

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES MANILA HEALTHSCAPE



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DOST Undersecretary for Research and Development Rowena Guevarra cites the department's research translation projects in health during her keynote speech at the NIH anniversary symposium.

NIH urged to do more translational health researches for Filipinos

The importance of and challenges in translating health researches to benefit more Filipinos were highlighted during the 21st anniversary conference of the UP Manila National Institutes of Health (NIH) held on February 28, 2019 with the theme, *Lab to Life: Translating Health Research for Filipinos*.

UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla lauded the accomplishments of the NIH in the last two decades and urged its researchers to meet the challenges. "Now, we are here to bridge the gap between research and translation. It is for this reason that we have to partner with those who understand – industry and government. This is not a competition but a partnership."

The Chancellor urged the researchers in the audience to seriously look at their datasets and attempt to translate them into policy, device, or clinical guidelines. These datasets have to be placed on platforms of translation.

For her part, NIH Executive Director Eva Cutiongco-Dela Paz said that the NIH is an extraordinary social invention, a community of teachers and scholars performing a unique social role – a duty for the public good. Within this milieu, the NIH is committed to excellence and relevance as the national health research center.

In his message, UP President Danilo Concepcion hoped that the NIH will inspire more researchers to help "find solutions to the woes of our countrymen,

especially contemporary problems that require immediate solutions."

Recognizing the NIH successes in the past, he urged the Institute to do more (researches) in all health fields; strengthen partnership with industry, other professions, and alumni worldwide; and engage the experts and envision output early on in the research to be able to come up with better research outcomes that meet the people's needs.

In her keynote address, Department of Science and Technology Undersecretary for Research and Development Dr. Rowena Cristina Guevarra explained the state of Filipino health science research and innovation as well as the importance of translation. "Health science in the Philippines has evolved and changed substantially over the past decades. Solutions derived from medicinal plants, local sources, and the innovative methods derived from research remain to be the most viable path in securing the health and well-being of the Filipinos."

She cited the DOST's Tuklas Lunas Program in harnessing the potential of Philippine biodiversity to discover and develop local functional food, herbal supplements, standardized herbal drugs, and drug candidates by identifying and characterizing high-value purified active compounds derived from marine and land sources for specific therapeutic indications.

According to the DOST undersecretary and UP professor, the DOST's Hospital Equipment and Biomedical Devices program aims to develop safe, reliable, and affordable medical devices. These include diagnostics and biological markers for diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer.

Some devices that are in varying stages of development and testing are the Axis Total Knee Replacement System, AGAPAY (cost-effective rehab system that provides uppler limb movements for post stroke and injured patients), and Reliefvent. She made special mention of Dr. Raul Destura's Biotech Lamp Dengue Diagnostic Kit that detects dengue faster, cheaper, and more accurately (*please see UP Manila Health Ripples July-Dec 2017 issue*).

She recognized that the technologies generated by *lagundi* and *sambong* were the most successfully commercialized government-funded researches. At their peak levels, there were 24 licenses for eight different kinds of herbal technologies for the two plants. The National Integrated Research Program on Medicinal Plants led by retired UP College of Medicine pharmacology professor Dr. Nelia Maramba conducted the researches on these medicinal plants that were first commercialized in 1997.

She explained that technology commercialization is now the responsibility of the research institution. The DOST provides assistance in

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Formerly the UP Manila Newsletter, the new name, UP Manila Healthscape, signifies the wide spectrum of areas in health and allied sciences that the newsletter wishes to disseminate through news and feature articles on academic programs, researches, continuing education and public service activities, and other events.

First Cancer-Phenome Biobank in the country inaugurated

The Philippine General Hospital unveiled a first-of-its-kind biobank facility in the country on February 18, 2019. Located at the PGH Science Complex, the Cancer-Phenome Biobanking System and Biomonitoring Program or simply the UP-PGH Biobank envisions to provide quality and standardized collection and storage of biospecimens to be used for biomedical researches directed towards the advancement of precision medicine.

A joint initiative of the University of the Philippines and University of California-San Francisco, and funding from the Commission on Higher Education Philippine-California Advanced Research Institutes (CHED-PCARI) through the Institute for Health Innovation and Translational Medicine, the new biobank will allow participation in collaborative research activities and the establishment of a community of practice focused on biobanking of biological samples.

"This project can lead to policy. Because we have local data, we can now pass policy recommendations to the proper government authorities so that we can make sure that the environment can be safer for our people," said UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla.

Echoing Chancellor Padilla's statement, CHED Chairman Dr. Prospero De Vera III said, "I'm very happy because this project brings us closer to a culture where we make decisions and we design programs based on data." He also noted that this facility contributes to UP's role as the national university, leading the other universities to be involved in this culture of decision-making based on data.

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UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla, UP College of Medicine Dean Charlotte Chiong, CHED Chairman Dr. Prospero De Vera III, and PGH Director Gerardo Legaspi lead the inauguration of the UP-PGH Biobank.

UP RANKING IN ASIA-PACIFIC RISES

The University of the Philippines moves up to the top 101-110 universities of the Asia-Pacific region, leaping from its place in the 151-160 bracket in 2018 and in the 201+ bracket in 2017, based on the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia-Pacific University Ranking released on February 20, 2019.

To come up with the ranking, THE analyzes universities across East Asia, Southeast Asia and Oceania using the same performance indicators as the THE World University Rankings 2019. This year, the ranking for Asia-Pacific universities features the top 300. UP and De La Salle University are the only universities in the Philippines that made it to the table.

THE's Asia-Pacific ranking of UP reflects the latter's rise in the World University Rankings from its place in the 800+ bracket in 2017, to the 601-800 bracket in 2018, and to 501-600 in 2019.

