

PsorAsia+Pacific Meeting, Manila, Philippines, February 24 -25th 2017.

Reported by Tan Yoke choo

Psoriasis Asia+Pacific is formed by a group of psoriasis organizations in the Asia and the Pacific. It was launched in February, 2012 in Manila, Philippines with Josef De Guzman as the founding President. The Psoriasis Association of Singapore is a member of the group and I was the secretary of the group. I attended the meeting in Manila held from 24th to 25th February, 2017. The goal of PsorAsia+Pacific is to alleviate the plight of people suffering from psoriasis. It also aims to foster a mutually beneficial support system amongst member groups to improve the methods of treatment and research for finding the cause and cure for psoriasis. PsorAsia+Pacific members can exchange information, transfer skills and knowledge and encourage emerging associations to strengthen relationships amongst members and patients to ensure access to quality health care.



To date, PsorAsia+Pacific is composed of the national psoriasis associations of fifteen member nations, viz, Australia, Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey and Vietnam.

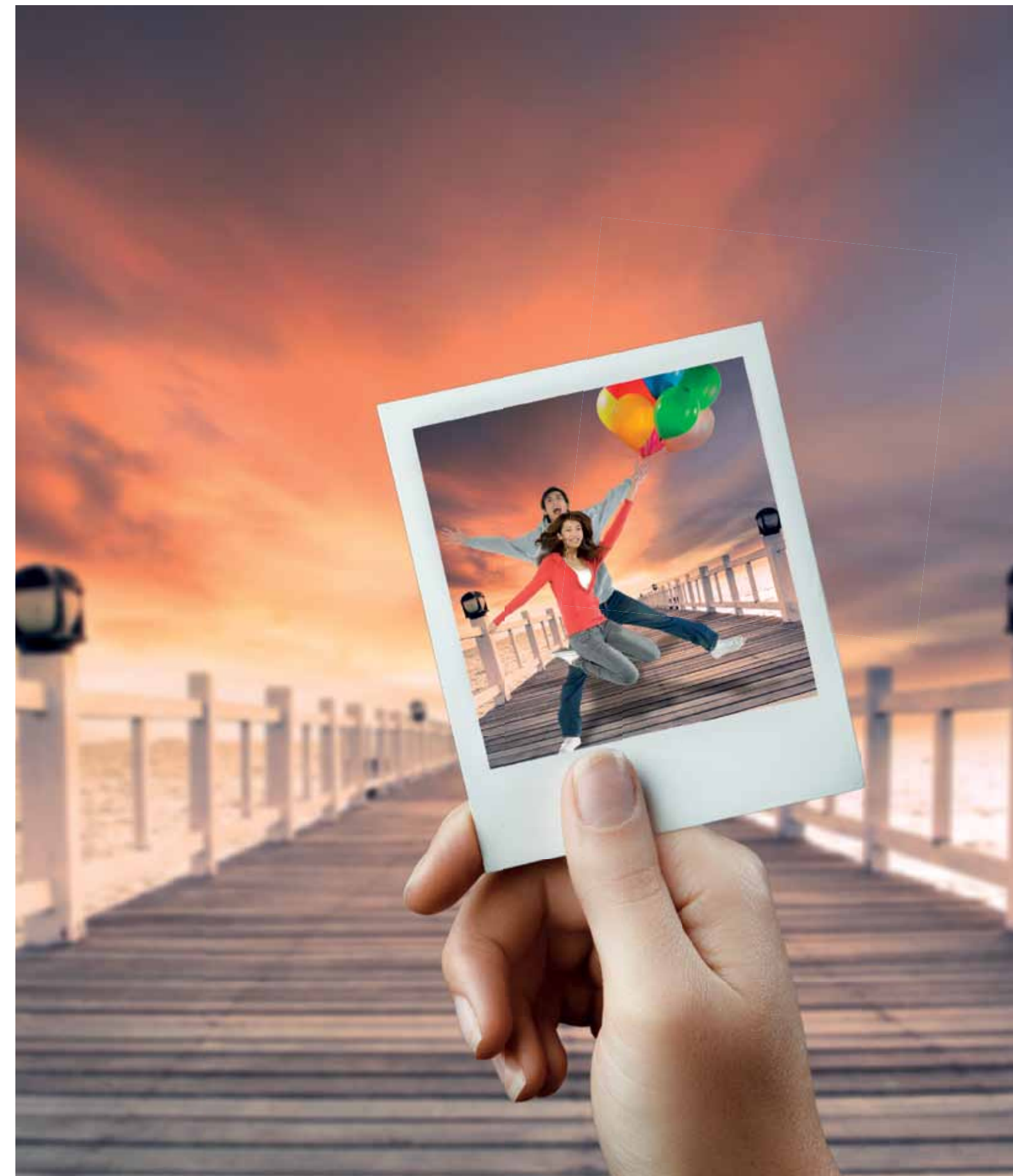
The PsorAsia+Pacific and its founding president, Mr. Josef de Guzman, hosted **Bridging the Gap: Across Nations for People with Psoriasis**, a conference for its members and invited guests that was held at Makati City, Philippines on February 24-25, 2017. During this meeting, a workshop was organized.

