

Anesthesiologi

- Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists
- College of Anaesthesiologists, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia



Message from the President of the MSA

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Malaysian Society
of Anaesthesiologists



College of
Anaesthesiologists, AMM

This is probably my last message as the President to members before I step down in August 2021. By now, we have been in the pandemic for more than 18 months. The situation in our country is regrettable with regards to the management of the pandemic thus far. We are now like many other countries struggling to cope with COVID-19 variants especially the Delta variant. Despite the country employing multiple strategies to curb the pandemic which include the MCO 3.0 (FMCO), ramping up the rate of vaccination, adherence to strict SOPs, mass testing, contact tracing and immediate isolation, the number of cases and deaths continue to rise.

Meanwhile, the MSA has been tirelessly involved in trying to help the government to manage the pandemic in whichever way possible. The MSA has been providing guidelines related to the management of the pandemic especially relevant to anaesthesiologists. Members can find these guidelines on the MSA website. We have also worked closely with the College of Anaesthesiologists, Malaysian Society of Intensive Care and Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) in making press statements to promote advocacy of health system reform.

Allow me to share with you some of the Society activities since March 2021.

Press Statements

We have released a press statement on 13th June 2021, to debunk the myth regarding vaccination and anaesthesia. The fake news that had gone viral suggested that anyone who receives the coronavirus vaccine is prohibited from taking any type of anaesthetic including local anaesthetic as this poses an extreme danger to the life of the vaccinated person. We decided not to allow such false statements to propagate as they may impact many vulnerable individuals awaiting anaesthesia for surgical procedures.

A Joint Press statement was released on 22nd June 2021 in response to the press statement by the Health Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, as reported by Bernama News Agency on 20th June 2021 with regards to the purchase of 500 negative pressure ambulances to transport COVID-19 patients. We are of the opinion that negative pressure ambulances do not improve outcome nor help improve the COVID-19 situation. The purchase of these ambulances will have serious monetary consequences.

Donation to Labuan Hospital

As we are all aware, Labuan had been hit badly by the Delta variant recently, leading to a high mortality rate and an overwhelming health services. The MSA, together with the CoA, the AMM and other affiliated medical organisations have made a donation to Hospital Labuan Sabah where we have provided five high flow nasal cannulae oxygen delivery devices (HFNCs) to help them cope with cases in the interim period.

MSA and CoA Annual Scientific Meeting - MyAnaesthesia 2021

I would like to encourage members to participate in the upcoming main anaesthesia conference for this year that will be conducted virtually. We have prepared an interesting scientific programme and are looking forward for full support from members.

Annual General Meeting 2021

The AGM will also be held virtually this year on 6th August 2021. It will be held in conjunction with the ASC. We hope that more members will be joining us this time from their homes or work places.

MSA/CoA Series of Webinar

The following have been conducted and scheduled:
27th March 2021 - Paediatric Anaesthesia Update Webinar

- 27th March 2021 - Perioperative ERAS Approach Webinar (In collaboration with Baxter)
- 10th April 2021 - Critical Care Webinar
- 24th April 2021 - Neuroanaesthesia Webinar (in collaboration with Persatuan Kakitangan Anestesiologi Hospital Umum Sarawak)
- 8th May 2021 - Ultrasound SIG Webinar
- 12th June 2021 - Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Webinar
- 26th June 2021 - Pain SIG Webinar - Hypnotherapy in Pain Management
- 3rd to 4th July 2021 - Neuroanaesthesia Symposium

17th World Congress of Anaesthesiologists (WCA)

The 17th WCA will be held from 1st - 5th September 2021 virtually, by the WFSA (World Federation of Society of Anaesthesiologists). The MSA will be participating in the WCA 2021's Global Anaesthesia Village to promote our organisation alongside a range of organisations interested in anaesthesia and surgical safety.

We have also recommended three MSA members for the WCA scholarship. Successful applicants will gain full access to the virtual platform, abstract presentations, networking events and much more. Members are reminded that they can also apply for MSA sponsorships if they are presenting oral or poster presentations at the conference.

K Inbasegaran Research Fund

Applications are called for the K Inbasegaran Research Fund valued up to RM10,000 per year. The purpose of this fund is to support partially or fully one or more research projects in the study of anaesthesia, intensive care medicine, pain medicine and related sciences and branches of medicine. This fund is available for application annually from the 1st June till 30th September. Approval for the funds will be made known to applicants by November. Administration of this fund is executed by MSA Research Committee.

KoreaAnaesthesia 2021

4th to 6th November 2021, Bexco, Busan, Korea (Hybrid)

The MSA has nominated three speakers and three moderators to represent Malaysia for the congress. The speakers are Associate Professor Dr Azarinah Izaham (Ambulatory Anaesthesia), Dato' Dr Wan Rahiza Wan Mat (Critical care) and Dr Sanah Mokhtar (Paediatric Anaesthesia).

It has been a very challenging and debilitating year for all of us especially the general public. I hope everyone continues to stay safe and strong. See you at the upcoming ASC!

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Examination in the COVID Era, Tackling the Uncertainties

by Assistant Professor Dr Nur Fariza Ramly

April 2020. It was the International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) turn to be the host of the Conjoint Board Part 1 Examinations. It was our second time in hosting the exam, and so all the experiences from the previous stint in 2018 came in handy. As the chief coordinator of the exam, it was my responsibility to make sure the preparations were in place and ready, as it was only three weeks shy of the examinations date.

