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at the APMEN III opening dinner*

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Welcome to the issue two of the APMEN e-newsletter. In these pages, you will receive news about APMEN and *P. vivax* malaria elimination efforts in the Asia Pacific region. We encourage you to circulate this publication to colleagues.

APMEN III

The third annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN III) was held from May 9-12 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. The meeting celebrated the on-going efforts within the region to reduce the scourge of malaria, to share experiences on how countries are working towards elimination of malaria, and work collaboratively on projects in research, capacity building, and advocacy. In attendance was the Malaysian Deputy Minister of Health, Datuk Rosnah binti Abd. Rashid Shirlin, and Health Director General, Dato' Dr Hasan bin Abdul Rahman, alongside over 80 representatives from the 11 Country Partners and research and partner institutions from the region, including the WHO. Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vanuatu were represented as Country Partners and Vietnam, Cambodia and Nepal attended as meeting observers.

During the APMEN III meeting, participants discussed updates on progress towards elimination of malaria. Two technical topics were explored in depth: *Plasmodium vivax*, the malaria species that is resilient to elimination efforts due to a dormant liver stage, and *Plasmodium knowlesi*, a species that is naturally hosted in a type of monkey, the long tailed macaques, and was recently found to infect humans in

Malaysia¹. Participants heard from public health officials from Brunei, which was certified malaria-free in 1987, who stressed the need for continued commitment to surveillance against malaria in order to prevent re-introduction and outbreaks of the disease. The meeting featured showcases on the APMEN Fellowship and Research Grant Programs which highlighted the achievements of enabling malaria control staff to gain elimination-specific skills from other APMEN countries and institutions as well through supporting operational research for APMEN countries through small grants. In response to the need for improved mapping of cases, APMEN formed a new group to help with surveillance and the use of geographical information systems. The meeting was hailed a success by participants.

APMEN would like to thank the Malaysian organising team (Dr Lokman Hakim bin Sulaiman, Dr Junaiden Mohamad Zain and Dr Jenarun Jelip and their staff), UQ Secretariat team (Prof Maxine Whittaker, Arna Chancellor, Amanda Lee and Marion Connel), GHG Secretariat team (Cara Smith Gueye, Hyunju Woo, Dr Michelle Hsiang and Dr Roly Gosling) and the Vivax Co-ordinating team (Dr Ric Price, Dr Lorenz von Seidlein, Sarah Moon and Melissa Gallop) for their support and hard work in the smooth running of these meetings.

1. Lee K-S, Divis PCS, Zakaria SK, Matusop A, Julin RA, et al. (2011) *Plasmodium knowlesi*: Reservoir Hosts and Tracking the Emergence in Humans and Macaques. *PLoS Pathog* 7(4): e1002015.



Dr Ian Bathurst

Attending the APMEN III Study Tour

Dr Ian Bathurst

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the death of Dr Ian Bathurst, who passed away in Austria on the 26 June, 2011. Born and raised in Christchurch, New Zealand, Ian completed his studies in the UK, obtaining a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Leeds. Following a successful career in both academia and industry, he joined the MMV team in 2004, as the Director of Drug Discovery. Ian represented MMV at the recent APMEN III and Vivax Working Group meetings in Kota Kinabalu and contributed an inspiring and engaging overview of MMV's projects designed to deliver more drugs targeted against *P. vivax* dormant liver stage and an update on malaria vaccine developments.

'We are very saddened by Ian's passing. He made a great contribution to malaria drug discovery and development and was a wonderful participant and colleague at APMEN III'. APMEN Co-Coordinator, Sir Richard Feachem.

Our condolences go out to the Ian's family and the MMV team.



Vector Control Working Group

The Vector Control Working Group (VcWG) meeting was held from May 8-9. The meeting opened with an overview of vector control moving from control to elimination, and then onto topics including: data collection and databases for vector control, APMEN vector control survey and the matrix project, innovations in tools and technologies, and country-level vector control activities. Training needs and opportunities within the region were also explored, as well as future critical action areas for the network. The second day included the announcement of a new co-ordinator for the VcWG – Dr. Alongkot Ponlawat, who will chair the group from his base at the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science (AFRIMS), in Bangkok, Thailand. Congratulations to Dr Alongkot and thank you for your acceptance of this position.

The work plan for the group for the remainder of 2011 was confirmed to include:

- Innovations in vector control to start a research grant process – focus on effectiveness of larviciding and environmental management in various elimination settings;
- Information-sharing on Standard Operating Procedures for commonly used vector control methods in elimination activities;
- Capacity building and reorientation – working closely with WHO and ACT-Malaria to increase access to training of trainers on reorientation of vector control staff and activities in vector control in elimination environments, on supervision of IRS; on conducting impact assessments; the stratification of vector control methods; and on the identification and maintenance and use of sentinel site data.

More details on these activities and others will be developed by the VcWG and posted on the APMEN website and to Country Partners and Partner Institutions in the near future.

APMEN Website

Click on the following links to view newly updated material on the APMEN website:

APMEN III: includes meeting summary notes, business meeting minutes, Advisory Board meeting minutes, photographs, media release & meeting presentations.

