

## SMPRP-AFOMP: FOOTPRINTS IN THE LAST 20 YEARS

Cruzpero, Ramon Carlo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Public Relations, SMPRP, Philippines

The Society of Medical Physicists in the Republic of the Philippines (SMPRP) joins the 20th anniversary celebration of the Asia-Oceania Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics (AFOMP). Looking back at the timeline of our community 20 years ago will take us to the footprints of our collaborations through education, training, and professional development in our field.

In 2000, the SMPRP was still named as the Philippine Organization of Medical Physicists (POMP). This was the year where our society joined in the inception of the AFOMP, thus, becoming one of its founding member organizations. From there, AFOMP has always been our support through activities and events where we share best and standard practices of the medical physics profession.

The Philippines participated in the International Atomic Energy Agency- Regional Cooperative Agreement (IAEA RCA) RAS 6038 project, *Strengthening Medical Physics through Education and Training*, in 2002. A series of short-term workshops then followed which were hosted by various institutions from both local and international organizations, including AFOMP, to further enhance the knowledge and skills through structured clinical programs in radiation oncology medical physics (ROMP), diagnostic radiology medical physics (DRMP), and nuclear medicine medical physics (NMMP).

It was in 2008 that our community applied to participate in piloting the two-year clinical Radiation Oncology Residency Training Program. The said training program ended in 2010 through a two-part examination conducted by Dr. Brendan Healy, from Australia, as the external examiner and Prof. Lilian Rodriguez as the local examiner. The first wave of the residency training programme produced 11 board certified ROMPs who now serve as mentors to the succeeding generation of ROMPs in the country. Currently, the Philippines has produced 20 board certified ROMPs.

Also, our community participated in the two-year clinical Diagnostic Radiology Residency Training Program in 2010. However, due to some unforced circumstances, it was only in 2019 that the certification examination was conducted. Dr. Ian Donald McLean, also from Australia, was the external examiner while Prof. Agnette Peralta, Engr. Bayani San Juan, and Ms. Aida Lobrigitto served as the local

examiners. Now, our community has produced 13 board certified DRMPs.

On the other hand, through the IAEA RCA RAS 6077 project, *Strengthening the Effectiveness and Extent of Medical Physics Education and Training*, the Advanced Medical Physics Learning Environment (AMPLE) orientation was conducted in 2016. The platform provided budding medical physicists with aided learning materials and remote mentorships to further enhance their clinical skills. In 2019, IAEA, together with the University of the Philippines- Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), sponsored a national training course on Radiation Safety: Safety is not an Accident. One of the key speakers was Prof. Tomas Kron from Australia.

This year, our community joined in the celebration of the International Medical Physics Week through a series of webinars. Apart from our locally produced webinars, we incorporated two from AFOMP. These were the Medical Physicists and Clinical Trials: Evidence in Times of Uncertainty with Prof. Tomas Kron as the speaker while Prof. S.D. Sharma as the moderator and How to Nurture the Next Generation of Medical Physics Leaders with Dr. Kwan Hoong Ng as the speaker and Dr. Eva Bezak as the moderator.

Since the inception of AFOMP, a number of Filipino medical physicists have been recipients of the AFOMP travel grants, which helped them to attend in international conferences. These events mentioned are just few but are the milestones that clearly manifested that SMPRP and AFOMP are working together in the last 20 years. They are clear testaments that both have achieved the AFOMP's objectives. These are:

1. to promote the cooperation and communication between medical physics organizations in the region;
2. to promote medical physics and related activities in the region;
3. to promote the advancement in status and standard of practice of the medical physics profession;
4. to organize and/or sponsor international conferences, regional and other meeting of courses; and

5. to collaborate or affiliate with other scientific organizations.

Starting 2020, SMPRP is devoted to hold our annual gathering called Philippine Congress of Medical Physics (PCMP). Other milestones and developments in the medical physics community here in the Philippines can be found on earlier articles such as Medical Physics in the Republic of the Philippines by Prof. Agnette Peralta, Engr. Bayani San Juan, and Prof. Lilian Rodriguez and South East Asian Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics (SEAFOMP)- Celebrating 20th Anniversary of Formation. Both articles were published in the Medical Physics International Journal, Volume 8, No. 2, 2020 (<http://mpijournal.org/pdf/2020-02/MPI-2020-02.pdf>).

We, the Filipino medical physicist community, are one in your 20th anniversary celebration. We are hoping to more collaborations in promoting and strengthening the medical physics profession. Let's imprint more footprints together in our future stories. Mabuhay, AFOMP!

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Contacts of the corresponding author:

Author: Ramon Carlo Cruzpero  
 Institute: Public Relations, SMPRP  
 Street:  
 City:  
 Country: Philippines  
 Email: