

BIOCHEMISTRY BUZZ

October 2007 Issue, Volume 002



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MESSAGE FROM HOD

Dear Staff & Students,

Our Department celebrated our 80th anniversary dinner on 6 September 2007. We were honoured to have NUS President Professor Shih as our GOH and the presence of students, alumni and distinguished guests joining us in this milestone celebration. It was truly an enjoyable and memorable night where ties were renewed and strengthened while new ones were forged with great promise as we embark on our journey to the centennial anniversary.

During President's speech for the dinner, he believed that Biochemistry can achieve G-10-10 and likewise, I am confident that we do have what it takes to meet this new challenge. However this will only be possible if all of us, ie the faculty and the non-academic staff work together as one heartbeat to achieve this goal. The road ahead will be filled with many challenges. Some of these include the implementation of the new medical curriculum which will begin in AY08/09 and the strong emphasis now towards translational research and we urge our faculty to collaborate with the clinicians. We also need to innovate teaching methods to maintain our teaching excellence. In summary, we need to re-invent ourselves and rise to all these challenges and remain relevant and strong for the future.

OUR HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS

Academic Staff

- *Drs Markus Wenk and Theresa Tan* were promoted to Associate Professor with tenure with effect from 1 July 2007 and 1 January 2008 respectively.
- GEK1537 'The Search For Life On Other Worlds', anchored by *Drs Tang Bor Luen & Yeong Foong May* has been awarded the GEM Incentive for Semester 1, AY2006/07.

Administrative & Professional Staff

- *Ms Aniza A. Wahid*, together with *Ms Jocelyn Chng* from Dean's Office & *Ms Debbie Wong* from Biomedical ethics, successfully organized an administrative meeting for administrative staff from the School of Medicine & NUH corporate services on Wednesday, 12 September 2007, at Seminar Room M9. The objective is to establish networking and foster greater interaction between administrative staff in the School of Medicine.

Non-Academic Staff

- Responding to the Government's call for more babies, *Maslinda* and *Pan Ning* welcomed their 3rd additions to their families on 14 August & 6 August 07 respectively. We know that many others are also answering this 'national service'. Stay tuned for more updates in our next issue.



Maslinda and baby Sarah.



Pan Ning's Baby Boy, Zheng Chengxiang.

NOMINATIONS

The Department is pleased to nominate the following staff:

- *Dr Tang Bor Luen* and *A/P Teo Tian Seng* for the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award AY 06/07.
- *A/P Markus Wenk* for the Outstanding Researcher Award
- *Ms Aniza A. Wahid* for the NUS Quality Service Award.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF**Academic Staff**

- Dr Thilo Hagen
-Assumption of duty: 2 July 07



- A/P Thomas R Walczyk
-Assumption of duty: 2 July 2007
(Joint Appointment with Chemistry)



- Dr Yew Wen Shan
-Assumption of duty: 11 Sept 2007

**Teaching Assistant**

- Hu Yongli

**Research Fellows**

- Dr Darija Viducic
-Dr Chua Kim Lee's lab



- Dr Irwin Cheah
-Prof Barry Halliwell's lab



- Dr Sebastian Scheffer
-Prof Barry Halliwell's lab

**Senior Administrative Officer**

- Wu Yilian (Neurobiology Program)



Research Assistants

- Bai Jing
–Dr Theresa Tan's lab



- Chew Junfang
–Dr Deng Lih Wen's lab



- Choo Yin Yin
–A/P Chang Chan Fong's lab



- Gireedhar Venkatachalam
–A/P Marie Clement's lab



- Hii Chung Shii
–Dr Gan Yun Hwen's lab



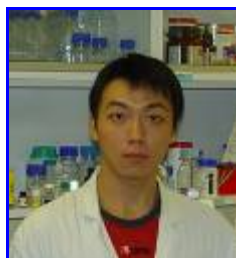
- Koh Thiam Joo
–Dr Chua Kim Lee's lab



- Krishnan Shanmugarajan
–A/P Marie Clement's lab



- Lu Chao
–Dr Jeffrey Armstrong's lab



Research Assistants

- Toh Soo Ting
–A/P Caroline Lee's lab



- Teh Ee Mei
–Dr Yeong Foong May's lab



- Zhou Lihan
–A/P Too Heng-Phon's lab

**Management Office Assistant**

- Amanda Lim Sook Min

**Laboratory Officers**

- Chua Chiang Lin Clement
–Prof Barry Halliwell (Neurobiology Program)



- Hor Hong Huen Catherine
–Dr Tang Bor Luen lab



- Zhou Shunhui Jason
–Dr Deng Lih Wen's lab

**Operations Associate**

- Zainon Bte Ismail (Neurobiology Program)



EVENTS

- *Staff Welfare Event – Bowling*

On 16 August 2007, the Staff Welfare Committee (headed by A/P Too Heng-Phon, Ms Irwani and Ms Sha Lanjie) organized a bowling competition at SAFRA Mount Faber. It was certainly an enjoyable afternoon filled with much laughter and fun.



The Food...



The long queue for the food...



Listening intently to Prof Too's "Pep Talk".



Cheering for the team.



Pose for the camera!



Giving away the prizes.

