Humanitarian Group of the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association

Asst Prof Dr Shalimar Abdullah, Prof Dr Saw Aik, Prof Dr Sharaf Ibrahim

The Beginning

The humanitarian group of the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association (MOA) was proposed by Prof Dato' Dr Tunku Sara Tunku Ahmad Yahaya during the June 2004 MOA Annual General Meeting in Penang in an effort to coordinate and encourage members of MOA to volunteer their services within the country and abroad.

The massive Aceh tsunami of 24th December 2004 prompted the group into action. Prof Dr Sharaf Ibrahim was appointed as the coordinator with Dr Hizam Mohd Yusof, Dr Suryasilmi Duski, Prof Dr Saw Aik, Dr Kamariah Nor Mohd Daud and Dr Nor Azlin Zainal Abidin heading to Banda Aceh. Dato' Dr K.S. Sivananthan, Dr T. Kumar and Dato' Dr Vasan Sinndurai went to Sri Lanka to treat and operate on tsunami victims in Poonambahalam Memorial Hospital project. The team was in collaboration with the NGO Global Peace Mission and MERCY Malaysia, China Orthopaedic Association (COA), Philippines Orthopaedic Association (POA), and Chiba Children Hospital donated the Orthopaedic equipment with an estimated cost of about MYR 1.2 million flown by Malaysian Airlines and Royal Malaysian Air Force. Subsequently in April of 2005, Prof Dr Saw Aik and Dr Yong Su-Mei participated in the Tzu Chi Medical Association (TIMA) medical camp to provide free medical and dental treatment to 3000 patients from Batam and the surrounding islands.

Through collaboration with international Orthopaedic
societies, a group of MOA experts was established to help various Orthopaedic problems abroad.

Prof Dr Sharaf Ibrahim with Dr Abdul Malik Hussein and Dr Hyzan Mohd Yusof visited Al Mujtahid Hospital, Damascus, Syria in April 2006. The team performed various surgeries for spine deformities, sports injuries and complex trauma. In August 2006, Dr Hyzan Mohd Yusof joined another medical relief organization to Tyre, South Lebanon to as a volunteer to provide free treatment for war victims in the region. In April 2007, Dr Abdul Malik Hussein and Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Abd Ghapar visited Damascus General Hospital in Syria to treat and operate on patients. Datuk Dr Ahmad Ridzwan Arshad (Plastics), Dato' Dr Ali Noor Chani and Dr Kamil Mohd Kassim visited Al-Mujtahid Hospital, Damascus, Syria in April 2007 to perform various surgeries and attend a Health Care Conference organized by the Syrian Ministry of Health.

In September 2006, Prof Dr Saw AiK visited Angkor Children Hospital to arrange Orthopaedic training for the local doctors. In April of 2008, the MOA Humanitarian Group headed by Dr Yong Su-Mei organised an external fixator workshop in Angkor Children Hospital in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

In 2011, the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association (AOA) Outreach Programme was initiated to provide a platform for further interaction and cooperation amongst Orthopaedic Surgeons in ASEAN. The AOA outreach organizes groups of volunteers from ASEAN to visit provincial communities and interact with the local surgeons through education and provision of treatment services. Dr Peter Lee Y.C. of Singapore headed the first team to Klaten, Java.

MOA members of AOA Outreach Programme, Prof Dr Sharaf Ibrahim, Prof Dr Saw AiK, Prof Dato' Dr Mohammad Abdul Razak and Assoc Prof Dr Abdul Halim Abd Rashid went to Surabaya, Indonesia with
other ASEAN members and they organized a symposia, case discussions and Ponseti workshop on clubfoot models. The ASEAN pediatric group also held a workshop from February 22-24th, 2013 in Mandalay, Myanmar.

Since 2013, MOA has allocated a fund of RM20,000 annually for Humanitarian projects. The fund was used for AOA Outreach Programme in Banjarmasin, Kalimantan, Indonesia. MOA in collaboration with MERCY Malaysia sent two teams to Ormoc, Leyte Island to support the orthopaedic service after Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in November 2013. MOA also contributed RM 10,000 to the POA. The MOA Humanitarian team went to Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH), Bangladesh in 2014 to organize an Orthopaedic Workshop with 50 participants.

In conjunction with the AOA Outreach Programme, a team was sent in 2015 to Jayapura, Papua, Indonesia. The team ran a 2 days workshop titled "Advance Treatment Modalities for Neglected Cases in Orthopaedics" attended
AOA Paediatric Orthopaedic Seminar

Aebaegia, February 2013.

Dr Ferdhany Effendi with operating staff of Rumah Sakit Martapura, Banjarmasin. Kalimantan Mission, 2013.

Entrance of Dhaka Community Hospital (Dr Ikraam Ibrahim, Dr Ferdhany Effendi, Assoc Prof Dr Shalimar Abdullah, Prof Dr Sharaf Ibrahim). Dhaka Mission, 2014.
by 250 participants. In 2016, “Principles of Musculoskeletal Trauma Management” seminar was held in RSUD Dr Zainal Abidin Banda Aceh. Assoc Prof Dr Shalimar Abdullah also visited Sitagu Ayudana Charity Hospital in Mandalay Myanmar for paramedic training workshop in June 2016.

**The Future**

Over the recent years, there have been some changes in the approach towards medical humanitarian services in less developed countries, and the role of professional organisations in organizing these activities. During massive natural disasters and wars, there are a large number of patients overwhelming the local and national resources and the needs of medical relief and support are important to minimized casualties. The elective medical humanitarian is also important to provide training for local medical staff to allow them to be the first line medical providers to their patients instead of relying on foreign / visiting doctors who are available for a short duration only.

Over the years, MOA has provided a support for medical humanitarian services in less developed countries. This includes complimentary registrations to attend courses and workshops held in Malaysia. However, MOA is now providing support for members to educate local medical staff in other countries. The 2016 MOA Scientific Meeting was the first meeting where the humanitarian section had its own plenary and lecture sessions. This definitely augurs well for the subsection and we hope to see the subsection continue to grow and expand.

**References**