

MEETING REPORT ON THE 'NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ORAL RECURRENT APHTHOUS ULCERATIONS' - MARCH 21, 1999 IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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MEETING REPORT ON THE SYMPOSIUM

In view of the complexities in managing patients with oral recurrent aphthous ulcers (ORAU), the Dean of the Dental Faculty, University of Malaya, mooted this idea of an ORAU symposium. Under the Dean's guardianship, Associate Professor Phrabhakaran Nambiar as the Chairman of the Organising Committee set out with other members of his organising committee to make this symposium a reality.

A total of 10 local and overseas speakers presented papers at the symposium. About 300 participants were present at the symposium. Among the papers presented, eight papers are published in this issue of the Annals of Dentistry, University of Malaya as complete papers. Two papers as below were presented but not published in this journal:

1. Distribution and Biochemical effects, properties of lactic acid bacteria from traditional foods in Southeast Asia - presented by Professor Ichiro Ohhira.
2. Recurrent aphthous ulcerations, the KLGH experience - presented by Dr Sharifah Fawziah Alhabshi.

The other speakers were:

1. Professor Dato' Dr Hashim Yaacob
2. Professor Krassanai Wangrangsimakul
3. Professor Dr Siar Chong Huat
4. Associate Professor Dr Rosnah Binti Zain
5. Associate Professor Dr Khoo Suan Phaik
6. Dr Koshy Philip
7. Dr Fernando Cortizo
8. Dr Thomas Paraidathathu

In brief, the symposium began with an overview of the classification, epidemiology and aetiology of ORAU by Associate Professor Dr Rosnah Zain. Her overview gave an insight into the varied causes of ORAU which have not been fully understood.

This was followed by a presentation by Professor Dr Siar Chong Huat on the clinical and histopathological features of ORAU, which included a presentation of a severe form of ORAU, termed Behcet's Syndrome. With Behcet's Syndrome, other than ORAU, the other parts of the body namely the eye, genitals and joints were also affected. The management of ORAU was reviewed by Associate Professor Dr Khoo Suan Phaik who summarised

that the current management remained non-specific in view of the lack of knowledge of the causative factors.

Professor Dato' Hashim Yaacob introduced a new management strategy for ORAU. He showed positive clinical evidence on 25 patients whose ORAU were managed using lactic acid bacteria capsules. In view of the study on ORAU and lactic acid bacteria, papers related to contents, safety, and efficacy of lactic acid bacteria commercial capsules were also presented by Drs Fernando Cortizo, Philip Koshy and Thomas Paraidathathu.

Professor Ichiro Ohhira also presented a paper on natural occurring lactic acid bacteria in Southeast Asian foods.

Professor Krassanai Wangrangsimakul then introduced the management of ORAU using juice extract of Asiatic Pennywort (*Centella asiatica*) known in Malaysia as Pegaga. He too reported some success using this type of traditional medicinal herb.

Dr Sharifah Fawziah Alhabshi finally presented a brief paper on her experience with ORAU at the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital.

The symposium ended with a panel discussion where participants interacted with the speakers via a question and answer session.

Before concluding this editorial, the editorial board of the Annals of Dentistry, University of Malaya, would like to congratulate the Organising Committee for successfully organising this symposium.

The organising committee members comprised of:

Patron: Professor Dato' Hashim Yaacob
Chairperson: Associate Professor Dr Phrabhakaran Nambiar
Secretary: Associate Professor Dr Dasan Swaminathan
Publication: Associate Professor Dr Khoo Suan Phaik
Treasurer: Associate Professor Dr Tara Bai Taiyeb Ali
Committee Members:

Drs. Marina Mohd Bakri, Sabri Musa, Sushil Kaur, Zamri Radzi
Puan Fathilah Abdul Razak, Encik Jabaruddin Jaafar, Mr Phillip Lam

It is sincerely hoped that this symposium has created more interests among Malaysian researchers to keep on the search for better management strategies for patients afflicted with ORAU.