

## Message from the President

Dear Members of the APSHG,

It is my absolute pleasure to serve you as the new President of the Asia Pacific Society of Human Genetics. Professor Thanyachai Sura, of whom the success of the APSHG was attributed to, has left big shoes to fill. Under his presidency, he steely led the society to newer and bolder heights in the face of the challenging COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it is indeed daunting having to step into the presidency but I am ready to fill his shoes. On the same note, I am privileged to work with a very talented new board of directors who have a wide range of experiences in the field of human genetics. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce them in this letter:



**President:** Brian CHUNG

**President Elect:** Nancy CHIEN

**Secretary:** Catherine Lynn SILAO

**Treasurer:** Breana CHAM

**Members:**

Ai Ling KOH

BR LAKSHMI

Ni-Chung LEE

Prasit PHOWTHONGKUM

Sultana FARADZ

ZILFALIL Bin Alwi

**Immediate Past President:** Thanyachai SURA

Asia Pacific region contributing to >60% of the world's population. We are incredibly diverse with a wide range of cultures, languages, religions, socio-economic factors, healthcare systems and healthcare needs. The recent growth of Asia in the world of genomics and its clinical application provides scholarly insights on the development of genomic medicine to the rest of the world. Although the APSHG was formally registered in 2006, the Society has its origins as far back as the 1990s with members from different countries networking, exchanging ideas and collaborating. Our first board meeting on December 16, 2023, there was considerable discussion of upcoming activities in the 2024-2025 calendar, and an earnest discussion on how to promote the awareness of the recent development of genomic medicine in the region and around the world. We shall maintain this momentum and I look forward to the brilliant work that we will all achieve in 2024-2025.

My very best wishes to you and your families –  
Happy New Year 2024!

Brian



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### President

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Yin-Hsiu (Nancy) Chien, MD, Taiwan

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Ni-Chung Lee, MD, PhD, Taiwan

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Sultana Faradz, MD, PhD, Indonesia

Zilfalil Bin Alwi, MD, PhD, Malaysia

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Zilfalil Bin Alwi

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## Message from the Editor-in- Chief



Dear APSHG Members,

As we approach the end of 2023, it is with great pleasure that I reflect on the numerous achievements that the Asia Pacific Society on Human Genetics (APSHG) has accomplished throughout the year. This newsletter serves as a comprehensive compilation of these milestones, providing valuable insights for the future.

In this issue, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the newly appointed board members of the APSHG. The election took place during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on October 13, 2023, in a hybrid format concurrent with the Human Genetics Asia 2023 conference in Japan. This momentous event marked a significant step forward for our society, and I am confident in the continued growth and success under the leadership of the new president.

As we anticipate the arrival of 2024, we look forward to embracing new opportunities, challenges, and advancements in the field of human genetics. The APSHG community remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovation.

I encourage all members to actively participate in shaping the content of our newsletter. If you have any comments, information, or news that you would like to share, please do not hesitate to email me at [zilfalil@gmail.com](mailto:zilfalil@gmail.com). Your contributions are essential in making the APSHG Newsletter a vibrant platform for communication and knowledge dissemination.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the APSHG community.

Best regards,

Prof. Zilfalil Bin Alwi  
Editor-in-Chief  
APSHG Newsletter

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## Message from the Immediate Past President

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Dear Members of the Asia Pacific Society of Human Genetics,



It is with great pleasure and a sense of pride that I write to you as the immediate past president of our society. Over the past four years, we have navigated through unprecedented challenges particularly during the global COVID 19 pandemic. Despite the obstacles, we have persevered and achieved remarkable milestones, including the highly successful HGA 2023 conference.

The past four years have been defined by resiliency, determination and a collective spirit of innovation within our society. I would like to thank Prof. Zifalil who suggested the newsletter of the society to keep everyone informed and engaged, especially during this unpredictable time. Our society's first newsletter was published online in July 2020 and every six months thereafter. The society organised its first Hybrid 2020 APSHG Summer School in Taiwan with the incredible work of Prof. Chien and Prof. Chung, and the on-site Summer-Autumn School in Bangkok, Thailand in 2022. The 2022 Summer-Autumn School was the first time that participants were physically present after the 2019 APHSG conference in Manila. It also provided for direct face-to-face interaction for some board of directors (BODs). The preparation for the HGA 2023, co-organized by the JSHG, the EAUSHG, and the APSHG, was one of the society's biggest

challenge. Several online BOD meetings were initially held at three month intervals with subsequent meetings held monthly and weekly to provide members with a collaborative space to discuss, develop and build upon ideas. A special mention to Dr. Mercy Laurino, Dr. Poh San Lai and Prof. Kenjiro Kosaki for their hard work and unwavering support for the society. The success of the HGA 2023 conference stands as a testament to the collective efforts and commitment of our society.