PsorAsia+Pacific Capacity Building Workshop, an Introduction: This Capacity Building Workshop is a 2-day workshop created for the leaders of PsorAsia+Pacific members. This inaugural workshop aimed to unify all country members in Asia and the Pacific in advocacy for people with psoriasis. Thus, the theme for this

event is aptly titled, "Bridging the Gap Across Nations for People with Psoriasis". It was also attended by medical practitioners and selected guests from the Middle East. Many prominent speakers, along with information-packed workshops filled the agenda of this event. The workshop started with Sophie Anderson, the executive Director of International Federation Psoriasis Association (IFPA) who enlightened the audience that IFPA is a non-profit umbrella organization representing 55 countries world-wide and has 4 regional members, viz., PsorAsia+Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Africa. Its mission is to be the unifying, global voice of all psoriasis associations, supporting, strengthening and promoting their cause at the international level. The major achievements of IFPA were the WHO resolution WHA 67.9 in 2014 and the Global report in 2016. The next step is to have a second resolution that would force the WHO members to take actions and have a formal inclusion of psoriasis on the WHO-Non communicable diseases also known as chronic diseases (NCDs). To further advocate for official inclusion of psoriasis on the NCD agenda, IFPA launched the Global Psoriasis Coalition.

In the workshop, we learned how to form advocacy group and about marketing process and strategic marketing planning. Many associations such as those from the Philippines, Vietnam, Hong Kong, South Korea and Turkey shared their reports with much passion and enthusiasm. Friendships were forged during the social dinners where delegates wore national costumes and where cultural shows were performed.

The organizing team, made up of patient volunteers, did a fantastic and efficient job in providing a warm and efficient welcome to all delegates from the time of arrival to Manila till the time of departure.



Helping *people* living with psoriasis.



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President's Message

Recently, I had a patient coming to the clinic suspecting that he may have psoriasis. He had surfed the internet and believed that his symptoms fitted the diagnosis of psoriasis. After examination, I told him that what he had was eczema and not psoriasis, and he was relieved to hear that. I do think that this episode suggests that more people are becoming aware of psoriasis. In the past, few people had heard of psoriasis but I think in the recent years, through public education and access to the internet, the awareness of psoriasis has increased.

The Psoriasis Association of Singapore is committed to raising the awareness of psoriasis in Singapore. Through regular talks, public forums and World Psoriasis Day events, the association has strived to increase the awareness of psoriasis and clear the misconceptions that surround the disease, especially to reinforce to the public that psoriasis is a non-contagious disease. Besides public education campaigns, each of us can be ambassadors of psoriasis, educating our friends and relatives about psoriasis. This is a very effective form of education, and many patients have shared that when they are open and upfront about their psoriasis and share with others about their condition, barriers are shattered and those whom they have shared with are much more accepting of them.

All of us play an important role. My hope is that together, we can continue to raise psoriasis awareness in Singapore and better the lives of those with psoriasis in Singapore.

God bless.

Colin Theng

ATTENTION

Please keep yourself free on 6th May and 20th May 2017
"A patient workshop, on Saturday 6th May 2017 (AM), that would encompass disease education including metabolic Syndrome, its complications, and why it is important for Psoriasis Patients to know about metabolic syndrome as well as psychosocial burden management in their day to day life."

6th May 2017 Talks on diet and exercise by Sport Medicine team from Changi General Hospital

22 May 2017 **PAS Annual General Meeting (AGM)**
11am – 12pm : Forum
"How to Maximise My Doctor's Visit – Tips from a Doctor" by Dr Hazel Oon
12pm – 1pm : Lunch
1pm onwards : AGM

