

**The 1st Asian Neuro-ophthalmology
Society (ASNOS) Meeting, Tokyo, Japan,
October 18-19, 2002**

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Masato Wakakura

(Tokyo Secretary-General of ASNOS)

The 1st ASNOS Meeting was held on 18th-19th October in 2002 at Toshi Center Hotel in Tokyo. Thirty-seven were, oral and poster presentations, of which 23 from overseas and 14 were Japanese, were presented. The presentators' nations or regions were varied: Taiwan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, China and Korea. Travel Grants for excellent papers were awarded to 10 presentators from the ASNOS.

Also, a highly impressive special lecture was given for all participants by Dr. R John Leigh, and was entitled "Understanding Eye Movement: From Molecules to Behavior".

On the evening of the 19th all participants and the staff of the Keio Medical School were invited to the ASNOS Farewell Party, and Prof. Ishikawa's opening remarks were followed by some of the Committee Members. There all participants exchanged small talks and deepened friendship. It should be noted that other six young Asian doctors participated, which leads us to predict that there will be more presentators at

the next meeting in Nagoya. Thus it is with great pride that we can report that the meeting closed with a sense of success of the achievement.

The following articles describe the impressions of the co. chairpersons for the oral and poster presentations given at each session during the 1st ASNOS meeting.

ASNOS, A Success Story

J. M. Tamesis (Quezon City)

Neuro-ophthalmology is a super-specialty brought about by cases that require the expertise of both the ophthalmologist and the neurologist. These difficult cases border on the unknown since they are straddled between two worlds, so to speak. In the Philippines, there are very limited members those who study Neuro-ophthalmology since most eye doctors would rather concentrate on surgical skills.

Ever since my fellowship in the United States in 1983, I felt that this field of specialization was dominated by western countries. In 1999, I was chosen by JANOS as one of the Tsutsui grant scholars. This opened my world to Neuro-ophthalmology within the Asian country. Several years later, the Asian Neuro-ophthalmology Society was

born with Professor Akio Tabuchi serving as its first president. The different Asian countries represented are as follows: Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, and Korea. On October 25, 2002, the first Asian Neuro-ophthalmology Society Conference was held in Akasaka, Tokyo, with Professor Yukihiko Mashima as the organizing chairman. It was truly a success story from the beginning. Papers from the different countries were enthusiastically presented, and a new member to the society was approved. People's Republic of China joined this group geared towards developing Neuro-ophthalmology in Asia.

The creation of the Asian Neuro-ophthalmology Society (ASNOS) is much welcomed and needed. Although the field of Neuro-ophthalmology has developed considerably in western countries due to their extensive research capabilities, there has been no venue for improvement in Asian countries, especially in the underdeveloped ones. We have mostly on western research and adopted their data to suit our own needs. With the ASNOS in place, countries in Asia, as well as non-Asian countries can access and compare data, which might have more relevant in their own regions. It also offers a venue for presentation of our own papers and research. This is the benefit of having our own society within the Asian.

As the United States has the North American Neuro-ophthalmology Society (NANOS), we now have our own ASNOS. We encourage other Asian nations to join our society in its effort to develop this subspecialty here in our own backyard.

Our thanks and gratitude to the Japanese Neuro-ophthalmology Society and its

leaders for spearheading this noble endeavor, and for their unselfish desire to improve the specialty of Neuro-ophthalmology in Asia. Congratulations JANOS! Welcome to ASNOS!

Impressions on the 1st ASNOS

Dr. Hiroko Yamamoto (Nagoya)

Dr. Ishikawa et al (Hirosaki) reported a case of ophthalmoplegia that initially was suspected to be Fisher syndrome showing normal MRI, but finally was considered as one-and-a-half syndrome because of the high PPRF and MLF stands on T-2 weighted MRI images. Pulse treatment of steroid was effective and they diagnosed the patient as having multiple sclerosis. However, judging from the fact that the symptom was monophasic and the lesion was single in nature I would suggest that Bickerstaff brainstem encephalitis needs to be taken into consideration. Dr. Miyagawa et al (Hirosaki) presented an interesting study entitled "Aberrantly expressed recoverin is functionally associated with G-protein coupled receptor kinases (GRKs) in cancer cell lines". Recoverin is known to be an immunologically suppressive factor of cancer associated retinopathy (CAR) as well as of primary cancer cells. Recoverin was identified in the cell line of 7 out of 18 cases of gastric cancer. In 6 of them, the cancer was at low clinical stage, "In 6 of them, the cancer was determined to be at a low clinical stage and this might be related to the suppressive recoverin mechanism". Dr. Ernawan et al (Bandung) presented a paper stating that 80 out of 1198 patients with tuberculosis were observed to acquire detailed oph-

