



On 8 October 2015, Dean Yaowalark Sukthana and Administrative Board members congratulated Clin. Prof. Piyasakol Sakolsatayadorn, former President of Mahidol University on the occasion of his appointment by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej as Minister of Public Health, Thailand at the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University.



*Happy New Year 2016*





★ Happy New Year to MORU



★ Happy New Year to Malaria Consortium Asia



★ Happy New Year to WWARN



★ Happy New Year to Silom Community Clinic @TropMed



★ Happy New Year to MOCID



★ Happy New Year to BIKEN



★ Happy New Year to SEAMEO TROPMED Network





## News:

### Malaria Consortium presents at the 2015 Joint International Tropical Medicine Meeting

Malaria Consortium staff presented findings and research at the Joint International Tropical Medicine Meeting 2015 (JITMM 2015) from December 2-4. The annual conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand, brings together researchers, policymakers, practitioners and scientists to discuss public health challenges and opportunities in the region. The theme for this year was 'Tropical Diseases Post 2015: New Threats or Towards Sustainable Success.'



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1M0cj3w>

### Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey on malaria in Thailand

Malaria Consortium, in collaboration with the Principal Recipient Administrative Office and the Bureau of Vector Borne Diseases, Department of Disease Control, Thailand Ministry of Public Health, organised a workshop to share the findings of a recent knowledge, attitudes and practices survey for malaria. This large-scale household survey took place across malaria-endemic villages within 43 provinces across Thailand and was supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, and Malaria.

The survey aimed to evaluate the coverage and usage of malaria prevention methods and associated malaria risk factors among populations in malaria-endemic areas. It also aimed to measure the effects of behaviour change communication (BCC) campaigns among the target population, assessing changes in the everyday behavior of communities in order to make health improvements.



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/20ZCYsE>

### Measuring malaria among border-crossers in Southeast Asia

Malaria Consortium launched the second phase of its cross-border project in Stung Treng province, Cambodia, in September. This new study will build on the work of a project completed last year, which investigated the impact of mobile and migrant populations on the spread of artemisinin resistant malaria, by conducting screening for malaria at both formal checkpoints and informal border posts.

The study aimed to compare malaria trends among mobile and migrant populations who cross along the Cambodia-Laos border. The results and lessons learnt will be shared at national and provincial levels, in order to support decision making around strengthening surveillance methods for malaria elimination and drug-resistant parasites. Border screening began in September and will continue until the end of March 2016.



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1RXC4Gu>

### Myanmar community members spearhead novel approach to eliminate dengue

Malaria Consortium organized a two-day refresher training on dengue prevention and control for 50 local community volunteers in Hinthada district, in the Ayeyarwady region. These volunteers, some of whom are community selected role models, could be key players in winning the region's fight against dengue.

Positive deviance has been successfully used an approach and tool to support projects in nutrition, maternal and newborn health, hand washing and hygiene, retention of antiretroviral patients. This project is the first time positive deviance is being applied to the management of dengue and a key aim will be to evaluate its potential as a tool to help fight the disease.



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1LOPsvT>



## Events:

### First dengue campaign launched in Pailin, Cambodia

Pailin Province in Cambodia has been experiencing a significant increase in dengue cases, with confirmed outbreaks in six villages. According to a national report in July and August 2015, there have already been 215 dengue cases and one death as a result of the disease.

In an effort to respond to this increase, Malaria Consortium, together with the Provincial Health Department in Pailin Province (PHD) and the National Dengue Control Programme, organised the first dengue campaign in Pailin Province, Cambodia with the theme “no larvae – no mosquito – no dengue.” Around 250 participants joined the event including the PHD Director, the Provincial Education Department Director and district governors.



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1j9bWN2>

### Training for improved surveillance and data management in Myanmar

Malaria Consortium – in partnership with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) – recently conducted data management training with members of the Vector Borne Disease Control staff at the Ministry of Health and data assistants working with the WHO.

Current data gathered from surveillance efforts is used to inform strategy and enables policymakers to better guide the elimination strategy. As a result, proper data management is central to providing the foundation for a better understanding of the malaria landscape and allowing for a more targeted response. The database will lead to improved surveillance, monitoring and evaluation in Myanmar and Malaria Consortium and partners will work together to roll out this system in other states covered by the Regional Artemisinin Initiative project, and eventually scaled up for use nationally.



For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/1MPalbk>

## Publication:

Novel Cross-Border Approaches to Optimise Identification of Asymptomatic and Artemisinin-Resistant Plasmodium Infection in Mobile Populations Crossing Cambodian Borders

Human population movement across country borders presents a real challenge for malaria control and elimination efforts in Cambodia and neighbouring countries. To quantify Plasmodium infection among the border-crossing population, including asymptomatic and artemisinin resistant (AR) parasites, three official border crossing points, including Cambodia's borders with Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, were selected for sampling. Over 3200 participants were interviewed and tested for malaria as they crossed the border and the publication highlights the key findings.

For more information and download the publication, visit: <http://bit.ly/1MuPPOU>

