

Academy News Secretary, ACM

Warm greetings to all the members of the Academy of Clinical Microbiologists (ACM).

The ACM is nearing its 20th year after its inception in 1996. A vision initiated by Dr. Mabel Legori, the Founder President, ACM has grown from its initial strength of 18 members to the present status with 293 life members spread across India and a few abroad. The ACM has played a commendable role in propagating the practice of clinical microbiology, by linking the patient with the microbiologist. The CME programmes (continuing medical education) and workshops conducted by the ACM are aimed with this in mind.

On August 1, 2015 a one-day CME was conducted by The Department of Microbiology, Pushpagiri Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Research Centre (RC), Tiruvalla, Kerala, India on 'Antibiotics — from testing to treatment'. This academic feast that enlightened us on several issues related to bacterial antibiotic resistance mechanisms; their testing and interpretation had eminent speakers from different specialities. In the introductory speech, Dr. Seema K. Oommen, Professor and Head of Department (HOD) of Microbiology, PIMS and RC, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India, very interestingly highlighted the bacterial susceptibility trends at PIMS and RC, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India. This was followed by 'Clinical & Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) versus European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST) versus British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC)' by Dr. Kavita Raja, Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. She took us through the different approaches in antibiotic susceptibility testing in these systems. The next speaker Dr. Sohanlal, consultant microbiologist and infectious disease (ID) specialist Malabar Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS), Calicut, Kerala, India highlighted the challenges in detecting resistance in gram-negative

bacteria, in his topic 'Extended-spectrum β -lactamases (ESBLs), Amp C, carbapenemases — are we on the same page?' Dr. B. Appalaraju, Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology, PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research (PSGIMSR), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India enriched our knowledge on mechanisms of drug resistance in gram-positive bacteria. The next speaker, Dr. Mathew Pulicken, Head of Critical Care, PIMS and RC, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India gave an informative talk on multidrug-resistant (MDR) *Acinetobacter* and its treatment options. Following that, Dr. Shareek talked about the 'Perspectives of an ID physician on antibiotic use', making us think about how to handle certain critical situations that he had experienced. The last speaker, Dr. Sujith Chandy, Professor of Pharmacology, PIMS and RC, Tiruvalla, Kerala, India gave a very interesting lecture on antibiotic stewardship. A poster session was included as well, in which delegates from different institutions presented their research work. The CME was indeed a grand success.

A meeting of the ACM council members was held during the same day as well. Among the various agenda discussed, the plan on starting an External quality control program under the ACM was included as well. Dr. Sohanlal has volunteered for the same. We will start with a few centres initially and then extend to other centres

A 'Workshop on article writing for medical microbiologists' was conducted on September 17, 2015 and September 18, 2015, at SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India organised by the Achutha Menon centre for Health Science studies (AMCHSS), SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India in collaboration with the ACM. This was an activity of the Journal of the Academy of Clinical Microbiologists, taking into consideration the poor quality of writing observed in the articles submitted for publication.

Professor C.C. Kartha, Professor of Eminence, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology delivered the keynote address

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How to cite this article: Valsan C. Academy News by Secretary, ACM. *J Acad Clin Microbiol* 2015;17:71-2.

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:
www.jacmjournals.org

DOI:
10.4103/0972-1282.171867

in which he highlighted some of the common mistakes made even by the prominent journals. The workshop was conducted by the eminent faculty in SCTIMST, such as Dr. K.R. Thankappan (Professor and HOD, AMCHSS), Dr. V Raman Kutty (Professor, AMCHSS), Dr. T.K. Sundari Ravindran (Professor, AMCHSS), Dr. Anoop Kumar T [Scientist F, Molecular Medicine, Biomedical Technology Wing (BMT) Wing], Dr. Kavita Raja (Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology, SCTIMST), Dr. P. Sankara Sarma (Professor of Statistics, AMCHSS), Dr. Mala Ramanathan (Professor, AMCHSS), Dr. Biju Soman (Additional Professor, AMCHSS), Dr. Ravi Prasad Varma (Assistant Professor, AMCHSS), Dr. Manju R. Nair (Scientist C, AMCHSS) and Ms. Jissa V.T. (Scientist B and statistician, AMCHSS). The workshop emphasized the need for research, recording scientific data and publication

in our field and helped the delegates to enrich and equip themselves with the skills of article writing.

The first CME of 2016 is to be held at the Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India in February 2016 and the tentative theme of the CME will be newer trends in virology.

We expect wholehearted participation from all members to strengthen the ACM and take it to great heights.

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