

EDITORIAL

Why the Neurological Journal of South East Asia

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During this time of information overload, when there is rapid proliferation of new medical journals, when the average practicing neurologist finds it difficult to keep up with the reading materials on his desk, what is the justification of another neurology journal?

The answer should start with the reasons for the formation of the ASEAN Neurological Association, (ASEAN is the abbreviation for the Association of South East Asian Nation). The idea of neurologists in South East Asia forming an association has been mooted since the mid-seventies. The reasons are obvious; attending scientific meeting in Europe or North America take a heavy toll on time and money, it is thus logical for the South East Asian neurologists to work together and to organize medical meeting within the region. There is also a need for the neurology fraternity within the region to meet and communicate more frequently in order to learn from one another, together solve our common problems and develop neurology in the region. There are already in many successful examples of ASEAN based medical specialty groupings in such fields as surgery, orthopedics, mental health, endocrinology and gastroenterology. On the 17th of November, 1994, in the beautiful Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, Philippine, the ASEAN Neurological Association (ASNA) was inaugurated. The first biennial scientific meeting was successfully held in Manila in December, 1995. Since then there has been rapid growth of ASNA related activities. The first ASEAN Symposium and Workshop on Stroke was held in Jakarta in July 1996. The first ASEAN Epilepsy Conference is scheduled in December, 1996 in Singapore. The second ASNA biennial scientific meeting will be held in July 1997 also in Singapore. Other than Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippine, Singapore and Thailand, it is hoped that Vietnam, as a new member of ASEAN, will soon also be a member of ASNA. It is expected that ASNA will eventually include Kampuchea, Laos and Myanmar, making it an organization that represents 10 nation states. Other than conferences and workshop, other ASNA agenda at varying stages of planning and realization are:

formation of various subspecialty chapters such as stroke and epilepsy, joint research, exchange fellowship and of course, the Journal.

The Neurological Journal of South East Asia was decided upon during the business meeting of the ASNA Council in December 1995. It was planned to fulfill the need to have a common vehicle to publish the results of study and research, especially those that have particular relevance to human neurological disease occurring in the South East Asia region. It is hoped that the Journal will have a multiplying effect in promoting original thinking and research leading to greater understanding of these diseases. The Journal will also help in the contextualization of the teaching and practice of clinical neurology in South East Asia. Being a region with close to 500 million population served by a thousand practising neurologists, there should be critical mass necessary for the success of the Journal.

Although the Journal is a project of the ASNA, it hopes to serve all in South East Asia, irrespective of the membership status in ASEAN. In this spirit, we welcome the participation of The Hong Kong Neurological Society and Neurology Society, Taiwan in the Journal. Indeed there are a lot in common between Hong Kong, Taiwan and member countries of ASEAN, in terms of custom, culture, language, ethnicity, history as well as neurological disease pattern and clinical neurology practice. We are grateful and look forward to the enrichment of the Journal by our Hong Kong and Taiwan fraternities.

The Journal will initially be published twice yearly. The guiding philosophy is to have a journal whose scientific standard we can be proud of, yet encouraging and supportive of our young researchers; useful for the busy practising clinicians, and available to every neurologist in the region.

Lastly a word of thanks to the other members of the editorial board, the reviewers, the ASNA Council, the authors and the pharmaceutical companies for their various help and support. It is my hope that for the Journal, this is the beginning of a long journey that is measured not by months or years, or even decades, but by centuries.