As the immediate past president, I am incredibly grateful for the unwavering support and dedication of each APSHG board member. Together we have demonstrated the ability to adapt, evolve and continue our pursuit of excellence in the face of adversity.

As I reflect on the past four years, I am filled with immense pride and optimism. For the future of our society the spirit of collaboration, innovation and resilience that has defined our collective efforts will undoubtedly continue to propel us forward. The impact and influence of our society will only grow stronger in the years to come. I have full confidence in the potentials of the current APSHG president Dr. Brian Chung and the current APSHG board members in leading the way towards even greater achievements.

Moving forward, I remain deeply committed to supporting the continued success and growth of our society.

With warm regards,  
Than Sura

Thanyachai Sura MD FRCPE  
Professor of Medicine  
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Thailand



## RESEARCH ON HEALTH IMPACT

Prepared by:  
Catherine Lynn Silao

Significant steps to incorporate diversity into the programs of the Asia Pacific Society of Human Genetics (APSHG) have been undertaken with the recently concluded joint meeting of three societies - the Japan Society of Human Genetics (JSHG), the East Asian Union of Human Genetics Societies (EAUHGS) and the APSHG. In August 2022, key persons from the APSHG headed by Prof. Thanyachai Sura and Prof. Lai Poh San met with Prof. Kenjiro Kosaki in Tokyo, Japan in which a joint meeting of the three societies was decided. Under the leadership of Prof. Kosaki, the conference was held in October 11-14, 2023 at the Toshi Center Hotel and the Zenkoku Toshi Kaikan in Tokyo, Japan with "All Asia" as its theme. Invited talks were given by world class speakers with Nobel Prize Laureate Prof. Svante Pääbo speaking on human evolution and population genetics.

The highpoint of the meeting with all societies [American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG), APSHG, EAUHGS, and JSHG] participating the session on "Translating human genetics and genomics into the future: Foresights, hurdles and global cooperation". Prof. Lai Poh San and Prof. Kosaki served as the hosts with our very own Prof. Thanyachai Sura and Prof. Brian Chung as speakers. Several viewpoints were presented in anticipation for a future wherein genomic technologies and information are easily accessible to all.

The conference had almost 3,000 participants from Japan and other countries actively discussing scientific advances in human genetics and genomics research thereby offering substantial interventions that may improve the healthcare of individuals and the public. These technological innovations, which are the driving forces in the field, now create important implications on the diagnosis and treatment of individuals afflicted with genetic conditions. The conference also showcased advances in genetic counseling providing the participants with additional knowledge of clinical and scientific best practices and insights into emerging research. It provided unique opportunities to engage and network with colleagues and provided a platform for the dissemination of advancements in the field of human genetics and genomics. This meeting truly fostered education of the upcoming generation of human geneticists and genetic counselors.





Networking evenings were organised to offer connection opportunities in relaxed and casual environments.

Another significant highlight of the conference was the Hybrid APSHG Annual General Meeting held on October 13, 2023. Attendees included APSHG participants as well as former APSHG Presidents Dr. MK Thong, Prof. Lai Poh San, Dr. Eva Cutiongco-de la Paz and Dr. Stephen Lam.

During this hybrid meeting, Prof. Kosaki was acknowledged for hosting this very successful conference and was presented the Certificate of Appreciation and Honorary APSHG membership by both APSHG President Prof. Sura and by the incoming APSHG President Prof. Brian Chung. Prof. Kosaki expressed his sincere appreciation for the contributions to science by every participant and member of the APSHG.





## APSHG Board of Directors

2023 - 2025

President Brian Chung

President Elect Nancy Chien

Secretary Catherine Lynn Silao

Treasurer Breana Cham

Members Koh Ai Ling

Lakshmi BR

Ni-Chung Lee

Prasit Phowthongkum

Sultana Faradz

Zilfalil Bin Alwi

Immediate Past President Thanyachai Sura

Auditor Gunadi

Prior to the conference, APSHG members nominated thought leaders in their fields whose perspectives and experiences in the genetics and genomics research community can effectively help guide the course and resources of the Society to the APSHG Board of Directors. The newly elected Board of Directors was introduced at the meeting.