Based on the THE rankings for 2019, UP also ranks 87th among the top 442 universities from 43 emerging economies. Among the top 1,250 world universities, UP is in the 126-150 bracket for Clinical, Pre-Clinical and Health subjects; in the 501-600 bracket for both Life Sciences and Social Sciences; in the 601+ bracket for Engineering and Technology, and Computer Science; and in the 801+ bracket in Physical Sciences. In Asia, UP's latest ranking was 156th, securing a high spot among the top 350 universities in 25 countries.

The THE university rankings cover research-intensive universities across their core missions of teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook, using 13 calibrated performance indicators. THE is a London-based publication. Its calculation of the rankings has been subject to independent audit by professional services firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

Source: www.up.edu.ph



The Philippine Cancer-Phenome Biobank Project held its first symposium on February 18, 2019 on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) and their effects on health as part of its inauguration (*please see separate story*).

The speakers were experts from the University of California in San Francisco (UCSF) Dr. Linda Giudice and Dr. Roy Gerona, UP College of Medicine Associate Professor and PGH attending consultant Dr. Erlinda Llamas Clark, and UP Diliman professor Dr. Michael Velarde.

Dr. Clark defined EDCs as synthetic materials that interfere with the body's endocrine system. They interfere with natural hormones and they regulate many important physiological activities by exhibiting

hormone-like effects that disturb signals of an organism. She added that chemicals in the environment may be disrupting the hormones and causing health problems both in wildlife and humans.

“US and global chemical production has increased several hundred-fold since World War II and people become exposed to these chemicals in numerous ways, such as in agriculture, use of personal care and household products, indoor and outdoor air pollution and water pollution,” stated Dr. Giudice, Professor and Chair Emeritus at the UCSF Reproductive Sciences. She explained that three generations at once are exposed to environmental conditions. The mother is the first generation, the fetus is the second generation, and the reproductive cells of the

fetus is the third generation. She added that epigenetic change must be observed in the fourth generation that was never directly exposed to the toxicant because there are several chemicals that have transgenerational effects.

Environmental contaminants, she added, are found in pregnant women and to some extent in babies who are born pre-polluted. These include tobacco smoke, lead, perfluorinated compounds, perchlorate, mercury, phthalates, and bisphenol A. “They correlate with promoting obesity (obesogens) while others are diabetogens, thyroid and neurodevelopmental disruptors, and reproductive and fertility disruptors.”

Dr. Giudice mentioned possible solutions to EDCs. First is to replace hazardous chemicals processes and products with safer alternatives. However, she warned that many of the so-called safer alternatives in the market are not really safe at all as some are even more disruptive.

Next, is to establish a methodology to evaluate the data on the effects of environmental toxins on human health. “This is called biomonitoring which is the measurement of the body burden of environmental

chemicals or their metabolites in biological samples. The most common biological samples used for biomonitoring are blood and urine,” stated Dr. Gerona who is assistant professor at the UCSF Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences. Dr. Gerona presented the findings of the Philippine California Advanced Research Institute (PCARI)-sponsored research of UP-PGH and UP Diliman that looked into the possible influence of environmental health in the etiology of breast cancer. In this study, 75 breast cancer patients and 75 healthy controls were recruited to donate their urine and hair samples and for the administration of an exposure questionnaire.

“We measured about 41 EDCs in 145 subjects. Thirty of the 41 were also bio monitored by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHAMES) which gave us the ability to actually compare the levels that we're seeing here in the Philippines to the United States. Nineteen of the 30 biomonitored have equal or greater levels in the Philippine cohort. Thirteen of the 19 have about 3 to 12 times higher in the Philippine cohort. We found six EDCs in the Philippines that are not

biomonitored by (NHAMES) and nine EDCs were significantly higher in cancer patients than the healthy controls,” reported Dr. Gerona.

Dr. Giudice enumerated measures on how to limit exposure to EDCs and improve health. These are eating organic food; washing all fruits and vegetables and hands thoroughly; minimizing the use of plastics, dry cleaning, canned goods, and pesticides; no to smoking, second-hand smoke, and alcohol; using alternative household cleaning products, such as soap and ammonia, baking soda and fresh air; using phthalate-free makeup and other personal care products; avoiding hand sanitizers and digital paper receipt handling; avoiding high particulate matter air pollution if possible; and avoiding lead and other heavy metal exposures.

“The PGH Biobank can help with the bio-monitoring program and the ability to culture Filipino cells that can test not only endocrine disrupting levels but also other types of diseases and these are for drug discovery or precision medicine. We are hoping that this biobank can be more national (in scope) and not just here in PGH,” said Dr. Velarde.

The symposium was sponsored by the Commission on Higher Education and PCARI.

CHARMAINE LINGDAS

FIRST CANCER-PHENOME BIOBANK...

While ensuring patient confidentiality, the biobank that will house patient-derived quality specimen will support high-level research nationwide to further the understanding of the genetic and molecular characteristics of cancer among Filipinos.

With the inauguration of this biobank, PGH Director Gerardo Legaspi expressed the hospital's commitment to provide solutions affecting the health of the Filipinos through research. “It is our mandate to make sure that the researches happening in PGH flourish even further. This is truly a bench-to-bedside activity given its proximity to our residents, fellows, and consultants.”

Earlier, a forum was held where studies on *Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals that Affect Women's Reproductive Health* were presented (see separate article).

“This bricolage of being able to put together scientists from the United States and different units of the university go together and create new ground,” said UP College of Medicine Dean Charlotte Chiong. “We should emphasize the spirit of *bayanihan* as a core value even in science and technology. If it can be something that can be shared among institutes and different agencies in government, this will push our country forward,” she added.

