

Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking - Past, Present and Future

A Nather, H J C Ong, M C B Feng, Z Aziz

*Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
National University Hospital
Singapore*

INTRODUCTION

Whilst tissue banking is well established in USA, Europe and Canada, tissue transplantation gained impetus in the Asia Pacific Region in the last decade^{1,2}. New tissue banks have been set up in countries such as Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and India. This development runs in parallel with the increasing demand for tissue allografts for transplantation in the region in the last few years.

Two factors are responsible for catalysing the progress of tissue transplantation in the Asia Pacific Region, namely the development of Regional Cooperative Agreement (RCA) Project RAS 7/008: Radiation Sterilisation of Tissue Grafts by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) since 1985^{3,4} and the formation of the Asia Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking (APASTB) since 1988.²

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pan – Asiatic Tissue Banking Association

The Pan-Asiatic Tissue Banking Association was set up in 1985 in Bangkok, Thailand, by Dr Yongyudh Vajjaradul (Thailand), Dr Alain Patel (France), and Dr Norberto Agcaoili (Philippines) with its Secretariat set up at the Bangkok Biomaterial Centre in Siriraj Hospital.

Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking

The Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking (APASTB) was founded in October 1988 at the Third International Conference on Locomotor Tissue Banking in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr Yongyudh Vajjaradul was appointed as the first President of the association and Dr Aziz Nather as the First-Vice President. Its secretariat was set up in the Bangkok Biomaterial Centre in Thailand. The association was an extension of the earlier Pan-Asiatic Tissue Banking Association first proposed in 1985 in Bangkok, Thailand by Dr Yongyudh Vajjaradul.

Today, its membership which has increased steadily over the years includes 150 members from 16 countries in the Asia-Pacific region – Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Philippines, China, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Scientific Meetings of APASTB

Inaugural	Thailand	1989	Dr Yongyudh Vajjaradul
Second	Singapore	1990	Dr Aziz Nather
Third	Japan	1991	Dr Moritoshi Itoman
Fourth	Philippines	1992	Dr Norberto Agcaoili
Fifth	Suzhou, China	1994	Dr Tang Zhong Yi
Sixth	Brisbane, Australia	1996	Dr David Morgan
Seventh	Malaysia	1998	Dr Hasim Mohamad
Eighth	Bali, Indonesia	2000	Dr Abdurrahman
Ninth	Seoul, Korea	2002	Dr Chang Joon Yim
Tenth	Hong Kong	2004	Dr Shekhar Kumta
Eleventh	Bombay, India	2006	Dr Astrid Lobo Gajiwala
Twelfth	Malaysia	2008	Dr. Norimah Yusof

Initially, the meetings were held annually. In 1992 during the 4th Meeting in Manila, the Board unanimously decided to hold subsequent meetings every two years. IAEA helped to sponsor Council Members from RCA Member States to attend the scientific meetings. In this way, Council Members from all RCA Member States were able to attend APASTB Meetings from the 4th one organised in Manila to the 9th APASTB Meeting held in Seoul, Korea 2002. This synergy between IAEA and APASTB helped considerably towards the development of APASTB. Unfortunately, IAEA stopped sponsoring members from RCA Member States to the 10th Meeting held in Hong Kong in 2004 as the RCA Programme for Tissue Banking (RAS 7/008) came to a close in 2003.

Presidents of APASTB

• Dr Yongyudh Vadarajul	Thailand	1988-1990
• Dr Aziz Nather	Singapore	1990-1992
• Dr Moritoshi Itoman	Japan	1992-1994
• Dr Norberto Agcaoili	Philippines	1994-1996
• Dr Sun Shi Quan	China	1996-1998
• Dr David Morgan	Australia	1998-2000
• Dr Hasim Mohamad	Malaysia	2000-2002
• Dr Abdurrahman	Indonesia	2002-2004
• Dr Chang Joon Yim	Korea	2004-2006

Current Office Bearers of APASTB (Fig. 1)

Past President	Dr Abdurrahman	Indonesia
President	Dr Chang Joon Yim	Korea
First Vice-President	Dr Shekhar Kumta	Hong Kong
Second Vice-President	Dr Astrid Lobo Gajiwala	India
Third Vice-President	Dr Norimah Yusof	Malaysia
Secretary-General	Dr Yong Koo Kang	Korea
Assistant Secretary-General	Dr Sung Bo Sim	Korea
Treasurer	Dr Sukari Halim	Malaysia
Editor	Dr Aziz Nather	Singapore
Auditors	Dr Hasim Mohamad	Malaysia
	Dr Moritoshi Itoman	Japan

Quality Control of Tissue Banking in Member States of APASTB

1. Procedure/Quality Control Manuals

For quality control, all tissue banks in countries of APASTB who are also participating countries of RCA Project RAS 7/008 are required to follow a Procedure Manual and a Quality Control Manual since 1998, approved by IAEA. This practice has been adopted by all tissue banks under APASTB since 1998.