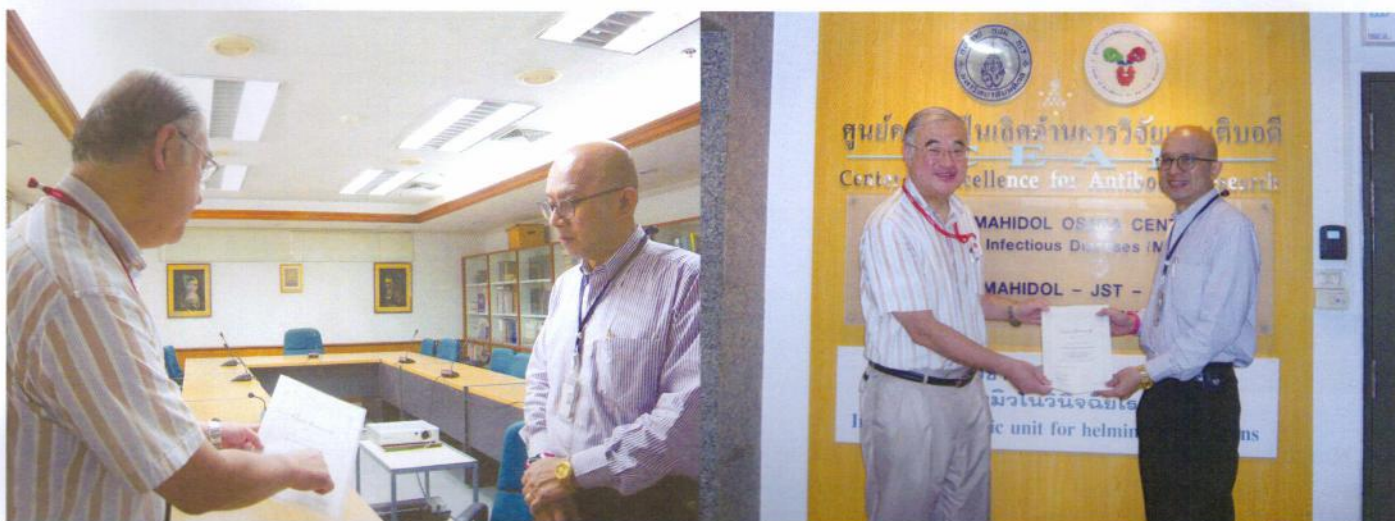


## Dean Yaowalark Sukthana has been appointed as Collaborative Professor of Osaka University



November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Prof. Tatsuo Shioda, Director of MOCID, visited Dean Yaowalark Sukthana and presented the certificate signed by the President of Osaka University, Prof. Shojiro Nishio, for appointment of Dean Yaowalark Sukthana as a Collaborative Professor of Osaka University at the Office of the Dean, 6th floor, the 60th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne Building, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University.

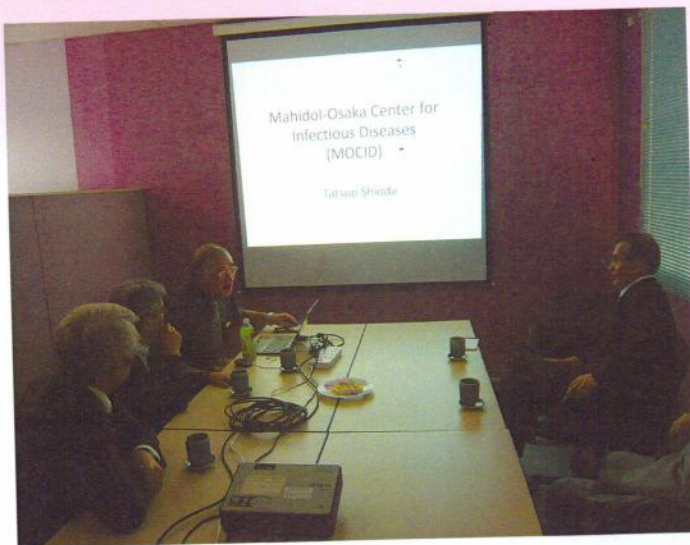
## Dr. Pongrama Ramasoota, Director of Center of Excellence for Antibody Research (CEAR) has been appointed as Collaborative Professor of Osaka University



October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Prof. Tatsuo Shioda visited Dr. Pongrama Ramasoota and presented the certificate for appointment of Dr. Pongrama Ramasoota as a Collaborative Professor of Osaka University at CEAR, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University.



## Osaka University President Prof. Shojiro Nishio and Director of Research Institute for Microbial Diseases Prof. Yoshiharu Matsuura visited Thailand



Presentation of Prof. Tatsuo Shioda



The President Prof. Shojiro Nishio (on the extreme left) and Director Prof. Yoshiharu Matsuura (on the extreme right)

November 7th, 2015, Prof. Tatsuo Shioda made a presentation on MOCID to the President Prof. Shojiro Nishio and the Director of Research Institute for Microbial Diseases Prof. Yoshiharu Matsuura at Department of Medical Sciences, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.

## Training Course on Global Infectious Disease Control during November 9<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University



Prof. Tatsuo Shioda's lecture

November 17th, 2015, Prof. Tatsuo Shioda delivered a lecture on Dengue and Chikungunya research activities to six trainees of the Training Course on Global Infectious Disease Control from Tokyo Metropolitan, Japan (Physicians/Nurses/Health Personnel) at Sornchai Looareesuwan Building, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University.



Six trainees from Tokyo Metropolitan, Japan at MOCID

After the lecture, six trainees from Tokyo Metropolitan, Japan visited MOCID's laboratory and observed research activity concerning Chikungunya on the 12th floor of Chulalongkrajit Building.



### Guest Associate Professor

Recently, our BIKEN lab decided to invite Dr. Yuki Eshita as a Guest Associate Professor at Research Institute for Microbial Diseases (RIMD), Osaka University, Osaka, Japan.

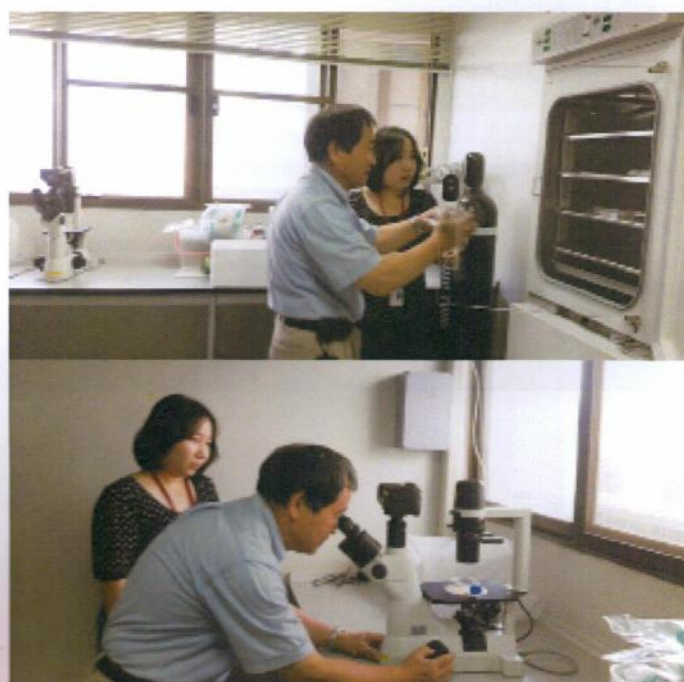
Dr. Yuki Eshita was an Associate Professor, at Department of Infectious Disease Control, Faculty of Medicine, Oita University, Japan. After his retirement in March 2015, he still continues a position in Oita University as a Part-time Lecturer and Visiting Researcher. Additionally, he became a Visiting Associate Professor in 2014 at Department of Medical Entomology, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University where Dr. Narumon Komalamisra is now the Head of this Department. Dr. Yuki Eshita is an entomologist and his work has been mainly focused on insect vectors of infectious diseases. He has published many papers and greatly contributed to the academic society of arthropod-borne infectious diseases. He also has various international research activities in many countries ranging from Asia through America to Africa.



