

# 20th MASEAN Conference

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The 20th Medical Association of South East Asian Nations (MASEAN) Conference, graciously hosted by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), was held from 24 to 26 May 2024 at the Shangri-La Golden Sands Hotel in Penang, Malaysia. The event was held in conjunction with the International Seminar for Authors of Medical Journals from MASEAN Countries organised by the *Medical Journal of Malaysia (MJM)* and the MASEAN Group of Journals (GOJ).

The opening ceremony of the 20th MASEAN Conference was graced by YB Tuan Jagdeep Singh Deo, Deputy Chief Minister of Penang II, who delivered the welcome speech.

Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz, President of MMA, took over chairmanship of MASEAN from the outgoing chairperson, Dr Mohammad Adib Khumaidi, President of the Indonesian Medical Association (IMA).

The SMA delegation comprised the following:

- Adj A/Prof Ng Chew Lip, SMA Treasurer; Secretary General of MASEAN
- A/Prof Mahesh Choolani, Chairperson, MASEAN GOJ

- Dr Calvin Tjio, Vice Chairperson, SMA Doctors-in-Training Committee
- SMA Secretariat staff – Ms Krysanía Tan, Ms Lee Xin Yi, Mr Spencer Soh

## Commercialisation of healthcare

Delegates from the national medical associations of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam gathered over the three days to share their experiences on the positive developments and pitfalls in the “Commercialisation of Healthcare”, the theme for this year’s meeting.

Topics discussed included training regulations for aesthetic medicine, the handling of complaints against doctors, telemedicine, and the teaching of medical ethics in undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. Delegates also updated participants on other developments and initiatives for their respective associations and countries.

## MASEAN JDN

The MASEAN Junior Doctors Network (JDN) was formally established during the 20th MASEAN Conference. Its formation was first proposed by IMA at

the 19th MASEAN Mid-Term Meeting held in Singapore last year.

MASEAN Secretary General Adj A/Prof Ng Chew Lip noted that the formation of the MASEAN JDN was an important milestone in the history of MASEAN. It was timely in view of the many issues experienced by junior doctors, such as long working hours, poor remuneration and lack of career development, which are common across countries. It was thus in everyone’s interest to ensure that junior doctors received good training and that their welfare was well taken care of. A/Prof Ng also shared that the SMA Doctors-in-Training Committee had developed into a strong community that provided support to junior doctors.

The MASEAN JDN will initially be chaired by Dr Tommy Dharmawan from IMA, with members from the other associations. The chairmanship will then be rotated among the countries on an alphabetical basis. Some of the activities being explored by the MASEAN JDN include monthly webinars and workshops, mentorship programmes, networking events, wellness initiatives and advocacy campaigns.



## MASEAN GOJ

Members of the MASEAN GOJ, led by A/Prof Mahesh Choolani, also met to discuss various initiatives including upcoming workshops in 2024 and 2025, and the publication of an e-book on medical writing, which would be distributed for free in the ASEAN region.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to MMA for their warm hospitality and look forward to the 20th MASEAN Mid-Term Conference, which will be hosted by the Medical Association of Thailand in Hua Hin in 2025. ♦

### Legend

1. Delegates at the 20th MASEAN Conference held in Penang
2. Adj A/Prof Ng Chew Lip (fifth from right) with the newly established MASEAN JDN