2. General Standard of APASTB

The Association has finalised its first draft of General Standards following the template drafted by IAEA after 2 years of deliberations. Our APASTB General Standards follow the standards adopted by American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) and European Association of Tissue

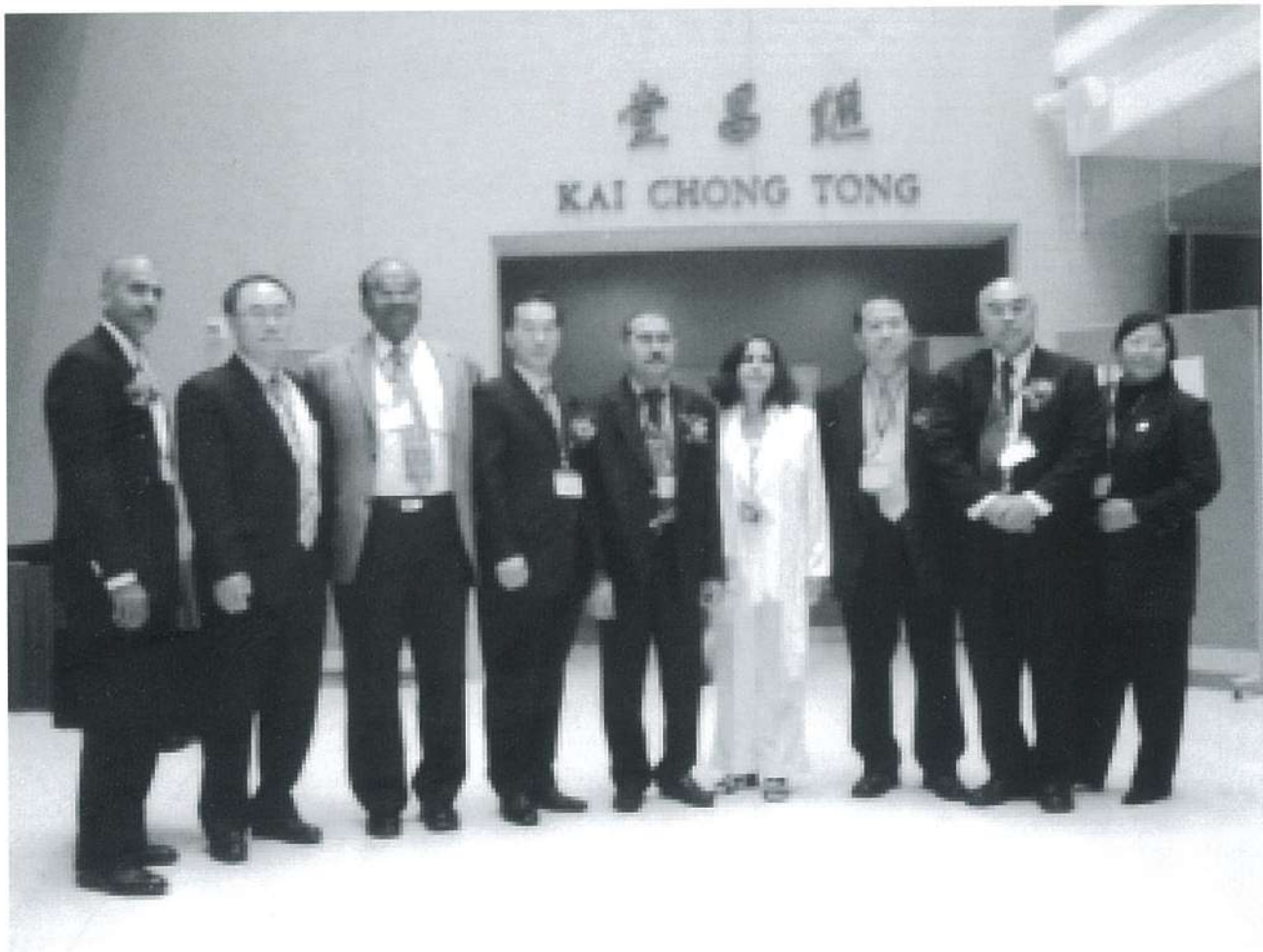


Figure 1. Current Office Bearers of APASTB

CURRENT STATUS OF APASTB

Networking of Member States

Members of APASTB are able to meet every two years to participate actively in the Scientific Meetings. In addition, APASTB produces a yearly newsletter. This serves to highlight important events on tissue banking held by Member States, forecast important future events on tissue banking and also as a forum for members to discuss issues on tissue banking freely.