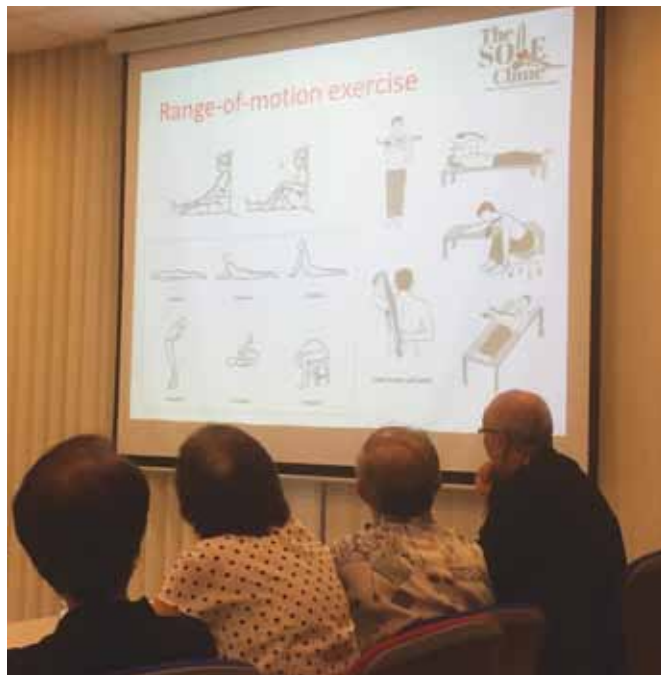
28th Oct 2017 **World Psoriasis Day**

Talks on “Pain Management” held on 10 December 2016 written by John Koh

Two guest speakers shared with us their professional experience on pain management at the event supported by Novartis on the 10th of Dec. 2016 at the National Skin Centre.

The first speaker was Dr Melanie K Sriranganathan, consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine at the Changi General Hospital, who specialises in treating psoriatic arthritis and other bodily pains.

She explained that there are two components to pain associated with joints. Firstly, we experience pain from inflammation of the tissues, muscles and tendons around the joint. Secondly, pain comes from inflammation inside the joint. This may be contributed by gout and psoriatic arthritis and from degeneration, such as osteoarthritis.



She explained that the joints at the neck, elbow, wrists, knuckles, fingers, knees, ankles and toes can all be affected. There is a need to check for psoriatic arthritis, as it can cause irreversible damage to the joints and lead to permanent deformity. A sufferer does not have to live in pain as the condition is treatable.

There are three broad categories of medication used in treatment, namely ‘NSAIDs’ or non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, ‘DMARDs’ or disease modifying anti rheumatic drugs, and biological therapy, an expensive but potent choice.

If you think you have psoriatic arthritis, get an assessment by a rheumatologist for proper treatment.

The second speaker of the day is Mr Lian Guo Jie, who has a Masters in Clinical Physiotherapy from Curtin University in Australia. He was a senior physiotherapist at the Singapore General Hospital from 2008-2015, and now has his own practice.



Mr Lian explained that physiotherapy treats impairments by prescribing the correct physical exercise to promote mobility functions and hence, improve the quality of life for the patients. Symptoms to look out for include warmth and swelling in the joints, reduced range of motions in the joints, spinal or buttock pain, stiffness after inactivity which lasts more than 30 mins and decreased ability to work and play, resulting in a poor quality of life.

Firstly, one has to assess what he can and cannot do, his current activity levels at work and play, general health condition and current medication. After a review, the physiotherapist will set goals that are important and achievable by the patient with chronic pain.

There is a cycle associated with pain. It all starts with pain, followed by a fear of injury from exercise leading to activity avoidance. This reduction in activity causes a deconditioning or disuse syndrome, which leads to more pain with decreasing activity and further deconditioning. One must break this cycle through progressive increase in activity.

For each type of arthritis or joint problem, the physiotherapist will advise on the type and range of exercises for the patient. One will start with passive exercises and later, active or strengthening exercises will be introduced.

Other pain management methods such as acupuncture, use of heat and ice packs on inflamed joints were also discussed. Mr Lian finished his talk with a physical session on many types of exercises that he promotes. All the participants joined in and had a wonderful time.

PAS Lunar New Year Lo Hei Celebration Written by Kong Kim Yoke and Tan Yoke Choo

On 4 February 2017, members of the Psoriasis Association of Singapore (PAS) were invited by LEO Pharma to a Chinese New Year lo-hei lunch at the Park Royal Hotel.



The PAS committee took this opportunity to thank and show appreciation to the medical advisors, regular volunteers and the peer support group of the PAS. During the lunch session, Dr Colin Theng, President of PAS expressed thanks for the ardent support

from all members for a successful year. He presented ang baos from the donation by a PAS member, Ms Michelle Kee, to several needy and appreciative members.

