

Faculty of Medicine
Khon Kaen University, Thailand

MD@KKU Today

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Newsletter
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German-Thai Friendship strengthened

Deputy Ambassador of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, **Dr. Ingo Winkelmann**, visited the Faculty of Medicine on November 16, 2012. Dean, Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, hosted the event. Dr. Winkelmann visited the Faculty (a) to reaffirm the relationship between Germany and Thailand in development of medical specializations and education, and (b) to observe medical services at Srinagarind Hospital. The Deputy Ambassador also met with lecturers and researchers who studied in Germany and now work in the Faculty. On this occasion, the Faculty presented highlights of research and academics that have arisen because of collaborations with German organization at Nhong Waeng Meeting Room, Clinical Sciences Building 1, 6th Floor, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University.



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German-Thai Friendship Strengthened	1	Dean offers a warm welcome to Mie University delegation	5
Faculty salutes team for its international, collaborative effort	2	KKU finds HIV infectious disease but it's not AIDS	6
Faculty member from the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, got the Grant Support from NIH, USA, for Liver Fluke Disease Study	2	13 th Thai Medical Education Conference at the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University	7
MD-KKU has been nominated as the WHO's Collaborating Centre for Research and Control of Opisthorchiasis (Southeast Asian Liver Fluke Disease)	3	Official Visit by Administrators of the Fujita Health University School of Medicine	7
Faculty of Medicine Opens Graduate Program to Kathmandu University	4	Faculty (MD-KKU) hosts 6 th Academic Conference on Best Practices	8
Welcome Ambassador of Japan to Thailand	4	Welcome Ms. Emma Heng Levine and Ms. Pakwan Rangseekajee	8
JP/KKU symposium and research on Lymphoma and Leukemia	5	Institute for Research & Development of New Technologies (IRDNewTech), Vietnam, at Faculty of Medicine, KKU	8

Faculty salutes team for its international, collaborative effort

Banchob Sripa, Ph.D., Department of Pathology announced that the article, "The tumorigenic liver fluke *Opisthorchis viverrini* – multiple pathways to cancer" will appear in the October 2012 issue of *Trends in Parasitology*, a world class parasitology journal (impact factor 5.144). The issue highlights "Liver fluke-associated cancer: hope for early intervention".

Ajaan Banchob's collaborators included (a) Paul J. Brindley and Jeffrey M. Bethony from the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Tropical Medicine, and Research Center for neglected Diseases of Poverty, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, George Washington University, USA (b) Jason Mulvenna, Michael J. Smout and Alex Loukas from the Centre for Biodiscovery and Molecular Development of Therapeutics, Queensland Tropical Health Alliance, James Cook University, Australia (c) Thewarach Laha from the MD-KKU's Department of Parasitology and (d) Dr. Eimorn Mairiang from the MD-KKU's Department of Radiology.

The team was invited by the editor of *Trends in Parasitology* to make the submission at the Symposium of "The 60th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene" at Philadelphia, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (December 4–8, 2011). The article, "The tumorigenic liver fluke *Opisthorchis viverrini* – multiple pathways to cancer" focuses on the causes of liver fluke disease and cholangiocarcinoma and avenues for future research.



Faculty member from the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, got the Grant Support from NIH, USA, for Liver Fluke Disease Study

Medical Lecturer, Banchob Sripa, Ph.D., Department of Pathology from the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, got the scholarship of Tropical Medicine Research Center from National Institute of Health, NIH which collaborated with Professor P. Brindley and J. Bethony, George Washington University, USA, and Professor A. Loukas, James Cook University, Australia. The "Pathogenesis, Carcinogenesis and Ecology of Opisthorchiasis in Thailand" was considered as one of six projects that got the scholarship in this five year with the amount of 1.5 million U.S. dollars. The project will be started from August 1, 2012.