Taken on the 4th floor, Santasiri Sornmani Building, Department of Medical Entomology: from left Drs. Raweewan, Yamanaka, Siriluck, Narumon, Eshita and Konishi



Taken on the 4th floor, Santasiri Sornmani Building, Department of Medical Entomology: from left Drs. Yamanaka, Eshita, Narumon and Konishi



Taken on the 11th floor, Chalermprakiat Building, Insectarium Unit: Drs. Siriluck and Eshita



## Academic Research

Our BIKEN lab has been collaborated with Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Public Health (FPH), Mahidol University. Ms. Chayada Khamsawad is a Master student (Major in Infectious Diseases and Epidemiology) at FPH doing experiments in BIKEN lab. Her research project is on dengue disease. She is also a medical science technician, experienced level at the Medical Entomology group, Biology and Ecology Unit at The National Institute of Health, Ministry of Public Health.

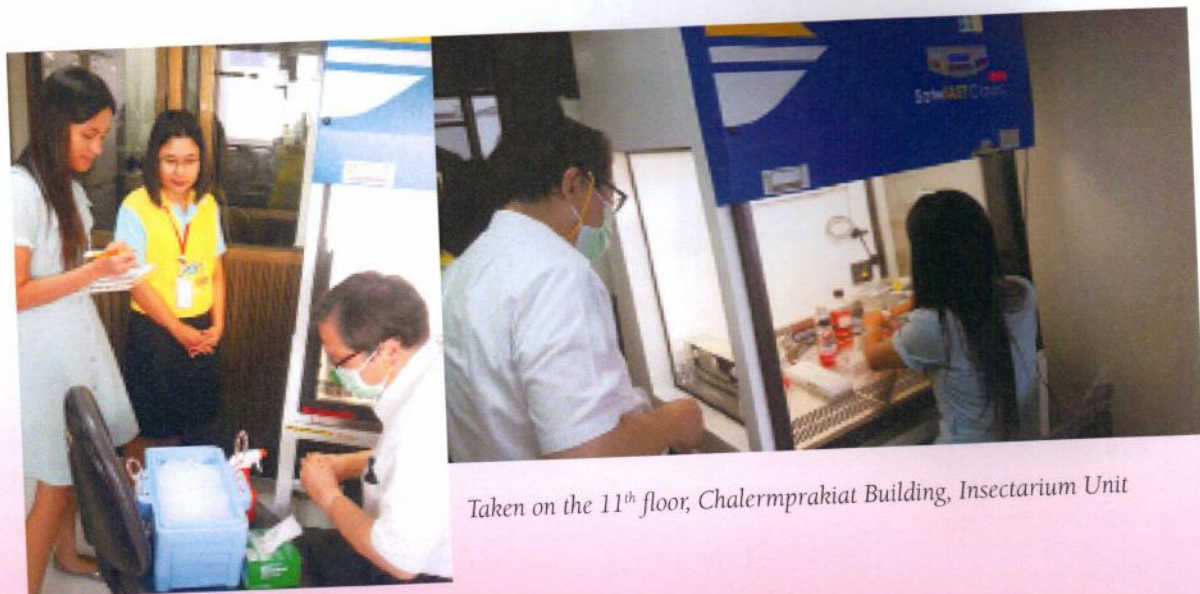
On 1st October 2015, Dr. Eshita together with Ms. Chayada's Major Advisor, Dr. Charnchudhi Chanyasanha, Associate Professor at Department of Microbiology, FPH visited Ms. Chayada at BIKEN Lab. Drs. Eshita and Charnchudhi watched her experiment and provided suggestions to Ms. Chayada about how to handle mosquitoes.



Taken on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Chalermprakit Building, BIKEN Lab: Drs. Eshita and Charnchudhi watched Ms. Chayada and provided suggestions to her.



On 4<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Ms. Chayada visited Dr. Eshita at Insectarium Unit. He gave a lecture on cultivating the mosquito cell line C6/36, and demonstrated his experimental procedure to Ms. Chayada and other researchers.



Taken on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, Chalermprakit Building, Insectarium Unit



## Légion d'Honneur to François Nosten



On 14 December 2015, the French Ambassador to Thailand, Mr. Gilles Garachon arrived at Mae Sot to present France's highest award, l'Ordre National de la Légion d'honneur, to Prof. François Nosten, Head of MORU's Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU), for 33 years of work fighting malaria.

Guests representing some of the many SMRU partners who contributed to this award at the ceremony included: Eh Ka Lu Shwe Oo from the Karen Department Health and Welfare (KDHV), Dr. Cynthia Maung from the Mae Tao Clinic, Dr. Ronnatrai, the former director of Mae Sot Hospital, Dr. Jirapong Authaisin from the Mae Ra Mat Hospital, and representatives from Thai Public Health departments. Nick White and Nick Day represented MORU and many SMRU colleagues also attended.

The festivities later moved to the SMRU office with three generations of staff attending, and many taking turns to say how they enjoyed working with François over the years.

Please join us in giving your heartiest congratulations to François and the SMRU team for this well-deserved honour.

*- With thanks to Dr. Rose McGready for text and to Nick Day, Stéphane Ribault, Jordi Landier and Suphak Nosten for photos*

## Long-standing staff honoured



Four MORU colleagues received long-standing staff awards on 4 December 2015. Handed out by MORU Director Nick Day, the awards honoured: Direk Limmathurotsakul, Head of Microbiology (2005-2015); Daniel Paris Senior Researcher, Microbiology Department (2005-2015); Pattamon (Pat) Tharaphan (2005-2015), Malaria Department; and Kemajittra (Ma) Jenjaroen, Microbiology Department (2005-2015).



*- Photos and details courtesy of Sawanya (Aeh) Anumas*



## Sharing knowledge on “The Discovery of Artemisinin”



On 17 December 2015, Prof. Nicholas J White shared his knowledge on “The Discovery of Artemisinin” at Pratap Singhasivanon conference hall, 17th floor, Rajanagarindra Building, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University.

## Malaria Epidemiology awarded Gates and ADB funding



A double bit of good news, this time from the MORU Malaria Epidemiology Department, which was awarded funding by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the project Quantifying the impact of human mobility on *P. falciparum* malaria burden and spread of antimalarial resistance in the Greater Mekong Subregion and Asian Development Bank for the project Malaria and Dengue Risk Mapping and Response Planning in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

For both projects, MORU Malaria Epidemiology will work closely with national malaria control programmes in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) to undertake mapping and epidemiological analyses of malaria and dengue surveillance data. Epidemiology will use travel surveys and mobile phone call data records to study the effects of population movement on the distribution of malaria and antimalarial drug resistance in the GMS.