The ten (10) winners of the APSHG Travel Grants were also announced. They are Kristy Iskandae, Rifhan Azwani Mazlan, Sam Martin, Yasmin Bylstra, Miao-Zi Hung, Ziske Maritska, Khunton Wichajarn, Paravee Owneium, Chanchira Sirakasasin, and Yu-han Chen.

On behalf of the APSHG, Prof. Brian Chung expressed his sincere gratitude to Dr. Thanyachai Sura and the 2019-2023 Board of Directors. Dr. Chung concluded with the reiteration of the aim of the APSHG which is "to serve our population".

## Secretary's Report on APSHG

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The face-to-face meeting, after consecutive conferences held only in a virtual mode, was well-appreciated by all. Greater participation by the attendees optimized the entire experience. Personal contacts are of paramount importance for the growth of science, as well as the cultivation of friendship and empathy. This conference has definitely fostered valuable new relationships, exert influences, and challenged everyone to grow!





## A REPORT ON ATTENDING A CONFERENCE HUMAN GENETICS ASIA 2023 TOKYO, JAPAN 11 -14 OCTOBER 2023

Prepared by:  
Assoc. Prof. Dr Imran Ahmad  
Dr Ruzilawati Abu Bakar,  
School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia

The Human Genetics Asia 2023 Congress was successfully held on 11-14 October 2023 in Tokyo, Japan at the Toshi Center Hotel, Zenkoku Toshi Kaikan and Sabo Kaikan. The congress was a joint collaboration of the 68th Annual Meeting of the Japan Society of Human Genetics (JSHG), the 14th Asia Pacific Conference on Human Genetics (APCHG) and the 22nd Annual Meeting of East Asia Union of Human Genetics Societies (EAUHGS).

The congress hosted 23 symposia with more than 500 presentations and was well attended by both local and international delegates. Listening to lectures and presentations by imminent speakers from all over the world provided a boost of motivation and inspiration for new ideas and perspectives. More importantly, it was a chance to meet and discuss with delegates on subjects of interest to keep us abreast with the latest developments in the field of genetics.

During the congress, we wore dual hats as both participants and presenters. As presenters, we presented two lean back experience sessions on our research papers. Firstly, an oral presentation entitled 'Gene expression profile of cytokines (IL-6, TNF-alpha and TGF-beta1) in Malay male subjects with chronic HCV infection'. Secondly, a poster presentation entitled 'IL-1 beta gene polymorphisms and the susceptibility of hepatitis C infection in Malay male drug abusers' on the third day of the congress.