thalmic examinations for evaluation of adverse effects of drugs. Actually 24 patients underwent the examinations and 3 patients of toxic amblyopia due to probable ethambutol were detected. Tuberculosis is one of the recent diseases that has been determined to be more contagious with the presence of AIDS, thus careful selection of anti-tuberculous drug is highly important. Dr. Tseng et al (Kaoshiung) presented a clinical study using 25 cases of ethambutol optic neuropathy (EON). Severe visual loss, prolonged recovery of vision, and more significant field loss were noted in a subgroup with impaired retinal function even at low dosages or short durations of administration. They also showed HLA typing may indicate differences of genetic vulnerability to ethambutol. The paper suggests the importance of ophthalmic and serological examinations before prescription of ethambutol. Dr. Lin et al (Taipei) presented 3 cases of leukemic infiltration of the optic nerve. The patients all had disc edema showing infiltrative optic neuropathy and the optic nerve was acquire the initial site of leukemic relapse. During follow-ups on patients with leukemia, infiltrative optic neuropathy needs to be carefully observed since this can occur even following intensive treatments. Better treatment choice for leukemia need to be elucidated by further study.

My reflections on the ASNOS

Rong Kung Tsai, M.D. (Kaoshiung)

The 1st Congress meeting of ASNOS in Tokyo was a successful meeting. It was a good start, and we should give credit to the

Society of Japanese Neuro-ophthalmology. For the purpose of encouraging more ophthalmologists to enroll in the field of neuro-ophthalmology in Asia, many doctors in Japan have taken on the extra-burden of the ASNOS. We should thank for them, especially Professor Tabuchi, Dr. Wakakura, and the organizer Dr. Mashima. During the meeting, there were many intriguing discussions and very warm and polite conversations that took place despite the inevitable problems with English expressions that occur with non-native English speakers. But overall, the meeting was wonderful and served as the basis of a good start for a new organization that will undoubtedly see more new faces and papers at the meeting in Nagoya in 2004.

Reflections After the 1st Asian Neuro-ophthalmology Society (ASNOS) Congress

May-Yung Yen, MD

(Taipei, Vice-President of ASNOS)

The 1st Congress of ASNOS was extraordinarily successful! I sincerely appreciated all the ASNOS Committee members from each country and all the candidates, especially the members of the Organizing Committee who worked so hard on preparations for this meeting. I also appreciate for the assistance from JNOS and I'd like to thank all those who provided the travel grants for the young foreign participants. The ten members who received the travel grants greatly added to the meeting.

The 1st ASNOS meeting included 37 presentations, 25 oral and 12 posters. The participants came from 8 countries. And this is

just the beginning. I anticipate attending the 2nd ASNOS in Nagoya, and foresee ASNOS developing into a big society in the near future.

ASNOS

Anuchit Poonyathalang (Bangkok)

The first ASNOS Meeting was more successful than expected. Many interesting papers from many Asian countries were presented. So many ideas, different methodologies and innovative instruments were discussed. The comments and questions were highly constructive and had many suggestions for further possible research pathways. I hope there will be a next step of more collaboration and initiation of multicenter research and treatment trials because neuro-ophthalmological diseases are very difficult to study due to the lack of large sample groups. By setting up a multi center approach, We would be building the first ophthalmologic society with a strong academic basis.

This in turn might bring about a resident exchange or fellowship program.

Regarding papers to choose to highlight from the 1st ASNOS, I am pleased to select No.A23 "A family with Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy with facioscapulohumoral muscular dystrophy" by Wanicha L Chuenkongkaew, no.A24, "A case of Leber's hereditary optic neuropathy with an abnormal multifocal ERG" by Hideki Chuman, and no.A25, "Toluene optic neuropathy in the Philippines" by Jesus M Tamesis, Jr.

I hope that further developments and success of the ASNOS is forthcoming.