Banks (EATB). APASTB has recommended at the Tenth Scientific Meeting of APASTB held in Hong Kong in 2004 that all Member States should conform to these standards

Training Needs of Tissue Bank Operators in Asia-Pacific Region.

Tissue Bank Operators in APASTB are trained using the IAEA/NUS Diploma Training Course for Tissue Bank Operators established in Singapore as the Regional Training Centre in November 1997⁴.

The first batch of students was registered in November 1997. 12 students convocated on 16 October 1998 with 4 distinctions, 5 merits and 3 passes among them. The Diploma Course has proven to be a great success. From 1997 to 2005, 89 students have convocated with 15 distinctions, 39 credits and 35 passes.

The Regional Training Centre has fulfilled its role of training technologists and tissue bank operators in the Asia-Pacific Region while adhering to the high standards of the IAEA. The Diploma Course has standardised training for technologists in the region and maintained quality control over the expertise of tissue bank operators.

International Journal on Tissue Banking

The APASTB has joined with the EATB and AATB to launch an international journal on tissue banking entitled "Cell and Tissue Banking" with Dr R von Versen as the Chief Editor. The journal is published 4 times a year and provides an avenue where new knowledge regarding tissue banking and transplantation can be circulated. The first issue of the journal was published in 2000. This journal has proven to be a very useful avenue for tissue bankers in APASTB to publish their research work – both basic and clinical research.

FUTURE ROLE OF APASTB

APASTB will continue to play an essential role in the further development of tissue banking in the Asia-Pacific Region. The organization has developed into one that has achieved equal status as the European Association of Tissue Banks (EATB) and the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB). It hosted the First World Congress of Tissue Banks involving APASTB, EATB and AATB during its Sixth Scientific Meeting held in Brisbane, Australia in October 1996.

APASTB is now considering joining a federation of 5 regional tissue banking organizations: the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB), the Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banks (APASTB), Australian Tissue Banking Society (AATBS), European Association of Tissue Banks (EATB) and Latin American Association of Tissue Banks (LAATB) to form a World Union on Cell and Tissue Banking.

The objectives of this union include:-

- Working for the improvement of cell and tissue banking in the world through setting up international regulations regarding the screening, procurement, processing and transplantation processes
- Exchanging information and expertise among the continental organizations
- Establishing a register for all cell and tissue banks
- Organizing on a regular basis scientific meetings where latest developments in tissue banking can be promoted
- Publishing information on tissue donation and transplantation
- Acting as a global scientific and professional counterpart in cell and tissue banking for the WHO

APASTB will continue to play an important role promoting and regulating tissue banking activities in the Asia-Pacific Region. The upcoming 5th World Congress Meeting on Tissue Banking will be hosted by the 12th APASTB meeting to be held in Kuala Lumpur in 2008.

An additional role that the association may play in the future is to provide accreditation for tissue banks in the region conforming to APASTB General Standards.

REFERENCES

1. Nather A. Tissue Banking in the Asia Pacific Region: Current status and future developments. *J Ortho Surg* 1999; 7(2): 89-93
2. Nather A. Tissue Banking in the Asia Pacific Region – The Asia-Pacific Association of Surgical Tissue Banking. In: Phillips GO, Strong DM, Von Versen R, Nather A. eds. *Advances in Tissue Banking*. Vol. 3 New Jersey, London, Singapore, Hong Kong. World Scientific 1999; 419-425
3. Phillips GO, Pedraza JM. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Programme in radiation and tissue banking: Past, present and future. *Cell Tiss Bank* 2003; 4: 69-76
4. Nather A, Phillips GO, Chang HF, Lim MYL. Development of IAEA/NUS Internet Diploma Course in Tissue Banking. *J. ASEAN Ortho Assn* 2001; 14:5-7
5. Nather A, Phillips GO, Morales J. IAEA/NUS distance learning diploma training course for tissue bank operators – past, present and future. *Cell Tiss Bank* 2003; 4: 77-84