- Thank you, Richard Maude, for sharing this good news



## Engaging communities for effective drug-resistant malaria MDA

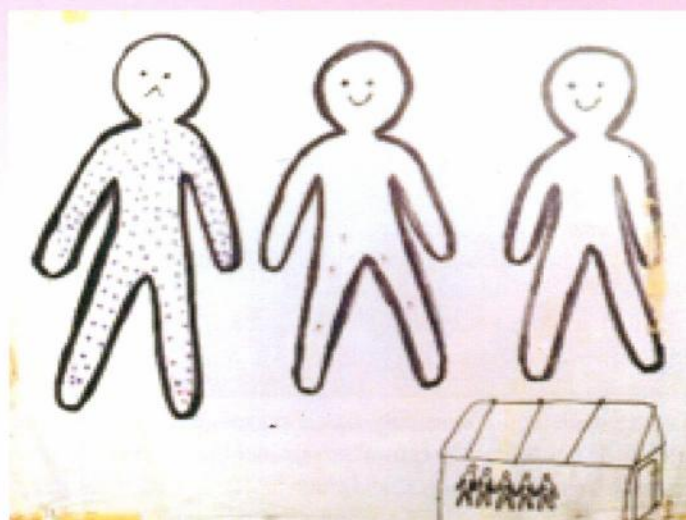
On 6-7 November 2015, representatives from MORU Units in Cambodia (COMRU), Laos (LOMWRU), Myanmar (MOCRU) and Mae Sot (SMRU), Thailand met in Bangkok to share experiences and best practices for community engagement activities in mass drug administration (MDA) for drug-resistant malaria studies. Led by Dr. Chris Pell from the University of Amsterdam and MORU's Kate Sahan and Phaik Yeong Cheah, each group discussed community engagement successes and challenges in delivering MDA protocols.

Although community engagement is considered crucial to effectively implement MDA, it is under-reported in research literature and there is a dearth of practical community engagement guidelines.

Lorenz von Seidlein's introduction underlined the MDA programme's importance given the emerging resistance of malaria parasites to front-line artemisinin treatments.

Dr. Rupam Tripura led presentations from the COMRU team, describing how community engagement activities worked within the clinical study and noting how a combination of COMRU and state healthcare facilitated MDA delivery.

Dr. Frank Smithuis and colleagues reported on community engagement in the MOCRU MDA study, noting that prior NGO work in the study areas had set up good relationships with villagers. Kate Sahan then summarized a social science evaluation of the Myanmar MDA's community engagement work, suggesting it was most valuable in promoting trust and good relationships between staff and participants.



*Malaria presenting symptomatically and asymptotically, an example of SMRU community engagement materials (Image courtesy of Suphak Nosten, Ladda Kajeewiwa and SMRU).*

## MORU, the Eagle has landed!

After a long and thorough tender process, the high-resolution mass spectrometer has finally arrived at MORU Pharmacology. The Pharmacology lab has been refurbished and the new machine is in the final stage of being installed and diagnosed before being put to use. The acquisition of this state-of-the-art machine was possible through an equipment grant from the Wellcome Trust, awarded to Joel Tarning in 2014.

"This capability is essential for us to take a combined metabolomic, proteomic, and lipidomic approach to developing improved diagnostics (disease biomarker identification), understanding of pathophysiology (virulence factor identification), better treatment (active metabolite identification), discovering mechanisms of drug action and resistance, and new drug development in malaria, tuberculosis and other bacterial infections," said Joel Tarning, Head of Pharmacology at MORU. "We are very excited to begin this work and develop this new research theme at Pharmacology."

For collaborative projects on this new equipment, contact Joel Tarning, [joel@tropmedres.ac](mailto:joel@tropmedres.ac), or Markus Winterberg, [Markus@tropmedres.ac](mailto:Markus@tropmedres.ac).

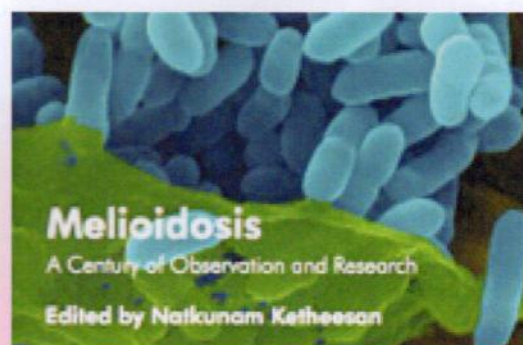


*- Thank you, Joel Tarning and Markus Winterberg, for text and photos*

## Updated Melioidosis book now out

Get it while you can! The 2012 book, *Melioidosis: A Century of Observation and Research*, published by Elsevier, is now accessible free-of-charge on the web. MORU Head of Microbiology, Direk Limmathurotsakul, asks that you feel free to share the link to interested colleagues, <https://espaces.edu.au/melioidosis>.

*-Courtesy of Natkunam Ketheesan and Direk Limmathurotsakul*





## SMRU signs MOU with Myanmar Department of Public Health

On 18 November 2015, at a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar, the Department of Public Health of the Ministry of Health in Myanmar and MORU's Mae Sot-based Shoklo Medical Research Unit (SMRU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for two programs: malaria elimination and tuberculosis.

Present at the MOU signing were Dr. Soe Lwin Nyein, Director General of the Department of Public Health and François Nosten, Director of SMRU. The MOU, according to François, means that SMRU is now officially registered in Myanmar and can work in collaboration with the National Malaria and TB programs. At the same time SMRU will continue to work with Karen NGOs and community based organisations in areas not under the control of the central government.

- Text and photo courtesy of François Nosten



## SMRU: Preventing neural tube defects with folate supplements



In the past few months, the Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU) has begun a campaign to make pregnant Karen women and their husbands aware of the importance of pre-conceptual folate to prevent neural tube defects (NTD) in newborns. NTDs are a severe problem in the Thai-Myanmar border areas served by SMRU, with 12 NTD babies per 10,000 births – nearly 10 times higher than in the USA (1.1 per 10,000) and over five times higher than a recent survey from southern Thailand (1.88 per 10,000 births).