Chancellor Padilla stated that the Biobank will be a crucial player in an upcoming cancer research project *Initiatives for Precision Medicine for Filipinos: The Cancer Genomics Program* of UP Manila together with the Philippine Genome Center and various cancer centers in the country.

“The Cancer-Phenome Biobank will soon be part of a network of biobanks. The Philippine Council for Health Research and Development is taking a lead in setting up this network. It started with the *Tuklas Lunas* biobanks now in UP Diliman and UP Los Baños. It will soon set up the biobanks for genomics and clinical specimen. With the network in our place, our researchers will have access to samples for future researches,” the Chancellor added.

The caner-phenome biobank will not only act as a conservation facility for biological specimens but eventually lead to personalized treatment for individual patients and identify the environmental factors that increase the risk of developing cancer when people are exposed to. With these and more, the newly-established biobank is poised to fight cancer in what is envisioned as a shorter time period than what it will usually take.

ANNE MARIE ALTO

The PGH Department of Orthopedics inaugurated its newly renovated conference room dedicated to the department's founder, Dr. Ambrosio Tangco, on 18 February 2019 at the PGH Spine Unit.

“Our conference room may have brought probably fear and dread during our residency years, but more than that, it is a place of learning, a venue for exchanging ideas, and a place where we can bond and form friendships. All of these in pursuit of excellence for the treatment of orthopaedic patients,” stated Dr. Joseph Garvy L. Lai, Executive Officer of the department. Former chairperson Dr. Edward Wang said that at 47 years, the department has graduated close to 200 orthopedic surgeons and was being run by 30 consultants - men and women who carried the torch of leadership and relevance on both the national and regional level.

“For all of these, we thank the



Dr. Ambrosio Tangco Conference Room inaugurated

original mission of Dr. Tangco to whom we dedicate this conference room,” said Dr. Wang.

Dr. Tangco graduated from the UP College of Medicine and trained in orthopaedics at Harvard University after the war. He joined PGH in 1948 and became head of the Section of Orthopedics of the Department of Surgery

from 1952 to 1962. When he became a member of the UP Board of Regents (BOR) in 1961, Dr. Tangco continued to pursue his dream of establishing a Department of Orthopedics. The department was born on June 22, 1971 through a resolution passed by the BOR at its 810th meeting with Dr. Jose V. Silao as first chairperson.

“Without the visionary leaders

a century ago, we will not be where we are right now. So we have the responsibility to continue that tradition, we have the responsibility to make sure it even gets stronger,” stated UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla during the inauguration.

With the department conducting a large number of postgraduate courses a year

among all the departments, Dr. Wang said this would not be possible without the dedication of its faculty who, for many years, have kept it on the map of medicine with cutting edge and state-of-the-art courses and workshops. He added that a large part of the funds for the renovation came from the postgraduate courses, with *OrthoRocks* as the biggest which is an orthopaedic review of core knowledge that caters to 300-350 participants a year from all over the country. He acknowledged the donors to the project, namely, Arturo Dy of Pan Pacific Industrial Sales Co. Inc. (Panpisco), Valentino Go, Jeffrey and Wendy Keng of Pacific Glass, and Wilson So.

PGH Director Gerardo Legaspi announced that the spine services will be transferred to an integrated spine service unit in the new building, the construction of which will be funded by a private donation of P700 million.

CHARMAINE LINGDAS

UPM announces *Ulasimang Bato* licensing

Ulasimang Bato, a medicinal plant used by generations of Filipinos to treat painful joints caused by hyperuricemia (high uric acid in the blood) is now a patented herbal formula up for licensing to pharmaceutical companies. The Letters Patent for *Ulasimang Bato* (popularly known as *pansit-pansitan*) was granted in February 2019 by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL).

This news was announced on 11 February 2019 by the National Integrated Research Program on Medicinal Plants (NIRPROMP) of UP Manila during the a technology presentation held at the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care in Quezon City.

Representatives from pharmaceutical companies and toll manufacturers, namely, Azarias Pharmaceutical Laboratories, Bauch Philippine Laboratories, Greenext LifeScience Corporation, Innogen Pharmaceutical Company, La Croesus Pharma Incorporated, Nattural Quality Corporation, New Marketlink Pharmaceutical Corporation, Pharmacare Products Company, Pascual Laboratories Incorporated, RiteMed Philippines Inc., and Trevenodd Corporation, graced the event. NIRPROMP, composed of faculty researchers from UP Los Baños, UP Manila, and UP Diliman, is credited with

technologies generated from researches on several medicinal plants that started in 1977. The most popular are *lagundi* and *sambong* which are cures for cough, colds and other common ailments. At their peak levels, the two herbal plants acquired 24 licenses for eight different kinds of herbal technologies that were first commercialized in 1997.

UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla, in a message read by Vice Chancellor for Research Dr. Armando Crisostomo, cited the academe-industry-government collaboration as the best way to translate scientific innovation and as a continuation of championing the use of safe and effective locally developed herbal medicines to improve the people's access to quality health care. PITAHC Director General Dr. Annabelle Pabiona-De Guzman presented the organization's mandate and activities, future plans, and its contributions to the research and development activities of NIRPROMP.

During the presentation, NIRPROMP Head Dr. Nelia Cortes-Maramba explained how hyperuricemia develops in a person through an unhealthy diet or the inability of the body to get rid of natural waste products fast enough. This situation leads to gout as well as an acidic blood and urine.

According to the Philippine Rheumatology Association, gout affects more than 1.6 million Filipinos and is steadily rising due to an unhealthy lifestyle. Doctors usually prescribe medicines like Allopurinol or Febuxostat but most local folks use *ulasimang bato* for its analgesic, anti-gout, and diuretic activity. This common herb can be eaten raw, cooked with vegetables and meat, prepared as tea, or formed into a poultice for topical application over skin wounds and inflammation.