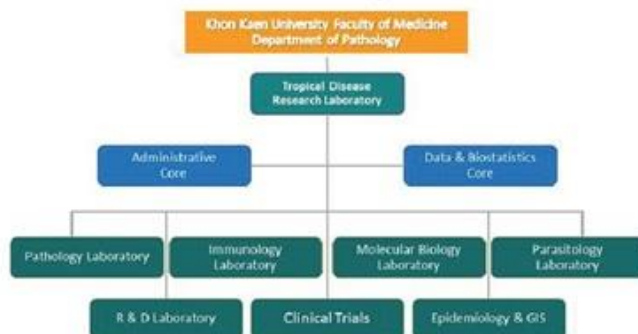


WHO Collaborating Centre for
Research and Control of Opisthorchiasis
(Southeast Asian Liver Fluke Disease)

MD-KKU has been nominated as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Control of Opisthorchiasis (Southeast Asian Liver Fluke Disease)

Associate Professor Kittichai Trairatanasirichai, President of Khon Kaen University, announced that the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, has been nominated as the WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Control of Opisthorchiasis (Southeast Asian Liver Fluke Disease) in late November, 2012. For more detail go to: http://apps.who.int/whocc/Detail.aspxMcc_ref=THA-67&cc_code=tha.

Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, Dean of the Faculty, added that our Faculty ranks among the top institutions for liver fluke disease research and lecturers from our faculty are frequently invited to speak or advise the WHO on Liver Fluke Disease research. The Faculty also plays a leading role in this kind of research in Southeast Asia. We can be justly proud of our Faculty and researchers for their focused and innovative and for the Dean's advocating on our behalf.



Associate Professor Banchob Sripa, Department of Pathology, and member of the Committee of the Liver Fluke Research Center—will head the new WHO Collaborating Center for Research and Control of Opisthorchiasis. He indicated that the Centre will collaborate with the WHO on planning and conducting research on Liver Fluke Disease: (1) elucidating and characterizing genetics, pathogenesis, epidemiology and transmission of the liver fluke (2) developing appropriate diagnostic tools for the diagnosis of infection and, (3) scaling up the implementation of interventions and in refining current disease control strategies. The Tropical Disease Research Laboratory will be the coordinating center where research will be conducted by graduate students, post graduates and fellows from the Faculties of Medicine, of Public Health, and of Veterinary Medicine, Khon Kaen University, and other parties joining in international research networks and collaborations.

Khon Kaen University gladly accepts the nomination from the WHO and the responsibility of being a leader in Research on Liver Fluke Disease, including a critical role as a Reference Laboratory.



Faculty of Medicine Opens Graduate Program to Kathmandu University

August 5-7, 2012, Dean Professor Pisake Lumbiganon sent a delegation to promote our Post-Graduate Program to potential international students in Nepal. The team comprised Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk, Associate Dean for International and Special Affairs, Associate Professor Yupa Kukongviriyapan, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Graduate Program), Associate Professor Wilaiwan Kritsanaphan, Department of Physiology, and Associate Professor Amornrat Ratanasiri, Department of Community Medicine. Doctors and researchers from Nepal interested in our program attended the discussions.

The Faculty's delegation were warmly welcomed by the administration of Kathmandu University. Our two schools have similar goals for community outreach, especially producing sufficient doctors to adequately serve the population.

Using multimedia, Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk introduced (a) Khon Kaen University and the Faculty of Medicine (b) the curriculum of our graduate programs and (c) the daily life of Nepalese students currently studying at the Faculty. Subsequent negotiations concerning academic cooperation and research between Kathmandu University and the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, were led by Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk and the President of Kathmandu University, Professor Suresh Raj Sharma, Dean of the School of Science, Professor Panna Thapa, and the Director of Dhulikhel Hospital (Kathmandu University Hospital), Associate Professor Rajendra Koju.

Based on the information presented and the personal rapport, the President of Kathmandu University agreed to sign an MOU between Khon Kaen University and Kathmandu University.



Welcome Ambassador of Japan to Thailand

On November 16, 2012, Associate Professor Dr. Kittichai Triratanasirichai, President of Khon Kaen University, Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, KKU, Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk, Associate Dean for International and Special Affairs, and Professor Yukifumi Nawa, visiting professor of the Faculty of Medicine, including administrators and lecturers from other faculties of KKU, and institutions of education of Japan in Thailand, lunched and welcomed His Excellency Mr. Shigekazu Sato, Ambassador of Japan to Thailand, at Centara Hotel and Convention Centre Khon Kaen. On this occasion, the President hosted the meeting and presentation of KKU education, cooperation between KKU, Thailand, and Japanese institutions, including the way to enhance relationship between KKU and Japan. Professor Yukifumi Nawa joined the meeting as the representative of the Faculty of Medicine, KKU.