To raise awareness among border communities, Andrew Stevens, student at SMRU, has worked for the past three months with Eh Toe To and Beh Blue Do, public health interns with the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE). Supported by a Government of Australia ASIABound short-term mobility grant, their community wide campaign has reached border-area women of childbearing age and their spouses.

using surveys, focus groups, community consultations and community based organisation (CBO) workshops.

Folic acid is a B-vitamin essential for proper cell growth and development of the embryo. Although essential in tissue formation, there was little awareness of its benefits and role in preventing NTDs among border area populations and local health workers, with only one quarter of SMRU health workers aware of its benefits.

Involving all parts of the community and getting local NGOs and CBOs to include pre-conceptual folate messaging in their work are essential to making the project effective and sustainable, and in getting the folic acid message to pregnant women and their husbands.

"The workshops with CBOs were humbling. Once participants understood the problem they were very willing to consider the best ways to disseminate the messaging to the community," said Dr. Rose McGready, SMRU Deputy Director. "The other unexpected response was from the men at outpatients who wanted to take more than one flyer for distribution. They really wanted to help the word out on folates."

- Text and pictures by Andrew Steven, Suphak Nosten and Rose McGready



## Myanmar NTP and UNOPS visit SMRU TB program

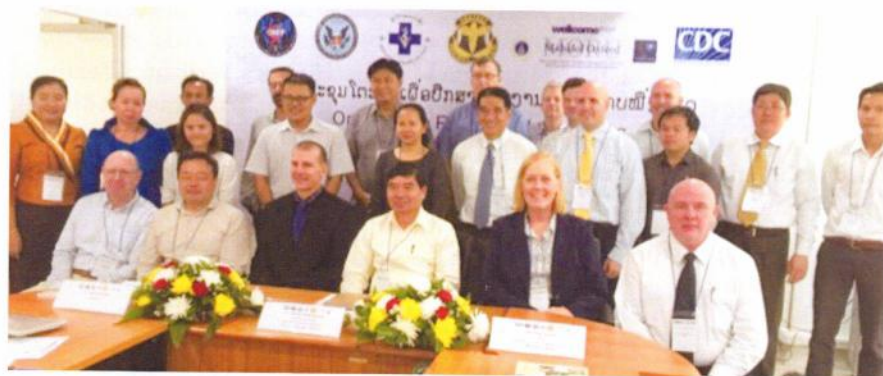


On 12-13 October 2015, the SMRU TB program welcomed a monitoring team visit from Myanmar's National Tuberculosis Program (NTP) and UNOPS TB team. Visitors included Dr. Si Thu Aung (NTP Program Manager), Dr. Cho Cho San (Asst. Director, focal point of Global Fund), Dr. Win Naing (Mon and Kaying Regional Officer), Dr. Faisal Mansoor (UNOPS Head of Program Unit), Dr. Maung Maung Sein (UNOPS TB Officer) and Dr. Saw Sandy Naing (UNOPS Public Health Officer – TB).

The team visited SMRU and SMRU TB sites to examine multi-drug resistant (MDR)-TB and non-MDR-TB control challenges for mobile and migrant populations in border areas, including better access to diagnosis and treatment. Sites visited included WangPa TB clinic and the Kokko TB Centre.

*- With thanks to Dr. Michele V. Delmas and Suphak Nosten for text and photos*

## One Health roundtable in Laos



On 21 October 2015, One Health, an international project that aims to reduce the global impact of emerging and zoonotic infectious diseases, held a roundtable meeting at the National Animal Health Laboratory (NAHL) in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Participants reviewed One Health activities including epidemiology outcomes, necropsy training and lab assessments and activities conducted by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), NAHL-AFRIMS-MORU project, and discussed future One

Health research priorities in Lao PDR and Southeast Asia.

Over 24 participants from 10 organisations located in four Southeast Asian countries including LOMWRU and OUCRU including MORU's Dr. Stuart Blacksell (right above) attended the meeting.

*-Text and photo courtesy of Stuart Blacksell*

## WT and Oxford security threat assessment at MORU

In early November 2015, Paul Sullivan (2nd left), University of Oxford's Head of Security Services, and Wellcome Trust Security Advisor Debby Provis (left) visited MORU offices in Bangkok for a Security Threat Analysis and Preparedness review. A similar review was recently carried out in the Kenya MOP. Others will be carried out in all of the other Oxford Major Overseas Programmes.

During the week they toured the MORU and Mahidol campus, conducted a series of staff meetings and advised MORU management on providing assurance to our key stakeholders that all staff and students are aware of their personal responsibilities regarding security and reinforcing MORU's commitment to providing a safe and secure working environment.

MORU Director Nick Day (right) and MORU COO Karen Valentine (centre) would like to thank all staff and students for the support and cooperation during this visit, and for engaging in the staff meetings, some of which provided an excellent insight to living and working in Thailand. Special thanks should also go to SMRU staff for hosting Paul's one day visit to Mae Sot as part of this review, which was held at the same time as a visit from international journalists and a sponsor due diligence visit!



*- With thanks to Karen Valentine for text and photo*



## Sharan wins first MORU Student Poster Prize



Microbiology won the inaugural MORU Student Prize. In all, 19 posters were submitted by MORU Network postgraduate students for the prize, which honours Niklas Lindegårdh, a great advocate of student activity who supervised numerous PhD students while Head of Pharmacology at MORU.

First runner up was Viriya (Oh) Hantrakul, also from Microbiology, and second runner up was Somporn Saiwaew from Malaria. The Student Prize winner and runners up were selected by over 70 colleagues who voted after reviewing the submitted posters in the Similan-Lanta Room. Nick White and Nick Day presented the winners with their award trophy and certificates.

A PhD student finishing her second year at MORU, Sharan is studying the bacteria *Orientia tsutsugamushi*. Her main supervisor is Jeanne Salje with Stuart Blacksell and Nick Day as co-supervisors. Sharan's poster was about labelling *Orientia* for live cell imaging with a green fluorescent dye called CFSE. Being able to label *Orientia* live is important as it allows us to follow the motility of the bacteria in real time, something which has not been performed before.

Viriya, a PhD student at Open University in the UK, is supervised by Direk Limathurotsakul, Head of MORU Microbiology. She is studying the epidemiology of melioidosis, aiming to determine burden of melioidosis in Thailand. Previously with the Clinical Trials Support Group (CTSG), Viriya has been working with Direk since 2013. Her poster, based on preliminary data, showed that melioidosis is found across Thailand and not just in currently known endemic areas, suggesting that the burden of melioidosis is substantially under recognized at the national level.