But *ulasimang bato* cannot just be planted and eaten. Dr. Maramba emphasized that the effective kind of the plant must be grown in sites where air, soil, and water are free from pesticide residues, toxic heavy metals that exceed specified amounts, toxic organisms, aflatoxins, and a microbial population that exceeds 100,000 colony forming units per gram.

She mentioned other requirements, such as proper propagation and establishment, crop maintenance, and harvesting and cleaning. Since sites with these qualifications are not often possible, a manufactured leaf tablet version is the best answer.

Clinical trials were held to compare *Ulasimang Bato* tablet (80mg/kg/day) with Allopurinol. Tests showed that



both are efficacious in reducing serum uric acid (SUA) levels among hyperuricemic patients. Both are tasteless, have pleasant odor, and easy to swallow. However, in Clinical Trial 3, some patients treated with Allopurinol suffered adverse effects, such as nausea, gastric pain, dizziness, rashes, etc. while none were experienced by the herbal tablet group.

In terms of cost, the leaf tablet will be much cheaper than Allopurinol when sold in the market.

For pharmaceutical companies interested in applying for licensing of the patented technology, please contact UPM-TTBDO, 3105727 or 3105731 or send an email to ttbdo@post.upm.edu.ph. **FEDELYNN JEMENA**

NIH URGED TO DO MORE TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH... identifying patentable inventions, protecting Intellectual Property, and supporting them until product pre-commercialization.

"We are waiting for the new IRR of the Technology Transfer Act of 2009 to be approved by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines. Once it comes out, the process of having the Fairness Opinion Board assessment and opinion report will become faster as the delay in this step is usually the complaint of researchers," the DOST Undersecretary stated.

She added that the DOST-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development has partnered with the Department of Health in Advancing Health through Evidence-Assisted Decisions with Health Policy and Systems Research (AHEAD-HPSR) Program. This is an improved strategy to implement the DOH's medium-term health policy and systems research agenda and its ecosystem.

Plenary and panel sessions
The first plenary session that followed the opening program highlighted the benefits and challenges of research utilization for the public good with Counsellor **Dr. David Simmons** of the World Intellectual Property

Blended learning workshops for faculty held



The UP Manila Interactive Learning Center (ILC) recently held several video production workshops to help faculty members design effective teaching videos. The workshops were held on February 11, 13, 18 and 20 with a total of 62 attendees in line with the Ituro project.

The iTURO is an Academic Program Improvement project of the ILC as a Faculty Grant for Blending Learning worth P50,000. Any UP Manila faculty

can apply for any course taught in UP Manila. Modules within courses are not eligible for the grant. For team-taught courses, the award will be split among members if the faculty teaching the course applies as a team. A faculty can apply as sole recipient of the grant with the consent of the other faculty teaching the course. The final output is a course on the UP Manila Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which includes the three teaching videos and the learning resources.

Organization as speaker. For the second session, **Mrs. Carmen Peralta** of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines discussed how health research contributes to Philippine development.

Meanwhile, experts in the fields of health science and technology from different universities, industry, and government shared their ideas and experiences on research translation and their respective innovations that are in varying stages of application.

Panel 1 presenters **Dr. Nilo Bugtai** of the De La Salle University Biomedical Devices Innovation and e-Health Research Group, **Michael Peralta, MSPT, MSPHysio, LL.M., PTRP** of the University of Santo Tomas Office of the Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation, and **Mr. Ace Acosta** of the Slipstream Commercialization and Innovation Liberation Front took part in the first panel with the topic *Paving the Way to Success: Creating Ideas that Matter* with **Dr. Salvador Caoili** of the UP College of Medicine as moderator.

Panel 2 discussions, in a nutshell, highlighted the academic-industry partnership wherein the speakers narrowed down how both parties can actively engage with one another in order to boost the innovation's impact and eventually ensure the success of the collaboration. RiteMED Philippines President **Jose Maria Ochave, Dr. Bienvenido Balotro**, and Valea Health Co-founder **Dr. Lorraine Faeldon** spoke about this topic with the title *Working with Industry: The Merit of Collaboration* with **Dr. Camilo Roa** as moderator.

Panel 3 discussions helped researchers understand the process they first need to go through – such as securing copyrights or

trademarks, patents, utility models, and industrial designs – before commercializing for their products' or innovations' protection.

For the topic, *If I have an invention... A Dummies Guide in Seeking Protection and Partnerships*, **Patricia San Jose** of the UPM-TTBDO and **Engr. Jerry Ligaya** of the Technological University of the Philippines were the speakers with **Mr. Cedrik Gayares** of the UP System Technology Transfer and Business Development Office as moderator.

Panel 4 consisted of scientist and inventors who showcased their own Filipino-made biomedical-related products that are in the process of commercialization. With the topic *Future Technologies to Look Forward To*, **Dr. Enrico Paringit** of the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development-DOST introduced a database that collects and stores massive amount of information that will be used in crafting inventions; **Engr. Jasper Araña** of Adamson University introduced a pillow for sleep apnea; Valea Health CEO **Gia Santos** introduced an SMS and chat-based health assistant; and **Dr. Erna Arollado** of the NIH Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences presented an herbal supplement for iron deficiency and other hematological disorders but without the usual side effects of commercially available iron supplements.

For the last panel discussion, **Ms. Maria Christina Ibañez** of Miriam Innovation Center, **Dr. Ricardo Quintos II** of the UP College of Medicine, and **Dr. Gonzalo Serafica** of the USAID STRIDE spoke on the topic, *I Can, We Can, You Can* which highlighted the designers inside every individual.

CYNTHIA VILLAMOR

UHC ACT SIGNED INTO LAW...