It was in March when the pandemic started to hit us hard. As the host, we took some extra steps by arranging for reserved examiners in case our external examiners were unable to come due to the COVID-19 situation. As a matter of fact, in mid-March, both the examiners from Singapore and New Zealand had to cancel their trip because of the travel restrictions. To top it off, one day prior to the first movement control order (MCO), the Council of the Medical Faculty Deans announced the postponement of all medical specialty examinations between 1st April to 31st May 2020. It was the first time in history that our major postgraduate examinations had to be postponed.

As the fiery pandemic did not die down in the months after, everyone was overwhelmed with anxiety and kept on their toes. The conjoint board finally came out with a new date of exam in October. Due to so many uncertainties and logistic issues surrounding the pandemic, it was not feasible to organise the examination in a single centre. Thus, it was agreed that the examination was to be co-hosted by two universities: IIUM and Univesiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). It took a lot of efforts and countless discussions, to reach a decision.

The candidates were divided into two centres for the written examinations. Those in Sabah, Sarawak and Klang Valley were scheduled to sit for exams in UPM, while the rest of the candidates were set up to take the exams in IIUM. The nightmare began for the coordinating parties when the standard operating procedures (SOPs) for travel were strictly enforced. All the passengers from Sabah were required to undergo mandatory home quarantine for fourteen days upon arrival to the Peninsular. Hence, all the six candidates from Sabah had to leave the state two weeks earlier to make time for the exams. One of the candidates was in contact with COVID-positive

passengers on a flight, and consequently home quarantined.

The situation was very dynamic in the few days before the examinations. We had to sort out so many logistic issues with regards to the candidates. Some of the candidates came from the high-risk areas such as the red zones, the enhanced MCO areas and the targeted enhanced MCO areas. The host universities took precautions by performing risk assessment for all the candidates, coordinators and examiners. Those from the high-risk area were requested to do a swab test prior to the examinations. We even had to arrange for a swabbing session in our IIUM centre for some of the candidates who did not have the chance to do it before their travel to Kuantan. Some of the candidates drove all the way from Johor and Pulau Pinang to IIUM to avoid the risks of exposure with the public transport.



Figure 1: The distance between candidates' table is measured to assure distance according to guideline

The written examinations in two centres went smoothly and were held according to very strict SOPs. All the candidates were required to wear their wear face masks at all times throughout the examinations. The number of candidates per hall and the distance between each candidate were observed according to the guideline. On the last day of the examination, the government imposed an immediate interstate travel ban. The candidates had to apply permission from the police to travel back to their state. Even though the candidates were faced with a lot of obstacles, the universities did provide the best assistance to all the candidates involved.



Figure 2: Written examination in IIUM centre

In view of the travel ban and the evolving situation of the pandemic, the decision was made that the examiners and markers to remain in their place, and the answer sheets to be delivered to them in softcopies for marking. It was the longest couple of days, when we, in IIUM, had to scan almost four thousand pages of answer sheets to be encrypted in files and distributed to the examiners and markers. During the whole process, we were constantly on videoconference with our co-host, UPM, to maintain communication and coordination.

The preparation for viva examination was equally hectic. Both centres had no experience in hosting online examination and we were only left with three weeks to pull everything together. By that moment, the Klang Valley and some other areas had become the red zones, therefore the decision was made to decentralize the examinations to multiple centres. UPM held the online viva examination in their centre, for the candidates from Klang Valley and other red zones.



Figure 3: The viva room setup in IIUM centre

The other non-red zone areas were hosted by us in IIUM, while the candidates remained in their own hospital. It was such an exhaustive effort to organise candidates from nine different centres. Fortunately, we gained full supports and commitments from all the heads of

department and coordinators from the candidates' hospital, namely Hospital Melaka, Hospital Pulau Pinang, Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Hospital Sultanah Aminah, Hospital Sultanah Bahiyah, Hospital Tuanku Jaafar, Hospital Umum Sarawak, Universiti Sains Malaysia and IIUM. Despite having to prepare everything in a very short time and with limited resources, all the centres were able to provide good online exam facilities for the candidates. Some of the centres even went the extra mile with providing the best venue, equipment, and uninterrupted internet connection. We are very grateful to all the heads of departments, coordinators, and other staff involved. Without their assistance, the online examination might have been disastrous.



Figure 4: During the trial of video conference with one of the centre

As for us in IIUM, we had to do some reallocation of the budget for urgent purchasing of the video conference equipment for the online exam. We also sought the support from the IT department to ensure reliable internet connection during the examination. We equipped our four rooms with brilliant webcams, omnidirectional speakers, large screen televisions, Zoom software and the other necessities. It was indeed a humbling experience to coordinate the online viva session during the pandemic. There were a few minor interruptions, but they were anticipated and handled efficiently. There were no major issues with the sessions and the first time online Conjoint Board Part 1 Oral Examination went smoothly. We thank everyone who worked very hard around the clock to make the examination successful despite all the minor challenges. This will indeed become the new norm for our postgraduate medical education in Malaysia.