Second runner up Somporn Saiwaew from Malaria is doing her PhD at the Department of Clinical Tropical Medicine, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Kesinee (Nok) Chotivanich, Head of laboratory malaria research at MORU. Her poster showed that the inhibitory effects of low molecular weight heparin (sevuparin) on cytoadherence and rosette formation in uncomplicated malaria warrant further studies with sevuparin as adjunctive therapy in severe malaria.

Please join us in congratulating the winners and all who participated. The next MORU Student Poster competition will be held November 2016.

*- Thank you, Sawanya (Aeh) Anumas, for text and photos*

## South Asia's 1st Melioidosis Congress discusses regional network



From left: MORU's Narisara Chantratita and Wirongrong Chierakul, SEA Melioidosis Congress organiser Prof. Chiranjay Mukhopadhyay (centre) of Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, LOMWRU's David Dance and MORU's Viriya Hantrakul.

The MORU Network was well represented at the 1st South Asian Melioidosis Congress in Manipal, Karnataka, India, with LOMWRU's David Dance and MORU's Wirongrong (Kae) Chierakul, Narisara Chantratita and Viriya (Oh) Hantrakul attending as invited speakers. In addition, supported by the American Society for Microbiology, Dr. Wirongrong gave a talk at Manipal University on BSL-3 facilities.

Held in early December 2015, the Congress drew delegates from around the world including a number from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who all reported that melioidosis was being recognised with increasing frequency in their countries, though most likely still substantially under-diagnosed. There was great

enthusiasm for the formation of a South Asian Melioidosis Network and agreement that the next meeting of the network would take place in Sri Lanka in 2017.

Projections from a modelling study led by MORU's Direk Limmathurotsakul were presented by David Dance and were picked up on by the national media in India including the Times of India and The Hindu.

*- Text and photo courtesy of David Dance*



## First melioidosis conference in Vietnam



Hot on the heels of the recent meeting in Manipal, India, LOMWRU's David Dance attended as an invited speaker the First National Conference on Melioidosis in Vietnam at the Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

Attended by over 100, mainly Vietnamese delegates, the conference featured presentations on the epidemiology of melioidosis elsewhere. Delegates also heard how the RENOMAB (Research Network on Melioidosis and Burkholderia pseudomallei) project, led by Prof. Ivo Steinmetz of the University of Greifswald and

meeting organiser Dr. Trinh Thanh Trung was starting to uncover more cases of melioidosis in Vietnam.

The audience were fascinated by projections arising from Direk Limmathurotsakul's modelling paper that will be published in Nature Microbiology in early January 2016. This suggests that there could be as many as 10,000 cases of melioidosis occurring in Vietnam annually, the majority of which are currently undiagnosed. David also gave a talk on behalf of Prof. Bart Currie from the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin.

David was amused to discover that the Vietnamese name for melioidosis is simply "Whitmore", after Alfred Whitmore, who first described melioidosis in Rangoon in 1911. (David has a personal interest in him and gave a talk at the last World Melioidosis Congress about him.)

He was also delighted to meet up with Prof. Le Van Phung again, with whom David collaborated in the early 1990s but has not seen for 23 years.



*- Thank you, David Dance, for text and photos*

## SMRU, health officials discuss obstetric referrals collaboration



At a 20 November 2015 meeting organized by Sujinthara (P'Jay) Hathaipongpen (2nd left), administrator of SMRU's Maw Ker Thai (MKT) clinic, MKT clinicians Cindy Chu (3rd left) and Dr. Mellie Gilder (4th left) met with Phob Phra Hospital Director Dr. Sakbancha Somchaimongkol (centre) and his staff to discuss collaboration for obstetric referral cases.

Every year, SMRU provides pregnancy and childbirth care to more than 2,500 women, with about 600 of these from Maw Ker Thai clinic. Approximately 6-8% of the women require emergency referral to a Thai hospital like Phob Phra.

Typical referral cases include labour problems such as foetal distress, cord prolapse, failure to progress in labour (cephalo-pelvic disproportion), retained placenta after delivery, and undeliverable presentations such as placenta previa or twins where the first baby is in breech position and the second is vertex. In addition, there are also ectopic pregnancy cases requiring emergency referral. All of these conditions are life threatening for mother or baby and require surgical facilities beyond what SMRU can offer.

*- Photo and text by Cindy Chu*



## SEAMEO TROPED Network: Highlights of Activities

### \* Participation in SEAMEO – wide activities

- ▼ SEAMEO College Planning Meeting as the Lead for Module 2, 29 September 2015, Bangkok, Thailand
- ▼ Workshop on SEAMEO's New Education Agenda: The 7 Priority Areas, 16-17 November 2015, Jakarta, Indonesia
- ▼ 38<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO High Officials Meeting, 30 November - 1 December 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



**38<sup>th</sup> SEAMEO High Officials Meeting**  
30 November - 1 December 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

### \* Participation in International Conferences

- ▼ UIA Associations Round Table Asia Pacific, 29 - 30 September 2015, Bangkok, Thailand
- ▼ WHO School Health Technical Meeting: "Global School Health Initiatives: Achieving Health and Education Outcomes", 23 - 25 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



### \* Organization of Regional Training Course on Development Evaluation





**\* Provision of Technical Assistance, as resource persons, to the following regional and national activities**

▼ Regional Course on Advanced Epidemiology, TROPMED Philippines, 19-30 October 2015, Manila, Philippines



▼ Public Health Symposium: Promoting Socially Relevant Public Health Projects and Researches, November 2015, Manila, Philippines

▼ Post Incident Evaluation (PIE) of the Health Response to the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC) Meeting, 8 December 2015, Manila, Philippines



**\* Management-related activity**

▼ SEAMEO TROPMED Network In-House Meeting, 27 November 2015, Bangkok, Thailand



**\* DAAD scholarships**

▼ MSc & PhD TROPMED students received DAAD scholarships through SEAMEO TROPMED Network to study in Thailand at German Residence, Bangkok, Thailand



*The first from the right, H.E. Mr. Peter Prugel, Ambassador of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bangkok, Thailand*





## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and Buddhist religious ceremony at Silom Community Clinic @TropMed (SCC @TropMed)



On 30 September 2015, SCC @TropMed organized the 10th Anniversary celebration with a Buddhist religious ceremony which was attended by the Thailand Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) – U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Collaboration (TUC) senior leadership and clinic staff. SCC was founded to serve as a dedicated HIV testing and STI testing and treatment clinic for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women. SCC opened its doors to its first client on 30 September 2005. For the first 8 years, the clinic was located in the Bangkok Christian Hospital on Silom Road and it was relocated to the Hospital for Tropical Diseases at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University in November 2013.

