Organizational Update

Asia Pacific Stroke Organization

Craig S. Anderson, MD, PhD

Asia comprises over 4 billion people, more than half of the world’s population, and it has the largest and most sustained economy in recent decades spearheaded by the rapid growth and industrialization of the China and India. Asia is also extremely diverse, with wealth and development differing widely within and across member states, and it contains a huge range of cultures, languages, environment, religions, historical ties, and government systems in populations spread across a large geographical expanse. As a consequence, the massive and increasing burden of stroke in this region of the world presents enormous challenges in terms of population-wide prevention strategies, clinical care, and health service delivery. Not only is there a broad spectrum of cerebrovascular disorders, including, for example, high rates of cerebral venous thrombosis, intracerebral vascular atheroma, and inflammatory vasculopathies that are uncommon in the west, but Asians embrace modern medical technologies and treatments while maintaining strong beliefs in traditional therapies, beliefs, and values. All this is occurring in the context of other changes in lifestyle, chronic and disabling diseases and injuries, and population aging.

It was against this backdrop that the Asia Pacific Stroke Organization (APSO) was established immediately preceding the combined Asia Pacific Conference Against Stroke and annual scientific meeting of the Stroke Society of Australasia in Cairns, Australia, in September 2009. It was a historic amalgamation of 2 organizations that had been promoting annual scientific meetings: the Asian Stroke Forum in Tokyo (2005 and 2007) and the Asia Pacific Stroke Association (2004 Hong Kong, 2005 Bangkok, 2005 Shanghai, 2006 Manila, and 2007 New Delhi).

As a charitable company registered in Hong Kong, APSO has several ambitious objectives specific to the Asia Pacific Region, defined as extending from Saudi Arabia (West), Mongolia (North), Japan (East), and Australia/New Zealand and the Island nations of the South Pacific (South).

1. To promote and encourage the advancement of scientific knowledge, research, and practice in all aspects of stroke and associated cerebrovascular diseases and to coordinate the exchange and dissemination of this knowledge and expertise throughout the Asia Pacific Region.
2. On a not-for-profit making basis, to encourage, promote, and organize international scientific activities and communication of results through annual conferences, publications, special meetings, and seminars. Research projects may be sponsored or conducted under special circumstances, as appropriate.
3. To encourage, promote, and organize postgraduate training and international exchange of investigators, teachers, fellows, and students.
4. To promote, organize, and participate in the continuing education process of other members of health professional organizations in the field of stroke and associated cerebrovascular diseases for the relief of sickness.
5. To promote, organize, and participate in the continuing education process of the general public so as to improve their knowledge of stroke and associated cerebrovascular disease and to assist stroke self-help societies in promoting the welfare of individuals affected by stroke for the relief of sickness.

To date, the mainstay of scientific exchange and promotion, and the key source of funds for APSO, has been its annual scientific meeting. In its first year of establishment, a special session was granted for APSO within the congress of the World Stroke Organisation in Seoul in 2010, but this did not generate any revenue specifically for APSO. Subsequent APSO organized Asia Pacific Stroke Conferences have been intellectually, socially, and financially successful, attracting between 600 and 1300 delegates in Colombo in 2011, Tokyo in 2012, Hong Kong in 2013, Taipei in 2014, and Kuala Lumpur in 2015. The most recent conference in Kuala Lumpur attracted almost 700 delegates from 35 countries, including 60 from Europe and 5 from North America, during October 3 and 4, after a day of interactive workshops covering the topics of acute stroke care, neurosonology, cognitive impairment (Vascog Asia), and systems of care.

APSO is an infant organization which has had to work hard to overcome various challenges, such as communication, timelines, relevance, asset generation, and competition with other conferences, events, and activities that overlap with stroke. However, it has a clear mission, passionate active members, and a business plan for member activities that include fellowships, training courses, and a journal. APSO has close ties with the European Stroke Organization and World Stroke Organisation, such that there are now mutual organizational sessions within respective conferences and collegial exchange of knowledge and support. Although APSO is open to individuals, most members are with regional national stroke societies, with modest annual fees, to allow

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mutual support to the stroke community in research, service
delivery, and advocacy. With a good foundation established,
APSO is now in a strong position to grow and add value and
meaning for the region.

The current Executive Committee of APSO for the next
2-year term include President Dr Chen Ya Huang (Hong
Kong), President-elect Professor Man Mohan Mehndiratta
(India), immediate Past-President Professor Craig Anderson
(Australia), Secretary Dr Ruey-Tay Lin (Taiwan), Treasurer Dr
Narayanaswamy Venketasubramanian Ramani (Singapore),
and Chair of Continuing Medical Education, Dr Kay Sin Tan
(Malaysia). Next year, the Asia Pacific Stroke Conferences
will be held in conjunction with the annual scientific meet-
ing of the Stroke Society of Australasia in the beautiful city
of Brisbane, Queensland, on July 15 to 17, 2016, see http://

Disclosures

None.

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