

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PATHOLOGY AND PATHOGENESIS OF TROPICAL DISEASES

Bangkok, Thailand

September 26 - 29, 1977

The International Symposium on Pathology and Pathogenesis of Tropical Diseases with special emphasis on parasitic diseases held in Bangkok was the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. The meeting was organized around pathology as the focus with very active support from other relevant disciplines such as immunology, parasitology, epidemiology and clinical medicine. The success of this approach was attested by the enthusiastic participation of all those attending including not only the invited consultants and other speakers, but also by the large number of senior and junior staff from hospitals and medical schools. It was clearly evident that pathology provided a unifying background upon which contributions from other disciplines could focus.

There was general and enthusiastic agreement among participants at all levels that meetings of this sort should continue in order to provide a forum for the multi-disciplinary approach to the aetiology, pathogenesis and pathology of tropical diseases. There was an expressed need for opportunities to continue the exchange of information and cross-fertilization of ideas. These needs seemed to be as great among the immunologists and epidemiologists as among the pathologists.

A second and equally important problem voiced by the participants was that of the acute shortage of trained pathologists in the region. There was an urgent requirement to improve and expand the recruitment and training of young pathologists not only in basic pathology but especially in the pathology of tropical diseases. The long range goal

should include the development of more highly qualified teachers and investigators for modern pathology.

The third suggestion expressed by the group meeting was the need for establishment of some sort of newsletter or abstract service which would promote the exchange of information in the region on a timely basis.

To achieve these 3 goals a number of suggestions were made, and a regional committee should be established to consider the most appropriate mechanisms to be employed. It was felt that plans should be developed for a continuation of these regional meetings. It was suggested that the programmes initially might focus on only one of the important tropical diseases which could then be covered in some depth from all of the various aspects. In this connection it might be possible to establish registries for specific diseases of interest which could be set up in the cooperating institutions having a special interest and/or expertise in the field.

The following recommendations were formulated and the Chairman of the Organizing Committee was requested to forward them to the WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases for further action.

1. It was recommended that a mechanism be established in the near future to coordinate the various activities needed in order to foster research and development in the Pathology of Tropical and Parasitic Diseases. This mechanism should also work closely, if possible, with existing groups or organizations

such as SEAMEO-TROPMED Project, SEA-RO, WPRO, and the International Academy of Pathology, etc. A specific task group to look into ways and means to find appropriate mechanisms to implement this recommendation should be convened by the Special Programme as soon as possible.

2. It was recommended that a programme to strengthen pathology institutions from the research and training standpoints in different regions of the developing world should be created. This should receive a high priority from the Special Programme. For the Southeast Asia region, it was envisaged that a network of collaborating departments of pathology in different countries which could facilitate training in the region should be set up, with one department serving as the secretariat of this network. Funds should be made available for the exchange of faculty members,

and for bringing in visiting professors from outside. Grants-in-aid to departments participating in this network should be considered. The aim of this program would be to attract more talented young medical and science graduates into Pathology and to orient them toward a research interest in parasitic diseases as well as offering them a better general training.

3. It was recommended that a special research programme dealing with one or two diseases that could be related to the objective of the Special Programme be conceived. This could be used as a model for further goal-oriented, time targeted collaborative projects. The aim of the study should be well defined, and within the research capabilities of the region at the moment. This programme would be conducted in conjunction with recommendation No. 2.