## M-CAB 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebration



On 16 October 2015, The Men with Sexual Diversity Community Advisory Board (M-CAB) celebrated its 10th Year Anniversary by organizing a symposium on “Challenges: Ethics and Research in MSM and TG population” and “Ethics and Roles of the Community on Clinical Research in MSM and TG Population” that was held at the Conference Hall, 17th Floor, Hospital for Tropical Diseases Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University. More than 60 participants who were interested in conducting clinical trials and community-engaged research in HIV/AIDS prevention especially in vulnerable populations attended the symposium. The attendees learned about the importance of fundamental research ethical principles: Respect for persons, Beneficence, Justice, and Respect for communities. The participants also had a chance to exchange their experiences and lessons learned in a group discussions on how to get more involved in the research process and working collaboratively with stakeholders to address issues affecting the well-being of their communities.



## HSRP Team Building 2015: Stronger Together



On 23 November 2015, our clinic staff joined the TUC HIV/STD Research Program (HSRP) Team Building 2015: Stronger Together at Dhabkwan Resort and Spa in Nonthaburi province. All staff had some time together to play “No Pain, No Gain” - team building games and activities which are a good way to get our team to connect and work together better as well as to promote collaborative critical thinking among our program staff. The main objective of this event was to strengthen our team communication skills, problem solving and mutual trust and friendship.

## World AIDS Day 2015



On 1 December 2015, the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Glyn Davies and Mrs. Davies joined the Thai Minister of Public Health, Dr. Piyasakol Sakolsattayathorn in celebration of World AIDS Day. Both were joined by dozens of other U.S. and Thai health officials including the CDC Thailand Director Dr. John MacArthur, the Permanent Secretary of the Thailand Ministry of Public Health Dr. Sophon Mekthong, and the Director of the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre Dr. Praphan Phanuphak. World AIDS Day was highlighted by a candle lighting ceremony presided over by Her Royal Highness Princess Soamsawali of Thailand. The two-day World AIDS Day event highlighted the importance of early HIV testing and treatment, which helps save lives and prevents new HIV infections. The Ambassador and Minister of Public Health demonstrated their solidarity in support of this effort by receiving counseling and rapid HIV tests by TUC staff.

## EGASP – Thailand targets antibiotic-resistant gonorrhoea

Resistance of STIs—in particular gonorrhoea—to antibiotics has increased rapidly in recent years and has reduced treatment options. One key challenge to effective gonococcal control in the current era of multidrug-resistant gonorrhoea is that few countries have effective gonococcal sentinel surveillance programmes in place. World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme (GASP) in 1992 to track the emergence and spread of resistance to treatments in gonorrhoea, and re-launched it in 2008. Thailand's Ministry of Public Health recently launched an enhanced Gonococcal Antimicrobial Surveillance Programme (EGASP – Thailand) with support from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and WHO. The programme will boost the country's existing surveillance system by standardizing procedures for testing samples of gonorrhoea in laboratories and capture additional clinical and demographic data. EGASP – Thailand was initiated at 2 sites in Bangkok: the Bangrak Hospital STI clinic and the Silom Community Clinic @ TropMed (in collaboration with the Hospital for Tropical Diseases Microbiology Laboratory) on 11 November and 13 November 2015, respectively. EGASP – Thailand has been highlighted in WHO feature at: <http://www.who.int/features/2015/thailand-gonorrhoea/en/>

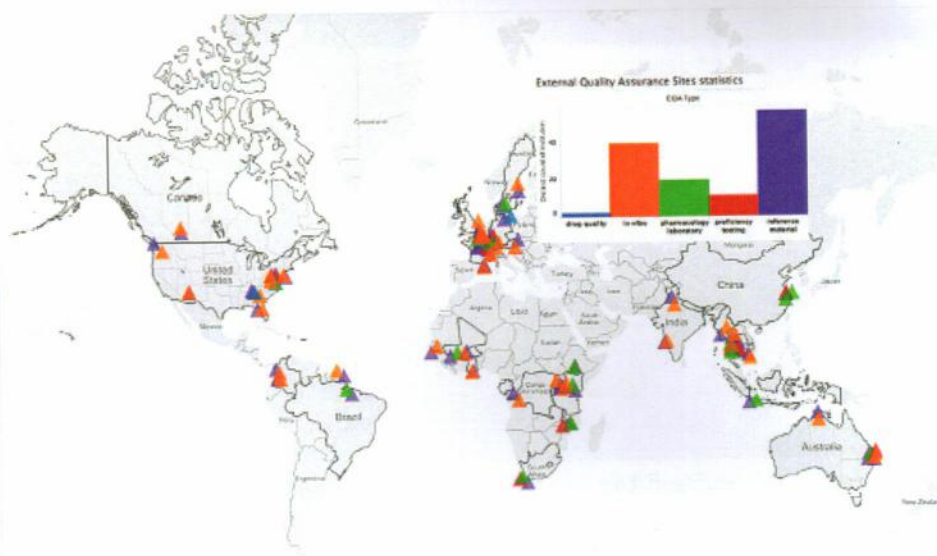




## WWARN Pharmacology Proficiency Testing scheme aims for ISO/IEC accreditation

Accurate and precise measurement of in vivo drug concentrations is an essential component of the assessment of antimalarial therapeutic efficacy, so that inadequate drug exposure can be differentiated from true treatment failures or drug resistance. When assessing pharmacokinetic data it is necessary to differentiate between patient population differences and differences in accuracy between assay methods or laboratories [1]. The WWARN Pharmacology Proficiency Testing (PT) scheme assesses the ability of a participating laboratory to quantify malaria drug levels in patient blood samples, resolve any technical problems and achieve lasting improvements [2]. In so doing, they increase the reliability of published antimalarial pharmacokinetic (PK) and pharmacodynamic (PD) data and enable pooled individual patient data analyses, such as those facilitated by WWARN [3-5].

The WWARN Pharmacology PT programme has completed the documentation and procedural requirements specified in the ISO/IEC 17043:2010 standard. This international standard defines requirements for the competence of providers of proficiency testing schemes and for the development and operation of proficiency testing schemes. This accreditation will provide an independent verification of the quality assurance measures implemented to operate the PT programme. This will help participating laboratories to complete an important requirement of ISO/IEC or other quality standards for analytical laboratories and thus support quality improvement in antimalarial PK/PD analyses worldwide.