Michelle Kee and her husband Tatara Hiroshu have been regular donors to the Psoriasis Association of Singapore. On 1st January 2017, Michelle invited her friends to her husband’s renowned Kuriya Restaurant for the Japanese New Year celebration. She appealed to her friends to donate to the PAS instead of sending gifts. The donation amounted to \$4300 and were distributed to the needy members.

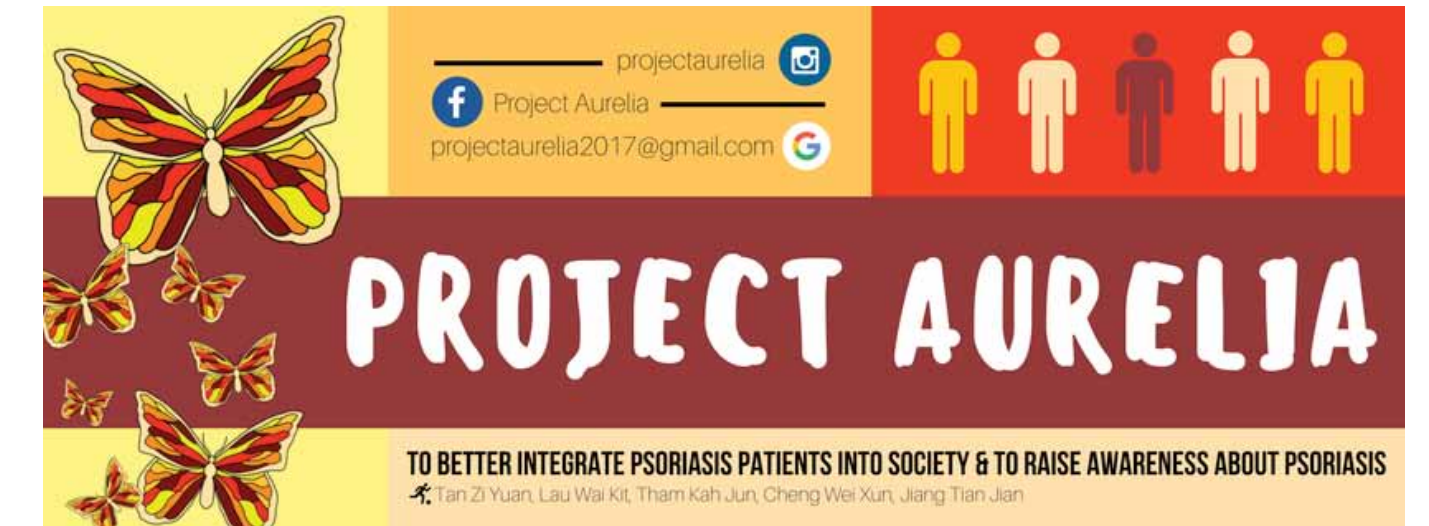
The members also received a selfie stick from LEO Pharma and a cake of soap from Benjamin Goh’s company.

The next PAS event is a Duck tour on 8 April 2017. Many members are eager to sign up for the event.

The executive committee would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of our members a happy, healthy and prosperous Rooster New Year!



Project Aurelia - by Hwa Chong boy



Hello! I am Tan Zi Yuan, leader of Project Aurelia. My team includes 4 other Hwa Chong students, namely, Lau Wai Kit, Tham Kah Jun, Jiang Tian Jian and Cheng Wei Xun. “Aurelia” refers to chrysalis or pupa, the stage between the larva and adult. In the context of psoriasis patients, Project Aurelia serves to help them get past the chrysalis or pupa stage, breaking that shell comprising of the social stigma the public has towards psoriasis. This will allow them to live their lives as they wish without having to worry about public misconceptions about psoriasis.

We are working with the PAS to improve their lives by raising awareness about psoriasis. The first is an initiative where we hope psoriasis patients will be willing to share their stories about living with psoriasis. This is similar to the “Humans of New York (HONY)”. By telling us their stories, we will be able to share them online with the public. This will allow more people to understand what it means to live with psoriasis and help to break down the barriers that hinder interaction and communication between psoriasis patients and the public. We also have an Instagram account and a Facebook Page where we will share information on psoriasis and post those stories. Do follow us on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/projectaurelia/>) and check out our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/projectaurelia2017/>) !

Besides raising awareness about psoriasis, later in the year, we plan to organise activities such as arts and handicrafts and Chinese calligraphy sessions that we hope psoriasis patients will actively participate in. We will invite our schoolmates and friends to participate in these activities together with psoriasis patients. Through these interactions, students will interact with psoriasis patients and learn about the condition first hand. Psoriasis patients will get the opportunity to interact with the students and the public, creating long lasting relationship while breaking down the social stigma people have towards psoriasis patients at the same time.