JP/KKU symposium and research on Lymphoma and Leukemia

July 17th, 2012, Two experts in hematology/oncology, **Prof. Junji Suzumiya** from Shimane University Hospital and **Associate Professor Ritsuro Suzuki** from Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine, and two young **Drs. Chie Onishi** and **Takahiro Okada** from Professor Suzumiya's team, Japan, met Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk, Associate Dean for International and Special Affairs, and Associate Professor Sopit Wongkham, Associate Dean for Research Affairs, to discuss about the expansion and strengthening of the Lymphoma Asian Network (LAN).

To achieve this purpose, the Japanese delegates wish to have continuous exchange knowledge with the Lymphoma and Leukemia Study Group of KKU about diagnosis and treatment of lymphoma and leukemia, especially Asian unique EBV-related T/NKT lymphomas. Researchers from Japan and Khon Kaen University attended the "JP/KKU Research Symposium on Lymphoma and Leukemia" and related activities from July 17 to 19, 2012, at the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University.



Dean offers a warm welcome to Mie University delegation



Dean Professor Pisake Lumbiganon extended a warm welcome to Professor Katsuhiko ANDO and his accompanying delegation.

Professor Katsuhiko ANDO, Associate Professor Hiroyuki SAKURAI and seven medical students from Mie University School of Medicine, Japan, started a two-day official visit to the Faculty on Monday August 20. This is the first visit to the Khon Kaen for these students.

The Mie University Team will be observing activities at Srinagarind Hospital, Samliem Primary Care Unit, Ubonratana Hospital (Community Hospital) and visiting the University of Health Sciences, Lao PDR.

KKU finds HIV infectious disease but it's not AIDS

Written By Phitsanu Thepthong



KKU's Srinagarind Hospital medical team has discovered a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, which is not Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or AIDS.

KKU's Srinagarind Hospital medical team has discovered a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection, which is not Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or AIDS. It is said to spread widely among mainly Asian people. This breakthrough find is the first of its kind in the world.

On September 24 at Sirikunakorn Building, KKU along with Research and Technology Transfers Affairs hosted a 'Researchers Meet the Press' to announce the pioneering discovery of this HIV infection. Prof. Dr. Ploenchan Chetchotisak of the KKU Science of Medicine Department and her co-researchers made their presentation at the press meeting.

Prof. Dr. Ploenchan confirms that this is a newly discovered HIV disease that seems to infect mainly Asians.

Headed by Prof. Dr. Ploenchan Chetchotisak, the KKU research team consisted of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phiroon Mutsikaphan, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Siriluck Annannathasiri, of Division of Infectious Disease and Tropical Medicine, Department of Medicine, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Weeraphong Lulitanond, of Microbiology Department, Medicine Faculty of KKU.

These professors jointly conducted the research among medical doctors from the national health institutes of Thailand, USA and Taiwan on the non-AIDS related HIV. This study with its critical find is the key to help doctors treat patients more accurately and potentially save many lives from the fatal disease. It has been published in recognized medical journals and is used as a reference during medical treatment.

Prof. Dr. Ploenchan said in her interview that since 1993, the team has studied patients who seemingly suffered from lymphatic tuberculosis. They found that these patients were in fact not infectious with TB but with Nontuberculous Mycobacteria (NTM). Apart from this, she added that some patients were also infectious with bacteria or fungus while others had reactive skin disease.

From 1993 to 2000, the research team collected data from 16 patients and reports from the Clinical Infectious Disease journals detailing clinical symptoms that have never been seen before.



The first report of this disease was in 2007. After that the team studied as many as 129 cases of patients with NTM from KKU, Siriraj Hospital, Ramathibodi Hospital and Chiang Mai University. It was then brought to light that these patients were infectious with NTM but not HIV/AIDS. This vital result was published in respected international medical journals.

In 2004, it was reported that Filipino and Thai patients based in Germany were infected with NTM.

At the same time, another report found that Anti-interferon-gamma antibodies could be beneficial in the treatment of autoimmune diseases.

Once doctors knew what symptoms to look out for, the number of reported patients increased respectively. This and the need to treat the illness, effectively led to the history of research cooperation between the national health institutes of USA, Thailand and Taiwan that then published the result in the New England Journal of Medicine.