Opening Ceremony

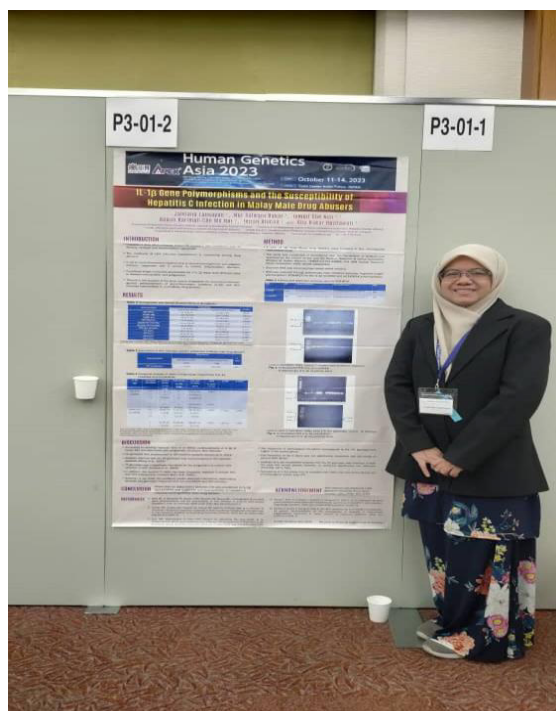


Talk by Prof. Zilfalil

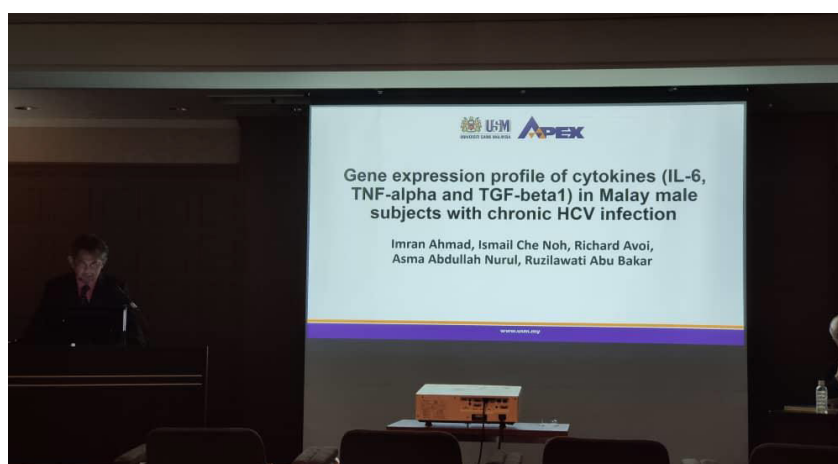




Authors with Prof. Zilfalil



Poster presentation



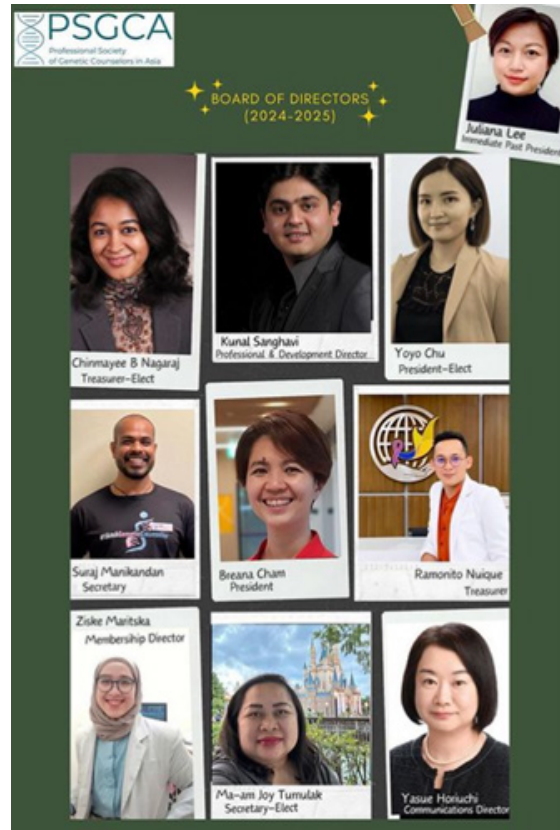
Oral presentation



## PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY OF GENETIC COUNSELORS IN ASIA (PSGCA)

### 1. Introduction to Board of Directors 2024-2025

It is my pleasure to introduce the Board of Directors for the Professional Society of Genetic Counselors in Asia (PSGCA) for the term 2024-2025. The Board comprises a mix of long-serving individuals and new faces to bring the society forward for the next 2 years.



### 2. Call for Membership Application / Renewal

In this term, we hope to continue growing in the numbers of members and our reach by adding genetic counselors from more countries in the Asia-Pacific. Over the next few months, you can expect more interactive and educational activities to become available to the membership.



With this, I would like to invite you to become one of our members and connect with a community of like-minded professionals across the region.



## How to become a PSGCA member?

PSGCA membership is open to genetic counselors, genetic nurses and students in genetic counseling programs in the Asia Pacific region. The membership fee is only SGD \$10 per year.

As PSGCA is a special interest group of APSHG, one must first become a member of the APSHG. You can register for or renew your membership for both societies at the following website: <https://www.apshg.info/memberships.html>.

## 3. Rare Disease Day events across the region

Rare disease day is commemorated on the last day of February and with 2024 being a leap year, the celebration will be on a rare day indeed. Here are some of the events that will be held in various countries:

### Indonesia

Rare Disease Day 2024

- 1) Parent Seminar
- 2) Photo exhibition
- 3) Performance
- 4) Public awareness talk show

### Genetic Counselling Society Malaysia

- 1) Social Media awareness campaign with the Malaysian Rare Disease Society
- 2) Public awareness event with University Malaya Medical Centre on 28/2
- 3) Public awareness event with Hospital Pakar Kanak Kanak UKM on 29/2

### Singapore

Rare Disease Day 2024 - Supporting the Rare with Hope (hybrid event)

<https://form.gov.sg/6584f68c6b691d0012bbe8c4>

Do watch out on our social media pages for the latest updates of related upcoming events!

Sincerely,  
Breana Cham  
President, PSGCA

## Contact Information



After AGM 2023 – Elected BOD 2024-2025

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