Following the enactment of the bill, the formulation of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) has to contend with several controversial and unclear issues and provisions that need to be defined and operationalized. To help provide evidence-based inputs to the IRR, the UP Manila Health Policy Hub has been conducting roundtable discussions (RTDs) since 2018 on the essential but ambiguous aspects of the law. This is part of UP Manila's goal to facilitate health policy management through policy statements, briefs, and policy analysis papers which ensure that cutting edge policy issues are anticipated and/or discussed by different stakeholders. As a result, the university can come out with a position, recommendation, or policy direction.

The first RTD was entitled "Beyond Hospital Beds: Equity, Service, and Quality" held on Nov. 29, 2018. This expounded on the policy implications of

the Senate version of the bill to the Philippine public health system. The second, held on Dec. 6, 2018, aimed to identify the health services that should be classified as individual-based or population-based and clarified the financing roles of the funding institutions (*see UP Manila Newsletter November-December 2018 issue*). The third RTD provided a status of existing service delivery networks and the roles of provincial and municipal health officers in the current setting of devolved health care. The forum served as a staging ground for possible policy gaps and discussed how to come up with realistic, systematic, and sustainable interventions.

The fourth RTD, entitled "Financing Health Services: Co-payments and Personnel Cost," was conducted on January 24, 2019 to identify services requiring co-payments and minimize duplication in financing personnel cost in public health facilities.

Dr. Hilton Lam, UP Manila Health Policy Hub Chair

presented the policy brief highlighting the different types of cost sharing and their good features given as (i) to decrease moral hazard, (ii) to decrease behavioral hazard, and (iii) to decrease catastrophic risk and to encourage healthier lifestyles. He explained the unique features of PhilHealth as a social insurance. Unlike other kinds of insurance, PhilHealth is an insurance of the first peso with a support value of 33%. Nevertheless, it also functions as an insurance of the last peso through recipients of the 'no balance billing' and the coverage of catastrophic care through the Z-benefit package. A proposed flowchart for identifying health services requiring co-payments was presented for discussion. Furthermore, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of different options in mitigating duplication of personnel cost was tackled. For more details on each of the points, please go to: www.upm.edu.ph. (Based on reports provided by the UP Manila Health Policy Hub).

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

UPCN joins project on the basics of skin and wound care



Participants of the Woundpedia Intermediate Course, January 31 – February 1, 2019

The WoundPedia™ Wound Care Basics (WWCB) is an interprofessional course designed to introduce physicians, nurses, and other health professionals to the basics of skin and wound care.

The objective is to provide a foundational educational experience for the generalist health care professional on the essentials of basic skin and

wound care. For the healthcare professional with previous wound care education and/or those who completed the basic course, the WoundPedia™ Wound Care Intermediate Course (WWCI) was designed.

Both are two-day intensive courses offered in partnership with WoundPedia™ through a generous educational grant

from CalmoSeptine®. WoundPedia™ is a non-profit Canadian organization that aims to improve the lives of persons with chronic wounds worldwide.

Since 2013, the WoundPedia Basic and Intermediate Courses have been serving as valued educational programs in the Philippines. Under the direction of a nurse-doctor

team from Canada, USA, Bahrain and the UAE, over 300 health care professionals both civilian and military have benefitted from these free courses.

In 2016, the offering of the course was made through the military nurses of the Philippines. In 2019, the University of the Philippines Manila College of Nursing

joined the partnership as the Continuing Professional Development provider and recruiter of the non-military nurses.

Current course directors are **Dr. R. Gary Sibbald**, Professor of Medicine and Public Health, University of Toronto; CEO WoundPedia, Project Lead ECHO Ontario, Skin and Wound Care; Director of the

International Interprofessional Wound Care Course (IIWCC) & Masters of Science Community Health (Prevention and Wound Care); Dalla Lana Faculty of Public Health, University of Toronto, Canada; Co-Editor in Chief, *Advances in Skin and Wound Care* and **Dr. Elizabeth A. Ayello**, Faculty, Excelsior College School of Nursing; Co-Editor in Chief, *Advances in Skin and Wound Care*; President, World Council of Enterostomal Therapists (WCET®); and Senior Adviser, Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing, NYU, New York, USA.

Future directions of the collaboration include the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement to continue the offering of the basic and intermediate courses including the development of blended learning format of the courses, interprofessional collaboration in the care of patients through the nursing clinics of UPCN with the support of the PGH Department of Nursing Service and other medical departments, and research collaboration between partners.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

PGH pioneers the use of 3D printed prosthesis



A patient shows his 3d printed limb prosthesis during the program.

The PGH Department of Orthopedics Prosthetics and Orthotics Section with the PGH Department of Rehabilitation

Medicine, has partnered with Instalimb Inc. and Japan International Cooperation System to bring the new

technology of 3D printable prosthetics to the country.

“This endeavor is consistent with UP Manila’s mission of being in the forefront of innovations that will impact the lives of our patients,” stated Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla during the Sofia Inciong-Paciano Professorial Chair Lecture entitled “3D Printed Prosthesis in the Philippines: Demand Dilemma Direction” held on January 29, 2019 at the UP Manila Museum of a History of Ideas.

The event was attended by representatives from Mapua University, De La Salle University, Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center, San Lazaro Hospital, University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, the Philippine Orthopedic Center, San Juan De Dios Hospital, National Council on Disability Affairs, Employees Compensation Commission, and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

“I understand the value of the project and we’d like to move ahead and engage as many hospitals as possible so that we

can generate the data that will make a recommendation for the coverage and benefits package of PhilHealth,” Chancellor Padilla said.

“We need a customized version for every patient. It’s not a one limb, one prosthesis for every patient. The 3D printable prosthetics is actually the opportunity for us to customize what we are giving to our patients,” she added.

