. Fang Seng Kheong emphasized the significance of holding the recent meeting in Sarawak. “We hope this meeting will benefit those from East Malaysia, especially those from Sarawak and even Brunei,” said Dr. Fang.

“There are less than 20 ophthalmologists in Sarawak,” shared Dr. Kenneth Fong, Honorary Secretary of MSO. “These ophthalmologists are mainly centered around urban areas while the rural areas remain inaccessible because of geography,” he added.



Dr. Kenneth Fong (left) and Dr. Fang Seng Kheong (right)

## Role of paramedics

To address this issue, Malaysia’s Ministry of Health has set up digital fundus cameras throughout the country. Hence, retinal photography can be done remotely and graded in central locations. “But a lot of things still need to be done in person,” emphasized Dr. Fong. “This is the area where paramedics play a key role.”

Holding the meeting for the first time in the state of Sarawak was a great decision, according to Dr. Tiong Tung Hui, MSJOC organizing committee’s local chairperson. “The response was very good and very encouraging,” he said.



Dr. Muiz Mahyudin

“MSO is delighted that we were able to hold this Congress in East Malaysia, which has been long overdue,” said Dr. Muiz Mahyudin, MSJOC’s Organizing Chairperson. “By bringing together international ophthalmologists, researchers, educators and medical officers from all parts of Malaysia and Singapore, MSJOC 2016’s intent was to bring updated knowledge, research and techniques which are beneficial to all levels of eye professionals,” he added.

While MSJOC’s scientific program was outstanding, noted Dr. Tiong, the one that really stood out the most was the great response from the paramedics. The meeting in Kuching had one day allotted to paramedics, which turned out to be a strong boost to the whole congress.

A one-day Basic Eye Care program for paramedics of Sarawak and Sabah was held during the MSJOC meeting. A total of 103 participants attended (Sarawak, 55; Sabah, 26; Peninsula, 22), of whom 14 Sarawakians received travel grants from the Sarawak Convention Bureau. MSO subsidized the cost of the paramedic program by offering free registration and pen torches to all paramedic participants. The paramedic program was organized by Dr. Chin Pik Kee and Dr. Tan Niap Ming. The program included a practical session where the participants learned to perform simple procedures, including visual acuity testing, upper eyelid eversion, checking the red reflex and anterior chamber depth. The feedback on the workshop was excellent, with some participants asking to use the lectures to do their own training.

Two of the lectures can now be downloaded from the MSO website:

[Basic Eye Examination](#)

[The Red Eye](#)

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Dr. Tiong Tung Hui,  
MSJOC organizing  
committee’s local  
chairperson



“Sarawak being such a big state, a lot of the rural areas are served by paramedics,” shared Dr. Tiong. “Giving them the opportunity to come and attend a seminar for free was indeed very helpful. They were very grateful about it.”

Malaysia has a lot of area to cover and ophthalmologists in the country are just not enough. Therefore, educating the paramedics is of huge importance. “It provides a huge impact to the community and the patients as well,” added Dr. Tiong.

More importantly, the MSOJC organizers are grateful to the support of the industry for helping the society implement its programs, not just during the meeting but also in delivering community outreach programs.



## Best Free Paper and Poster Awards

Aside from the main sessions on glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, retinal diseases, retinal imaging and others sub-specialty fields in ophthalmology, the free paper and poster sessions at MSJOC 2016 were well attended and participated as well. The cost of posters made by the junior doctors was also subsidized by MSO through awarding of grants.

Among the free paper presentations, three stood out:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize** – Cash RM1,000: Cloud-based automated software for diabetic retinopathy screening and monitoring in a National Screening Program by Dr. Daniel Ting, Singapore National Eye Centre
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize** – Cash RM500: Autologous blood is as effective as Tisseel glue in conjunctival autograft surgery by Dr. Gaayathri Nadarajah, Pusat Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize** – Cash RM300: Provision of eye care in Sarawak: Comparison between hospital based and outreach cataract surgeries by Dr. Chua Lausanne, Sarawak General Hospital



Dr. Daniel Ting



Dr. Gaayathri Nadarajah



Dr. Chua Lausanne

The best poster awardees are as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize** – Cash RM500: A clinical audit to evaluate and reduce cancellation rate of cataract surgery during preoperative assessment in Hospital Bukit Mertajam by Dr. Kosyilya Arumugam, Hospital Bukit Mertajam
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize** – Cash RM300: Segamat Paediatric Eye Disease Study (SEGPAEDS) by Dr. Lakana Kumar Thavaratnam, Hospital Kuala Lumpur
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize** – Cash RM200: Evaluation of anterior segment parameters before and after scleral buckling surgery for retinal detachment by Dr. Andrew Tsai, Singapore National Eye Centre



Dr. Kosyilya Arumugam



Dr. Lakana Kumar



Dr. Andrew Tsai

As MSO gears-up for APVRS 2017, the organizers would like to thank all members, delegates, exhibitors, speakers, presenters and visitors for their contribution in the success of MSJOC 2016.

MSO needs the support of all trainees and ophthalmologists in the country to continue to be the voice of the profession and to ensure that our specialty continues to develop. Do join or renew your membership!