

BOOSTING COLLABORATION AMONG THE MASEAN GROUP OF JOURNALS

Text by A/Prof Mahesh Choolani

On 26 April 2017, the Medical Association of South East Asian Nations (MASEAN) General Body unanimously voted to form the MASEAN Group of Journals (GoJ) Board to drive medical excellence in the region by creating some of the top international medical journals in the world.

The mission

The second MASEAN GoJ board meeting was held on 28 November 2017 at the head office of the Myanmar Medical Association (MMA) in Yangon, Myanmar. This meeting was hosted by MMA and was attended by delegates from five member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Singapore. Representing almost 9% of the global population, ASEAN medicine needs a louder voice on the world stage. The MASEAN GoJ has been mandated to build capability and quality of medical writing and medical publication among its member countries through collaboration and development. Several such initiatives include regular Board meetings to discuss challenges faced by individual journals and share best practices, initiate regular medical writing workshops in member countries, share reviewers, develop a platform to increase the readership of articles in each other's journals, and to help "sister" journals get indexed and improve their impact in the region and the world.

International Advisory Panel

The MASEAN GoJ Board is assembling an illustrious International Advisory Panel (IAP) comprising up to four members who each have a very strong track record of publishing their own research work



in high impact journals and running other medical journals. The IAP members would provide guidance on missions of the GoJ, contribute articles that will shape medicine in ASEAN countries and speak at our regional MASEAN conferences and meetings.

Stakeholder training workshops

The MASEAN GoJ representatives agreed that the lingua franca for the collaborative efforts between member countries is going to be English and that articles published in non-English journals will have English-translated abstracts for everyone else to read. A means to disseminate important findings that affect the ASEAN region will be developed to make the research of science and medicine among member countries more porous, increasingly efficient and highly effective. Journal editors of the MASEAN GoJ will attend regional meetings at least twice a year for continued education of best practices and reviewers of the journals will be invited to attend journal reviewer workshops to generate transparency

and homogeneity in the review process across the member journals. Medical writing workshops will also be held at least once annually by member countries to elevate the standard of medical writing among ASEAN journals. ♦

Legend

1. A/Prof Choolani (second from right) with the office bearers and members of the MASEAN GoJ at the 17th Mid-Term Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

A/Prof Choolani is an associate professor and senior consultant with the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, National University of Singapore and National University Hospital. A/Prof Choolani is also a Deputy Editor of the *Singapore Medical Journal*. His main fields of interest are in prenatal diagnosis, fetal therapy and ovarian cancer.