“Globally and locally, there is a huge demand for prosthesis. In the Philippines, 1.8 million of Filipinos needed prosthesis in 2018 and is projected that by 2050, five million will need prosthesis,” said Dr. Josephine R. Bundoc, Head of the PGH Department of Orthopedics Prosthetics and Orthotics Section.

“The huge demand for prosthesis is mismatched with very low access. This is attributed globally to environmental markers: social, physical and occupational, inadequate and not strategically located facilities, and lack of trained personnel. Additional factors in the Philippines are prohibitive cost, limited local suppliers and manufacturers,

and the amputee’s own belief and attitudes,” she pointed out.

“In 3D printed prosthesis, we just scan the residual limb and digitally model the prosthesis design and start printing. It is very personalized and customized. Designs can be improved rapidly and even the most complex residual limb shapes can be accommodated,” she stated.

Dr. Bundoc explained that the traditional below the knee prosthesis service entails 52 hours and 15 minutes and costs Php 30,000, while the 3D printed prosthesis only entails 18 hours at the cost of Php 10,000. She mentioned the limitations of 3D printed prosthesis, such as the need for a high-end 3D printer to produce highest quality prosthesis, no power interruptions, need for trained prosthetists and physicians, and a shorter life-span.

Dr. Paul Matthew S. Liao, Prosthetics and Orthotics Fellow, enumerated the advantages of the 3D printed prosthesis based on his team’s experiences: much lighter than the conventional prosthesis, can be used in activities involving

water, and can be done in 3-5 days compared to the traditional prosthesis which entails three months.

“We developed this technology in Japan, but we hope that the implementation will start in the Philippines. We started a demonstration experiment for commercialization of 3D printed prosthetic foot. This demonstration experiment was adopted by the Japan External Trade Organization’s Japan-ASEAN New Industry Creation Demonstration Project, Japan International Cooperation System (JICS), and jointly implemented with the PGH). Through this commercialization, we aim to realize our vision of creating a world where all people in need can obtain prosthetics and orthotics,” stated Mr. Yutaka Tokushima, CEO of Instalimb Inc.

CHARMAINE LINGDAS

ERRATUM

In the UP Manila Newsletter November-December 2018 issue, the title of the article on the anniversary of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology on page 5 should have been **UPCM Biochem & Molecular Biology Dept marks 65th year**. Our apologies.

Northern Mindanao local chief execs complete leadership and governance training

The UP Manila College of Public Health (CPH) conferred plaques of recognition and certificates of completion of the Municipal Leadership and Governance Program (MLGP) to 37 graduates from Northern Mindanao during a colloquium held on Feb. 28, 2019 at the UP Manila Theater.

CPH is the academic partner of the Department of Health-Northern Mindanao Center for Development (DOH-NMCHD) in the conduct of the MLGP, a two-year, three-module leadership program that aims to improve health outcomes, enhance local health systems, and increase community participation through its Centers for Health Development.

The graduates were composed of local chief executives (LCEs), municipal health officers, and municipal local government operations officers from Northern Mindanao's 13 municipalities. Beyond just a culminating activity for the MLGP, the colloquium served as an avenue for learning through the MLGP experiences of the municipal health leaders presented as personal stories of transformation.

The stories provided a deeper understanding of the health challenges faced by the local health systems and lessons on the leadership responses and effective strategies, health gains, and persistent but not impervious issues on primary healthcare, service

delivery network, and social determinants of health.

During this colloquium, the municipal mayors of Mambajao (Camiguin), Pangantucan (Bukidnon), Manticao, and Sugbongcogon (Misamis Oriental) shared their inspiring leadership journeys. An expert panel composed of Dr. Adriano P. Suba-an, Assistant Regional Director of DOH-NMCHD; Mr. Austere A. Panadero, Executive Vice President of the Zuellig Family Foundation (ZFF); and Dr. Paolo Victor N. Medina, the Assistant Professor of Community Medicine at the UP College of Medicine probed the public narratives of these LCEs and lauded their commitment to the betterment of their constituents' health.

Following the confirmation of the MLGP graduates by CPH Dean Romeo Quizon and the acknowledgment of partners by Dr. Nimfa Torrizo, Regional Director of DOH-NMCHD, the event was capped by the keynote address of Dr. Abdullah B. Dumama, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Health of the Visayas and Mindanao Field Implementation and

Coordination Team. Asec. Dumama encouraged the MLGP graduates to bring reforms to their communities by recognizing that they are part of both the problem and the solution in their respective localities and influencing the community to think and act proactively towards improving their health.

With technical assistance from the ZFF that trains academic partners like UPM-CPH on the Bridging Leadership Framework, the DOH continues to develop LCEs and other local leaders into effective health advocates to ensure successful implementation of health programs.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE



Local chief executives share their personal stories of transformation during the Municipal Leadership and Governance Colloquium for Northern Mindanao, 28 February 2019, UP Manila Theater; (L-R) Hon. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo (Mambajao, Camiguin), Hon. Miguel Silva, Jr. (Pangantucan, Bukidnon), Hon. Antonio Baculio (Manticao, Misamis Oriental), and Hon. Mildred Mondigo (Sugbongcogon, Misamis Oriental).

ADVANCED BIORISK TRAINING MARKS 5TH EDITION WITH 23 GRADUATES



The National Training Center for Biosafety and Biosecurity (NTCBB) under the UP Manila National Institutes of Health held a ceremony for the 5th Philippine Advanced Biorisk Officer's Training (PhABOT) graduates on February 1, 2019.

The PhABOT is a five-week intensive training which provides participants with new knowledge on the biological risks of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and microorganisms, all aimed to improve Philippine public health. Given in three sessions over a period of one year, it is done through interactive lectures based on Global Biological Risk Management Curriculum modules, group exercises and workshops, hands-on demonstrations, and field application trips to other facilities.

