

## APVRS 2017 A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

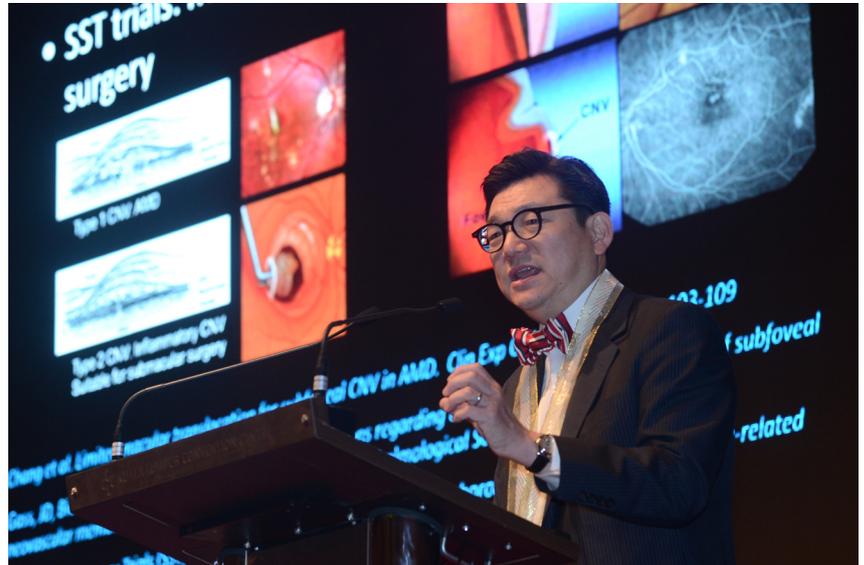
The Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology (MSO), supported by the Asia-Pacific Vitreo-retina Society (APVRS) central secretariat and the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), successfully organised the recent 11<sup>th</sup> APVRS Congress (2017), held for the first time in Malaysia, at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 8-10 December.

Close to 1800 delegates from over 50 countries attended the congress from retina specialists to trainees, along with representatives from numerous global industry partners, said Dr Kenneth Fong, MSO president and president of the 11<sup>th</sup> APVRS Congress.

“I am happy they have recognized the growing importance of the Asia Pacific region in the Ophthalmology scene. I hope they will assist by putting in more resources towards running clinical trials on Asian patients and developing new treatments for our patients,” said Dr Fong during his welcoming speech at the opening ceremony.

Also present at the ceremony were deputy director-general of the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, Datuk Dr Shahnaz Murad, APVRS president Dr Taraprasad Das, and APVRS secretary general Prof Dennis Lam.

Dr Shahnaz highlighted that with the establishment of clinical research centres (CRCs) across the country, Malaysia is committed to the sharing of knowledge and information and invited all parties



to interact with the CRC in order for significant research to be carried out.

This was followed by the presentation of the prestigious APVRS award to Dr Taraprasad Das, vice chair of the LV Prasad Institute and Professor at Sun Yat Sen University. He is also a Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences in India, Regional Chair of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and President of Vision 2020 India. Dr Das then delivered the Tano Award lecture presentation on decoding evidence-based best practice in post-cataract surgery endophthalmitis prevention.

Two other awards were presented during the congress - the Keshmahinder Singh Oration (KSO) award, and the APVRS International Award. The KSO award was presented to Dr Andrew Chang, clinical associate professor in Sydney, consultant vitreoretinal surgeon and the head of the Retinal Unit at the Sydney Eye Hospital, who delivered the lecture on “Vitreoretinal Surgery - An Unexpected Adventure”. Dr



Chang generously refused the fund from the award, opting to convert them to travel grants for deserving delegates. The APVRS International Award went to Dr Neil M Bressler, chief of the Retina Division in the Wilmer Eye Institute, and president of the Macula Society, who gave a lecture on “Diabetic Retinopathy Management - A Race Against Time”.

During the packed three-day programme, congress delegates were updated in clinical procedures, tools and technologies to improve their ophthalmic skills and knowledge via 4 keynote lectures, 8 masterclasses, instruction classes, lunch symposiums and over 170 speakers delivering lectures and leading intensive discussions.

One of the highlights of the congress included the release of the results of two very important clinical trials for the management of polypoidal choroidal vasculopathy (PCV): The EVEREST 2 and the PLANET studies.

In the EVEREST 2 study, a combination therapy of ranibizumab 0.5mg and verteporfin photodynamic therapy (vPDT) was compared to monotherapy ranibizumab 0.5 mg over a period of 24 months in symptomatic macular PCV patients - a total of 32 patients from 42 sites across 7 Asian countries.

Dr Adrian Koh, founding partner and senior consultant at the Eye & Retina Surgeons, Camden Medical Centre in Singapore presented the findings: Firstly, visual acuity gained in the combined group was 9.6 letters as compared to the 5.5 letters in the monotherapy group; and secondly, the percentage of complete polyp progression at 2 years was more than double with combination therapy (56.6%) as compared to monotherapy (26.7%). Additionally, the mean change in best corrected visual acuity (BVCA) and the BVCA gains of the combination therapy group at month 24 were better than the monotherapy group with both treatments allowing patients to avoid visual loss.



The congress was not only a perfect opportunity to learn the latest management of important worldwide diseases such as myopia and diabetes, but also to network with colleagues from around the region and beyond, said Dr Fong.

Other highlights of the congress included the open interactive forum entitled “Meet the Masters” where a panel of 8 prominent and senior vitreo-retinal leaders imparted their wisdom and life experiences in leading the life of an Ophthalmologist, including on matters of time and stress management.

The conference also allowed delegates to renew personal ties and make new friends from around the world. After-hours, the Presidential Dinner at the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur presented a 4-course dinner while experimental music band At Adau performed unique compositions, combining traditional Sape music with African and Latin American sounds; as well as the Congress Party, where delegates visited hawker-style food stands to sample freshly cooked Malaysian cuisine, as they were entertained by the music and dance performances of the diverse people of Malaysia, and tried their hand at the cultural activities such as pewter-smithing, basket-weaving, Chinese calligraphy, wood-carving, batik and playing the gamelan.