Coming soon: Finalised APMEN Matrices

Alternatively, please visit www.apmen.org, for all the latest information on APMEN.

www.apmen.org

Vivax Working Group

The Vivax Working Group (VxWG) meeting was held on May 9. The meeting reviewed 2010 work plan activities, including the Research Grant Program and also discussed the progress and development of 2011-2012 activities and actions.

Preceding the VxWG meeting, was a genotyping workshop held on May 8, which was conducted by the Vivax Co-ordinating team. The workshop was attended by 35 participants, including six Research Grant 2010 awardees and focussed on the development of *P. vivax* genotyping methods.

For more detailed information on the Vivax Working Group's meeting and activities, please refer to the special vivax edition of the APMEN Newsletter. More detailed information on the Vivax Working Group's meeting and activities, will be available in the special vivax edition of the APMEN Newsletter available in mid-July.



WHO representatives at APMEN III

Comments on APMEN III

"The World Health Organization warmly welcomes the collaborative and mutually supportive spirit of APMEN, the forum it provides for sharing knowledge and practical experiences on successful malaria elimination approaches, and its successful fellowship programme for research capacity strengthening. APMEN III has shown how the elimination agenda in the Asia Pacific countries is maturing and gathering pace... and we have been particularly impressed by the excellent presentations and documentation provided by the APMEN Country Partners and observer countries during this meeting. We are very grateful to our host country Malaysia for extending us such a warm and hospitable welcome ... we could not have been in better hands this week!"

Dr Aafje Rietveld, Medical Officer at the World Health Organization (WHO) HQ/ Geneva, Global Malaria Programme, presenting closing observations on behalf of the eight WHO representatives who attended APMEN III

APMEN IV Republic of Korea

Following discussions amongst the attending Country Partners at APMEN III, it was announced on the closing day of the meeting that APMEN IV would be hosted by the Republic of Korea, in the country's capital of Seoul. The meeting is tentatively planned to be held during the first week of May, 2012, with exact dates to be advised as soon as they are confirmed. We encourage you to place these dates in your diary now.



APMEN Study Tour

APMEN III meeting participants attended a study tour on the afternoon of Wednesday, 11 May, which visited the Kiulu Health Centre in the district of Tuaran, approximately one hour outside of Kota Kinabalu. The study tour was arranged to understand the role Primary Health Care Volunteers (PHCV) in malaria control in Sabah. The program included a briefing on the malaria elimination plan in the state of Sabah, the roles and responsibilities of PHCV and the organisation of district health and rural health services in Sabah. The study tour also provided participants with an opportunity to interact with the local PHCV and to visit Kiulu Health Centre facilities where blood slide collections collected by the PHCV are sent for examination by health centre staff for prompt diagnosis and treatment

The preparation of the study tour program was coordinated by Dr Moh Seng Chang in close consultation with Dr Jenarun Jelip and the State Ministry of Health Sabah and Ministry of Health Malaysia.



Primary Health Care Volunteers at the APMEN III Study Tour



Marvi Rebueno-Trudeau at the APMEN III Study Tour



Dr Roly Gosling,
New APMEN Secretariat Co-coordinator

APMEN Newsroom

Landscape analysis, "Trends in malaria research in 11 Asian Pacific countries: an analysis of 2700 peer-reviewed publications over two decades" has been recently published in the *Malaria Journal* in 2011 (<http://www.malariajournal.com/content/10/1/131>). This article was co-authored by members of the APMEN Vivax Coordinating team and Vivax Working group amongst others.

Also recently published is an article co-authored by APMEN Vector Working Group guest speakers, Hugo Bugoro and Dr Tanya Russell on the "Bionomics of the malaria vector *Anopheles farauti* in Temotu Province, Solomon Islands: issues for malaria elimination", available in the *Malaria Journal* (<http://www.malariajournal.com/content/10/1/133/abstract/>).



Dr Alongkot Ponlawot.
Newly elected Vector Working Group chair



Change to APMEN Joint-Secretariat Co-coordinator Position

Due to other commitments at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Dr. Michelle Hsiang will be stepping down from her position as Co-Coordinator of the APMEN Secretariat at the UCSF Global Health Group (GHG). She has very much enjoyed supporting the launch and early development of APMEN and will continue to stay involved in APMEN activities.

Dr. Roly Gosling has recently been appointed as the Lead of the Malaria Elimination Initiative at the UCSF Global Health Group, and in this capacity he will serve as the new Co-coordinator of APMEN Secretariat, working closely with Prof Maxine Whittaker, APMEN Secretariat Co-Coordinator at the University of Queensland.

Dr. Gosling has a background in malaria intervention trials and epidemiology after having worked with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and was based in Tanzania for 7 years. He is medically qualified as a clinical microbiologist and has a PhD in epidemiology. He has an interest in developing strategies and tools to support countries to take malaria to pre-elimination levels and to go the last mile to reach elimination.

As the Co-coordinator of APMEN Secretariat, Dr. Gosling will provide technical and strategic oversight to the activities of the Secretariat. He will liaise and link with relevant partners to help APMEN achieve the objectives set forth in the work plan, and scope for new activities and directions for the Network. Dr. Gosling will work closely with Cara Smith Gueye, Program Analyst for the APMEN Secretariat at GHG, to manage and coordinate Network activities in information sharing, evidence building, and advocacy.



Kamaludin Mohammad Yassin from the Ministry of Health Brunei
Presenting at APMEN III