For this and for the previous four batches, the NTCBB is conducting the training jointly with the Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) of the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction. This is in conjunction with other institutions such as the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and global agencies specializing in various areas of biosecurity.

"Today marks our fifth run of the ABOT program. We have created a lot of programs for the country and generated new expertise and stellar graduates who created their own programs and societies to increase advocacy and knowledge base in biosecurity and biosafety in the Philippines," NTCBB Director Raul Destura told the 23 graduates composed of researchers, educators, administrators, and medical practitioners

from different universities, hospitals, and other institutions in the country.

He disclosed that the NTCBB would release online courses or programs in the next couple of years for the skills development of the advanced officers.

Major Jason Turner of the US Army and DTRA chief stated that their mission is to enable the Department of Defense and their international partners to counter and deter weapons of mass destruction. "Obviously a biological pathogen, whether accidentally released or intentionally released, qualifies for such a concern and frankly, we care about stuff that isn't necessarily zoonic in nature as well. DTRA's approach to dealing with these issues is to understand the networks that enable them. We try to understand the networks of how that happened. There are various networks as well for terrorism purposes. The great thing about you is that being CBOs, you are now part of the network that counters those other networks," added Maj. Turner.

In addition to the holding of the ABOT program, UP Manila is a contributor to the ongoing development of the National Biorisk Framework of the Philippines through the NTCBB in collaboration with the NIH's Institute for Health Policy and Development Studies. This framework will contain the pillars, hallmarks, and guideposts of biorisk assessment and management that will help significantly in making public health communities, policy makers, institutions and researchers aware of biological risks and their mitigation.

CHARMAINE LINGDAS



Thirty-seven (37) graduates, composed of local chief executives, municipal health officers, and municipal local government operations officers of thirteen (13) participating municipalities of Northern Mindanao strike a pose with the Health Leadership and Governance Program (HLGP) Team and Development Management Officers (DMOs) of DOH-NMCHD, Bridging Leadership (BL) faculty trainers and staff from UPM-CPH, and guests during the Municipal Leadership and Governance Colloquium for Northern Mindanao, 28 February 2019, UP Manila Theater

Agreement with Nagoya City University renewed for studies on Emerging Viruses



The MOU signing coincides with the College of Public Health 92nd foundation celebration, from left, Dr. Kaori Asamitsu, Dr. Evalyn Roxas, Professor Marohren Tobias-Altura, Dr. Fresthel Monica Climacosa, Retired Professor Nina Gloriani, Professor Emeritus Takashi Okamoto, Chancellor Carmencita Padilla, Dean Romeo Quizon, Professor Kazunobu Sawamoto and Dr. Tammy dela Rosa.

Nagoya City University (NCU) and the UP Manila College of Public Health (CPH) renewed their long years of academic partnership with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on February 4, 2019 at the CPH Lara Hall.

The partnership seeks to establish a collaborative study group for emerging viruses which would result in

publications of excellent research papers and development of young virologists in the Philippines. The signing coincided with the 92nd foundation celebration of CPH and strengthens the more than 20 years of cordial relationship between the two universities.

Both institutions have jointly produced several groundbreaking researches on HIV treatment pioneered

by Dr. Okamoto and Dr. Gloriani. The collaboration has also led to the professional development of the staff, students, and researchers from UPM through the lectures delivered by Dr. Okamoto in various symposia, other mentorship activities such as trainings, and masteral and doctoral studies of UPM students at the NCU.

FRESTHEL M. CLIMACOSA

UPMAS AND SILVER JUBILARIAN CLASS OF 1994 LAUNCH 2019 HOMECOMING

Last January 16, the silver jubilarian Class of 1994 spearheaded the launch of the UP Medical Alumni Society (UPMAS) 2019 Homecoming at the UP Manila Museum of A History of Ideas.

The homecoming theme is “Puso at Galing, Dito Galing, MaDe in UP” - an emphasis on two qualities of a good physician which should always come together and on the Alma Mater that instilled these traits in the good physician. It is a time for Class 1994 to give back to the college. The silver jubilarians came up with this theme recognizing its timelessness and universality.

The occasion was graced by UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla '81, UP College of Medicine Dean Charlotte Chiong '85, and Philippine General Hospital Director Gerardo Legaspi '87. They thanked the class for the key roles it has played and will continue to play in UP Manila, the college, and the hospital. The three discussed their respective plans and



Chancellor Carmencita Padilla, 2nd row (center) with members of Class 1994 and representatives of other celebrating classes.

targets all aimed at making the institution continue to be the country’s center of excellence in the health sciences.

UPMAS President Jean Anne Toral assured the support of the alumni society to its members, the Alma Mater, and the Filipino community. The event also saw the launch of the UPMAS seal following what is indicated in its By-Laws Article XIV - its establishment in 1946 and the all maroon background.

Also present were representatives from the various classes who are this year’s jubilarians – from classes ending in 4 and 9. Former UP Manila Chancellor and

UPCM Dean Marita Tolentino-Reyes '64 and National Institutes of Health Executive Director Eva Cutiongco-dela Paz '89 represented their classes. The most senior alumna present was Dr. Leonor Barcelona-Empedrad of Class 1959. The golden jubilarians of Class 1969 was represented by their president Dr. Federico Cruz who shared some reminiscences of their years in the UP College of Medicine.

Representative members of Classes 1974, 1979, 1984, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014 were also in attendance. The youngest class of 2019, led by their president Kyle Eugenio, received 162 homecoming lanyards from the

silver jubilarians as a good luck send-off when they graduate at the latter part of this year. Members of the 2019 UPMAS Board were also present, four of whom had their oath taking – Chancellor Reyes, Dr. Cruz, past UPMAS president Jacinto Blas Mantaring III '84, and Ryan Capitulo '99.