Understanding Eye Movements: From Molecules to Behavior by Prof. John Leigh

Dr. Akio Tabuchi

(Kurashiki, The President of the ASNOS)

Dr. Leigh initially emphasized that over the past 40 years, one of the most substantial findings in the neuro-ophthalmology field was the clarification of the neuroanatomical mechanism for eye movements. A major revolution came about with the discovery of pulleys at the orbit. Extraocular muscles insert the globe through the pulley at the global layer and do into the pulley itself at the orbital layer. The muscles at the orbital layer play an important role for maintaining steady eye position through predominantly singly-innervated fibers. Misplacement or disturbance of the pulley seems to lead to congenital strabismus or diplopia and occurs following botulinum injection for treatment of blepharospasm. These discussions reminded me of the special lecture on "The orbital pulley system" by Professor Demer at the annual meeting of the Japanese Amblyopia and Strabismus Society. I am sure that the new concept will contribute to further developments in strabismology.

Prof. Leigh's lecture gave us an opportunity to consider a variety of topics on nystagmus and eye movement disorders. These included premotor circuits involved in generation saccades related to mechanisms of slow saccades as seen in progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), saccadic oscillation in opsoclonus, and cerebellar feedback mechanisms of saccades. His next topic concerned vergence, where he presented information

on the stated roles of prefrontal eye fields for controlling saccades, pursuit and vergence, the close relationship between the stimulus for vergence eye movement (retinal disparity) and “populating coding” of visual signals originating from MST. He also spent a large amount of time explaining the pathogenesis and treatment of nystagmus. The details were published in the previous issue of *Neuro-ophthalmology Japan*, Asian section entitled “Understanding Eye Movements: From Molecules to Behavior with a note on treatment of nystagmus” and in the *Ann N.Y. Acad Sci* vol 956 (2002) entitled “Neurobiology of eye movements: from molecules to behavior”.

In his closing remarks he emphasized that neuro-ophthalmologists need to carefully observe clinical cases of eye movement disorders when trying to find the answers to fundamental questions about how eye movements are controlled.

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Kong Yong Goh (Singapore)

On behalf of the Singaporean neuro-ophthalmologists I would like to congratulate Drs Akio Tabuchi and Yukihiro Mashima for organising a highly successful 1st Asian Neuro-ophthalmology Society meeting last October. Participants came from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, China, Indonesia and Singapore.

Altogether, there were 25 oral presentations and 12 poster presentations.

Presentations varied from basic to clinical research. All of us had a stimulating weekend of looking at neuro-ophthalmic diseases from the Asian perspective as well

as networking with one another and forging new friendships amongst fellow neuro-ophthalmologists.

What can ASNOS members look forward to after this first meeting? I believe this society should focus on international collaboration in research and teaching.

There are many diseases that are present only in this part of the world and the data collected can be used to improve our knowledge and management of these conditions. For example, we can study the peculiar characteristics of Asian patients with optic neuritis and its visual outcome. (And I am sure this will be different from our Western counterparts). The society can also help to organise courses and disseminate information to fellow members. In this respect, I would like to welcome members to a neuro-ophthalmology course by Dr Neil Miller who will be coming to Singapore from the 29th Sept to the 4th of Oct 2003. Some Asian countries of such as Malaysia and the Indo-Chinese states do not have representation yet and society members can help encourage their attendance of future meetings.

To improve communication amongst fellow members, ASNOS can, perhaps, start an e-mail discussion forum similar to NANOSNET whereby interesting cases are discussed.

It is my hope that ASNOS will become a voice for Asian neuro-ophthalmologists in international ophthalmology meetings in the near future. To enhance its regional nature, I would strongly suggest the meetings rotate amongst member countries after the INOS Meeting in 2006 and the society participate actively in regional and

international meetings like the upcoming Asian Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO) in Bangkok in December of this year.

My recollections of the 1st ASNOS

Froilan P. Inocencio (Pasigcim)

My experience at the convention held in Japan can be summarized quite simply as Japanese efficiency, warmth and intellectual exchange.

The intellectual exchange was enormous. The lecture entitled, "Understanding Eye Movements: From Molecules to Behavior" led us to the cutting edge of ocular move-

ments, and the presentation and studies provided by the Asian counterparts inspired the audience. Warmth was felt throughout the sessions, most especially at the farewell party, where every delegation was given a chance to speak and mingle with other members, giving us a sense of unity with our Asian ophthalmologists. Like our closest relative and advisors, the Japanese ophthalmologists were willing to provide us with wise comments on our research and encourage us to continue to pursue our work.

I do hope the ASNOS will continue to prosper in the future.