

Merging Medicine with Science

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It is with great pleasure that we present the Proceedings of the NHG Annual Scientific Congress 2004 as a supplement issue in the *Annals of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore*. For the third year running, the NHG member institutions have come together for the Annual Scientific Congress (ASC). Through the ASC, we hope to promote research and foster close relationship and camaraderie among health professionals under the large NHG umbrella. It is through this Congress that we aim to showcase our research and bring important advances in Medicine and Science to all our NHG staff.

Last year for NHG ASC 2003, we saw probably the largest number of abstracts ever submitted to a local medical meeting; 481 abstracts were submitted and 392 were accepted after peer review. Although the standards were generally good, we wanted to reduce the number of rejected abstracts (18.5%) by helping our staff to plan, carry out and present their research more effectively.

To achieve our aims, we held a series of 3 workshops to generate increased interest in research and maximise their quality. These included workshops on "How to Plan & Formulate a Research Project", "How to Write an Abstract/Extended Abstract", and "How to Design a Scientific Poster & Prepare an Oral Presentation". The workshops were sponsored by a generous grant from the NHG Endowment Fund. Each of these workshops was well attended by almost 200 participants.

We were delighted by the 471 abstracts submitted this year. After the same process of peer review, only 21 (4.5%) of abstracts were rejected, giving a whopping number of 450 abstracts accepted for publication in this supplement issue of *Annals*. Our reviewers were impressed by the improved quality of abstracts submitted.

To allow various types of research to be showcased in this Congress, we have organised the abstracts into special categories featuring various specialties, providing separate sessions for clinical and laboratory research, showcase Clinical Practice Improvement Programmes, and dedicated sessions for Nursing and Allied Health research. The prestigious NHG Doctor Award was created for the top abstracts submitted in the area of clinical research. The NHG Young Investigator's Award was dedicated to young researchers especially in the areas of laboratory-based research. We carefully selected the top 49 abstracts for extended abstract submission to better showcase their quality. Thirty of these abstracts were selected for oral presentation during the Congress. Due to the limited space available in the Congress venue, we have to divide the poster presentations over 2 days during the Congress.

The breadth of the abstracts submitted to this Congress has been breathtaking. We were greatly encouraged by the broad range of topics and research covered. Many of the research abstracts submitted showed the true spirit of Merging Medicine with Science, where questions arising from care of the patient is addressed by good scientific research. We were also delighted that every member institution of NHG had submitted abstracts to this Congress.

This supplement issue of the *Annals* will not be possible without the tremendous support of researchers and participants who have strived to put their good research on paper. We would like to thank our large panel of reviewers for their timely review and comments, which enabled us to put together this supplement issue. The efforts of our IT support by making it possible for presenters to submit abstracts and reviewers to judge these abstracts electronically have enabled us to meet the tight timeline. Last but not least, we thank the NHG College staff, especially Ms Cindy Chen, and the *Annals* editorial staff for their kind editorial support for this issue.

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