Map of Laboratories participating in the WWARN QA/QC Programme, including Proficiency Testing scheme (red triangles) and Reference Materials programme.

1. Lourens, C., et al., Implementation of a reference standard and proficiency testing programme by the WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network (WWARN). *Malaria journal*, 2010. 9: p. 375.
2. Lourens, C., et al., Benefits of a pharmacology antimalarial reference standard and proficiency testing program provided by the WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network (WWARN). *Antimicrobial agents and chemotherapy*, 2014. 58(7): p. 3889-94.
3. WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network Dihydroartemisinin-Piperaquine Study Group, The effect of dosing regimens on the antimalarial efficacy of dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine: a pooled analysis of individual patient data. *PLoS medicine*, 2013. 10(12): p. e1001564.
4. WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network Artesunate-Amodiaquine Study Group, The effect of dosing strategies on the therapeutic efficacy of artesunate-amodiaquine for uncomplicated malaria: a meta-analysis of individual patient data. *BMC Medicine*, 2015. 13: p. 66.
5. WorldWide Antimalarial Resistance Network Artemether-Lumefantrine Dose Impact Study Group, The effect of dose on the antimalarial efficacy of artemether-lumefantrine: a systematic review and pooled analysis of individual patient data. *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, 2015. 15(6): p. 692-702.





▼ During 2 – 4 December 2015, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University joined by SEAMEO TROPMED Network, TROPMED Alumni Association, the Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Association of Thailand (PTAT), Department of Disease Control, Thailand Ministry of Public Health and the Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) hosted Joint International Tropical Medicine Meeting 2015 (JITMM 2015) with the conference theme “Tropical Diseases Post 2015: New Threats or Towards Sustainable Success” at Amari Watergate Bangkok, Thailand. There were 700 participants, 88 oral presentations and 89 poster presentations at the event.



▼ Prof. Dr. Kevin C. Kain (standing in the middle), from University of Toronto received the Sornchai Looareesuwan Medal



▼ Keynote Speakers: Prof. John Eu-Li Wong, Chief Executive, National University Health System, National University of Singapore, Clin. Prof. Udom Kachintorn, Mahidol University President, Dr. Jurai Wongsawat, Advisory Level Department of Disease Control, speaking on behalf of Dr. Amnuay Gajeena, Director General, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand



▼ Most Outstanding TROPMED Alumni 2015

1. Prof. Yaowalark Sukthana, Dean, Faculty of Tropical Medicine (third from the left)
2. Prof. Syahril Pasaribu, Rector, University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia (fourth from the left)
3. Prof. Dr. Gias Uddin Ashsan, Dean, School of Health and Life Science, North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh (fourth from the right)



## Activities @Tropmed



"Meet the Dean 2015" event on 5 November 2015



During 26 November - 4 December 2015, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University in cooperation with School Health Promotion Unit, Asian Centre of International Parasite Control (ACIPAC), Partnership for Child Development (PCD), Imperial College London and Japan Consortium for Global School Health Research (JC-GSHR) organized the 5th Annual Course on School Health and Nutrition Programmes in Asia for foreign School Health personnel from 15 countries.







▲ During 9 - 20 November 2015, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University conducted a training course on Global Infectious Disease Control for medical doctors, nurses and health personnel from Tokyo Metropolitan, Japan. This course consists of lectures on important tropical diseases, clinical and laboratory diagnosis for tropical diseases, ward rounds and case presentation.



▲ During 8 - 11 December 2015, Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University organized a short visit program for medical doctors, nurses and health personnel from Yoicih Hospital, Okinawa Chubu Hospital, Asahikawa University, Maetao Clinic and Chulalongkorn University. This visit program is aimed to strengthen participants' capacity on Malaria and Dengue management and Protozoology, Helminthiasis and Leprosy management.



▲ On 18 November 2015, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emsri Pongponratn, Consultant to the Dean for International Affairs and Alliance together with Prof. Sasithon Pukrittayakamee, Deputy Dean for Education and Asst. Prof. Kasinee Buchachart, Deputy Dean for Student Affairs and Special Activity welcomed Prof. Joselli Rueda, Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (D.T.M. & H.) alumnus in 1980, and delegations from University of the Philippines on the occasion of visiting the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University.

## *Congratulations*



▲ Prof. Punnee Pitisuttithum, Deputy Dean for Translational Medicine and Innovation received "Most Outstanding Researcher in Medical Science 2015" from National Research Council of Thailand.



▲ Assoc. Prof. Pongrama Ramasoota, Director of Center of Excellence for Antibody Research (CEAR) received Invention Award 2016 – Outstanding Level titled "Therapeutic human antibodies against Dengue virus" from National Research Council of Thailand and "Kasetsart University's Outstanding Alumnus 2016".



▲ Asst. Prof. Direk Limmathurotsakul, Department of Tropical Hygiene, Assoc. Prof. Narisara Chantratita, Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Dr. Wirongrong Chierakul, Department of Clinical Tropical Medicine received Outstanding Distinction Research Award (Medical Science) 2015 titled "Timemethoprim – sulphamethoxazole versus trimethoprim – sulphamethoxazole plus doxycycline as oral eradication treatment for melioidosis (MERTH): a multicentre, double-blind, non-inferiority, randomized controlled trial" from National Research Council of Thailand.



## Activities @Tropmed



▲ Visiting Hospital for Tropical Diseases, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam during 28 – 30 October 2015, the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University led by Prof. Yaowalark Sukthana, Dean of the Faculty, Asst. Prof. Udomsak Silachamroon, Director of the Hospital for Tropical Diseases, Bangkok, Thailand, Dr. Wirongrong Chierakul, Department of Clinical Tropical Medicine, Assoc. Prof. Emsri Pongponratn, International Affairs and Alliance Consultant, and nursing team had been benchmarking and experience sharing on tropical diseases case management with the Hospital for Tropical Diseases (HTD) in Ho Chi Minh City (Bệnh viện Bệnh Nhiệt đới) led by Dr. Vinh-Chau Van Nguyen, Director, and Dr. Lam Minh Yen, Deputy Director.

Moreover, Dean Yaowalark Sukthana and Asst. Prof. Kasinee Buchachart, Deputy Dean for Student Affairs and Special Activity went to interview Vietnamese PhD student candidate at the Vietnam Research Programme and Oxford University Clinical Research Unit. The Faculty team also invited the honorary guest, Prof. Tran Tinh Hien, Director of Clinical Research, Oxford University Clinical Research Unit, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and FTM Alumni for dinner and discussing about further collaboration.

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