This HIV is not AIDS. It is a newly discovered disease different from the latter in terms of its clinical symptoms that are more similar to those of Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) disease.

Prof. Dr. Ploenchan added that the main cause of AIDS is a Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection.

These HIV/AIDS patients lose their body's immunity, leaving them open to ill side effects like TB or Fungus that may in turn become develop more strongly in a weak immune system.

However, what that the team has discovered is not AIDS and is not communicable from man-to-man.

She added that most patients with NTM could be treated or even cured in some cases but the treatment takes a long time.



13th Thai Medical Education Conference at the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University

The Faculty of Medicine—currently celebrating its 40th anniversary—opened its 13th Thai Medical Education Conference, “Health Professional Education in the 21st Century”. This year’s conference is emphasizing development of the medical curriculum for the needs of the 21st Century.

Opening speeches were given by Associate Professor Dr. Kittichai Triratanasirichai, President of Khon Kaen University, and Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. A welcoming speech was then delivered by Associate Professor Nantana Sirisup, Deputy Secretary General of Consortium of Thai Medical Schools.

Open discussions will be joined by medical experts from various medical schools around the country, including those at Mahidol University, Ubon Ratchathani University, Walailak University, Chiang Mai University, Naresuan University, and Prince of Songkla University.



Paying a visit on August 22nd, 2012, were: **Professor Dr. Takahide NOMURA**, MD, PhD, Chair of the Committee for International Exchanges (& Professor in the Department of Pharmacology), **Professor Toshikazu MATSUI**, MD, PhD, Chair of Educational Affairs and Vice-chair of the Committee for International Exchanges (& Professor of Introductory Clinical Medicine), **Professor Masatsugu OHTSUKI**, MD, PhD, Vice-chair of the Committee for International Exchanges (& Professor of General Clinical Medicine) and **Ms. Yoshimi OTA**, International Affairs. The Japanese team paid a courtesy visit to the Dean, Professor Pisake Lumbiganon, then met with faculty, including former Dean Professor Wiroon Laupattarakasem and Assistant Professor Napa Limratana, to discuss academic exchange activities.

Fujita Health University and the Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, have had a longstanding collaboration. The Thai medical students who recently visited Fujita Health University were present and gave a multimedia presentation on their great memories of Japan. Likewise, the Japanese medical students visiting our Faculty expressed their gratitude for the kindness they experienced here.

Official Visit by Administrators of the Fujita Health University School of Medicine



Faculty (MD-KKU) hosts 6th Academic Conference on Best Practices



Between October 21 and 23, 2012, the Faculty is hosting the 6th Academic Conference in Medical Sciences at the Royal Nakara in Nong Khai. The respective Faculty of Medicine at KKU, Prince of Songkla University, and Chiang Mai University will present: "The Learning Process when Solving the Problem of Crowding in the Emergency Room" & "The Medical Students' Parent Association"; "Systematic Medicine" & "Excellence in Developing Medical Staff"; and, "Collaborative Hospital Networks" & "Strategies for Promoting Sustainable Research". In addition, there will be discussions on newly developing fields medical inquiry and on the launching of the AEC in 2015 and how medical schools should be in preparing themselves.

Welcome Ms. Emma Heng Levine and Ms. Pakwan Rangseekajee

December 12, 2012, Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk, Associate Dean for International and special affairs, welcomed Ms. Emma Heng Levine from UC Berkley, and Ms. Pakwan Rangseekajee from University of Adelaide. Ms. Emma Heng Levine and Ms. Pakwan Rangseekajee are attending in Palliative Care Unit for investigating medical treatment knowledge at Srinagarind Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University between December 17, 2012 and January 11, 2012.



Institute for Research & Development of New Technologies (IRDNewTech), Vietnam, at Faculty of Medicine, KKU

October 25, 2012, Associate Professor Witoon Prasertcharoensuk, Associate Dean for International and Special Affairs, welcomed (a) **Associate Professor Dr. Nguyen Huynh Phan**, President of IRDNewTech, (b) **Le Thi Thu Ha**, Head Office of IRDNewTech, (c) students and (d) staff from IRDNewTech at the Nong Waeng Meeting Room. The Faculty and IRDNewTech were holding discussions on the development of an exchange program between our two institutions. Associate Professor Dr. Nguyen Huynh Phan underscored how exchanges benefit students and institutions in both research and academics.



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