Dr. Toral presented the activities for the year starting with the launch followed by continuing medical education activities in Cebu (March 6), Dumaguete (April 27), Koronadal (August), and Manila (December 16); UP Medical Alumni Society in America Annual Grand Convention in Dallas, Texas from

July 2 to 6; and the homecoming week starting off with the UPMAS Golf Open (December 13, Ayala Greenfield Estates Calamba, Laguna), homecoming parade and Pabidahan (December 18, UPCM and PGH grounds), and homecoming ball (December 19, Marriott Grand Ballroom).

Dr. Cecilia Jimeno, UPCM Department of Pharmacology Chair and head of the 2019 UP MED Webinars, presented the new platform for this regular online seminars on relevant medical topics using the UP Manila Livestream which can also be viewed at Facebook Live through the UP MED Webinars

page. Dr. Alexander Tan, Class 1994 Treasurer and UPMAS Board Member, launched the UPMAS Photo Contest on the homecoming theme. It is open to UPCM alumni life members with the finalists and winner to be presented during the homecoming ball.

Dr. Tammy dela Rosa, UPMAS Vice President and Awards Committee head, presented the various award categories recognizing the alumni achievers: Distinguished Alumnus, Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Researcher, Outstanding In Medical Service, Outstanding in Community Service and Public Health, and the two group awards – Most Distinguished Class and Family of the Year.

As the program ended, the audience was serenaded by upcoming classical singer and stage actress Criselda Go and by silver jubilarian Dr. Melfred Hernandez, Director of the UP Manila Office of Alumni Relations.

JEAN ANNE B. TORAL

The Manila Declaration on the Drug Problem in the Philippines*

BY NYMIA SIMBULAN, LEONARDO ESTACIO, CARISSA DIOQUINO-MALIGASO, TEODORO HERBOSA, & MELLISSA WITHERS

Gathering in this workshop with a common issue and concern – the drug problem in the Philippines and its consequences and how it can be addressed and solved in the best way possible;

Recognizing that the drug problem in the Philippines is a complex and multi-faceted

problem that includes not only criminal justice issues but also public health issues and with various approaches that can be used in order to solve such;

We call for drug control policies and strategies that incorporate evidence-based, socially acceptable, cost-effective, and rights-based approaches that are designed to minimize, if not to eliminate, the adverse health, psychological, social, economic and criminal justice consequences of drug abuse

towards the goal of attaining a society that is free from crime and drug and substance abuse;

Recognizing, further, that drug dependency and co-dependency, as consequences of drug abuse, are mental and behavioral health problems, and that in some areas in the Philippines injecting drug use comorbidities such as the spread of HIV and AIDS are also apparent, and that current prevention and treatment interventions are not quite adequate to prevent mental

disorders, HIV/AIDS and other co-morbid diseases among people who use drugs; Affirming that the primacy of the sanctity/value of human life and the value of human dignity, social protection of the victims of drug abuse and illegal drugs trade must be our primary concern; and that all health, psycho-social, socio-economic and rights-related interventions leading to the reduction or elimination of the adverse health, economic and social consequences of drug abuse and other related co-morbidities such as HIV/AIDS should be considered in all plans and actions toward the control, prevention and treatment of drug and substance abuse;

As a community of health professionals, experts, academics, researchers, students and health advocates, we call on the Philippine government to address the root causes of the illegal drug problem in the Philippines utilizing the aforementioned affirmations. We assert that the drug problem in the country is but a symptom of deeper structural ills rooted in social inequality and injustice, lack of economic and social opportunities, and powerlessness among the Filipino people. Genuine solutions to the drug problem will only be realized with the fulfillment and enjoyment of human rights,

allowing them to live in dignity deserving of human beings. As members of educational, scientific and health institutions of the country, being rich and valuable sources of human, material and technological resources, we affirm our commitment to contribute to solving this social ill that the Philippine government has considered to be a major obstacle in the attainment of national development.

Conclusion

The statement of insights and affirmations on the drug problem in the Philippines is a declaration that is readily applicable to other countries in Asia where approaches to the problem of drug abuse are largely harsh, violent and punitive.

As a community of scholars, health professionals, academics, and researchers, we reiterate our conviction that the drug problem in the Philippines is multi-dimensional in character and deeply rooted in the structural causes of poverty, inequality and powerlessness of the Filipino people. Contrary to the government’s position of treating the issues as a problem of criminality and lawlessness, the drug problem must be addressed using a holistic and rights-based approach, requiring the mobilization and

involvement of all stakeholders. This is the message and the challenge which we, as members of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, want to relay to the leaders, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and human rights advocates in the region; we must all work together to protect and promote health and well being of all populations in our region.

*This Declaration was released in the Annals of Global Health, 2019; 85(1): 26, 1–4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.28>. The UP Manila faculty members were instrumental in the drafting and adoption of the Manila Declaration during the Asia Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) International Conference on Global Health held at the Novotel Hotel, Cubao, Quezon City in 2017.

UHC ACT SIGNED INTO LAW; UP MANILA CONTINUES TO PROVIDE IRR INPUTS

The signing of the Universal Health Care Act by President Rodrigo Duterte on February 20, 2019 is considered a landmark measure that would provide health care coverage for all Filipinos. The law ensures that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health goods and services and protected against financial risks by automatic enrollment to the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP). Under the measure, membership in the NHIP will be classified as either “direct contributors” for those who have the capacity to pay premiums, or “indirect contributors” for those sponsored by the government such as indigents, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

The law also grants every Filipino “immediate eligibility” and access to preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative, and palliative health services delivered either as population-based or individual-based health services. It will expand PhilHealth coverage to include free medical checkups, laboratory tests, and other diagnostic services. The signing of the Universal Health Care Act by

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