Team Awarded the 1st Prize:

1. Dr Sashi Kesavapany
2. Heiny
3. Koh Thiam Joo
4. Ma Cai Juan

Team Awarded the 3rd Prize:

1. Zhou Lihan
2. Ng Jin Kiat
3. Musfirah Musa
4. Dr Steve Cheung
5. Tang Soon Yew

Team Awarded the 2nd Prize:

1. Isabelle Chen
2. Dr Leroy Pakkiri
3. Wang Kai
4. A/P Tan Chee Hong

Best Male Bowler: Dr Sashi Kesavapany

Best Female Bowler: Aniza A. Wahid

Best Style (Male): Dr Thilo Hagen

Best Style (Female): Helen Isaac

EVENTS

■ *80TH Anniversary Dinner*

On 6 September 2007, the Department of Biochemistry celebrated our 80th Anniversary at Pioneer Spring Restaurant, SAFRA Mount Faber. The Department expresses our deep appreciation & thanks to the organizing committee and to all staff, students, alumni and guests for making the celebration a truly memorable and joyous occasion.



Biochemistry's 80th Anniversary Dinner.



The Organizing Committee.



Mingling...



Biochemistry's Handsome and Charming Gentlemen..



Dean, Yong Loo Lin Sch of Medicine, Prof John Wong(left) and Head of Biochemistry, Prof Barry Halliwell (right) welcoming NUS President Prof Shih Choon Fong (centre)



Dean, Yong Loo Lin Sch of Medicine, Prof John Wong(left) and Prof Britton Chance



Head of Biochemistry, Prof Barry Halliwell(left) and Deputy Head Of Biochemistry, A/P Tan Tin Wee (right)

VISITS

- The following faculty candidates were invited by HOD and have visited the Department:
 1. *Dr Mostaqul Huq*, Postdoctoral Associate,
University of Minnesota School of Medicine,
Minneapolis, USA
 2. *Dr Talat Nasim*,
Division of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, Guy's Tower, Guy's Hospital,
King's College London
 3. *Dr James R Mitchell*,
Erasmus University Rotterdam,
The Netherlands

GRANTS AWARDED

Our staff have been awarded the grants as stated below:

Month	Staff	Amount awarded	Project Title
July	A/P Marie Veronique Clement	S\$566,000 (by NMRC)	A study to assess the mechanism(s) involved in the down regulation of the NA ⁺ /H ⁺ exchanger 1 gene expression by peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor-gamma: a possible new strategy to selectively sensitize tumor cells to anticancer drug treatment.
	Dr Sashi Kesavapany	S\$35,000 (University Funding)	Metabonomic fingerprinting of neurodegenerative diseases
August	Dr Gan Yunn Hwen	S\$268,326.40 (by Ministry of Health, Singapore)	Identification of factors in diabetes that favor <i>Burkholderia pseudomallei</i> pathogenesis
	Dr Thilo Hagen	S\$50,000 (by NMRC)	Role of Protein degradation in cellular signaling and cancer
September	Professor Sit Kim Ping	S\$180,000 (by ARF)	Human Keloid Fibroblasts: A Potential Model for Study of Cancer Biology
	A/P Tan Tin Wee	S\$7,000 (by Educational Technologies CDTL, NUS)	The Implementation of Learning Activity Management Systems (LAMS) in the National University of Singapore

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TIER 1 PUBLICATIONS**June**

Too, H P, "Knockdown of Oct-4 or Sox-2 Attenuates Neurogenesis of Mouse Embryonic Stem Cells". *Stem Cells and Development*, 16, no. 3 (2007). (United States).

Wang, Zihua, Jingbo Wang, E Tantoso, BS Wang, A Tai, LLPJ Ooi, S S Chong and **C G L Lee***, "Signatures of Recent Positive Selection at the ATP-Binding Cassette (ABC) Drug Transporter Superfamily Gene Loci.". *Human Molecular Genetics*, 16, no. 11 (2007): 1367-1380. (United Kingdom).

July

Kesavapany, Sashi, "Cyclin-dependent kinase 5 differentially regulates the transcriptional activity of the glucocorticoid receptor through phosphorylation: clinical implications for the nervous system response to glucocorticoids and stress". *Molecular Endocrinology*, 21 (2007). (United States).

Kesavapany, Sashi, "Inhibition of Pin1 Reduces Glutamate-induced Perikaryal Accumulation of Phosphorylated Neurofilament-H in Neurons". *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, 18 (2007). (United States).

August

TAN, B E S, M Y R C LIANG, K G Yeoh, B Y J SO, C L Hew and **M C M Chung***, "Gastrointestinal (GI) Fluids Proteomics.". *Proteomics: Clinical Applications*, 1, no. 8 (2007): 820-833. (Germany).

September

Lareu RR, Arsianti I, Harve KS, Peng YX, **Raghunath M**. In Vitro Enhancement of Collagen Matrix Formation and Crosslinking for Applications in Tissue Engineering – a Preliminary Study . 2007. *Tissue Engineering*, 13(2):385-391 [3.7]

Lareu RR, Harve KS, Peng YX, Benny B, Chen C, Wang Z, Rajagopalan R, **Raghunath M**. 2007. Collagen matrix deposition is dramatically enhanced in vitro when crowded with charged macromolecules: the biological relevance of the excluded volume effect, *FEBS Lett*, Jun 12;581(14):2709-14. Epub 2007 May 21

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *Staff Welfare Event* in January 2008.
Organizing Committee: A/P Too HP, Ms Sha Lanjie and Ms Irwani.
Be prepared for an action-packed programme and fun-filled activities.
Further details will be provided soon!

BON VOYAGE

With a combined 50 years of service with the University, the following colleagues have decided to bid farewell to the Department for greener pastures. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours and hope to meet them again as Biochemistry Alumni who we celebrate future anniversaries with.

- 16 years – A/P Li Qiu-Tian
- 9 years – A/P Robert Yang
- 33 years – Lim Soh Chan
- 2 years – Chan Ying Ying
- 3 years – Pei Hui Pin