

NEWS & VIEWS

Asian Board in Nuclear Medicine

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A proposal for establishing an Asian Board in Nuclear Medicine (ASBNM) has been unanimously accepted at the recent ARCCNM National Delegates Assembly in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Asia can only be described as "diverse" when it comes to culture, history and heritage. The same holds true for the levels of scientific, educational and technological competence among different countries. The practice and training in Nuclear Medicine is equally diverse; there are countries with well structured programmes, leading to major clinical diplomas and degrees, and unfortunately, countries where formal training has yet to be established. Current development in nuclear medicine technology has brought with it new challenges for training and levels of competence. There are also questions of "ownership" of the science and art of nuclear medicine and battle lines are being drawn for a turf war in many places.

The author has maintained for over two decades, the need for strengthening present nuclear medicine training programmes. The suggestion has always been to add more complementary imaging and therapy courses to bring greater relevance and "market acceptance and value" of the new generation of nuclear medicine physicians. This has evolved to a realization that there are issues of standardization in nuclear medicine training, issues of comparable competence and issues of competency-deficiencies in an environment where hybrid imaging has become the *sine qua non* of nuclear medicine practice in the 21st century.

On being designated country principal for ASNM (Asian School of Nuclear Medicine) in 2009, the first proposal made by the author was establishing a mechanism of ensuring a

level of uniformity of competence among nuclear medicine physicians from different countries within the Asian continent. This would necessitate a mechanism of establishing continuous human resource development; a system of training in core elements of nuclear medicine and complementary techniques and a process where certification of competence can be earned and maintained independent of the sophistication or even the presence of national training programmes. An Asian Board was a natural culmination of these mechanisms and activities.

The idea of an ASBNM (Asian Board in Nuclear Medicine) was first suggested to the Dean of ASNM Prof. Theofilo San Luis and Chair ARCCNM Prof. Henry Bom, in a series of emails, and then in person at the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology in Cape Town in 2010 and then later at the 8th ARCCNM delegates assembly in Dhaka. The idea found immediate resonance with the two leaders and the proposal was presented to the 9th ARCCNM meeting in Ho Chi Minh City in December 2011. This proposal was unanimously approved and a committee of senior nuclear medicine physicians (Table 1) was formed to work on it and have a first report ready by May of 2012 during the 10th Congress of the Asia-Oceania Federation of Nuclear Medicine to be held in Tehran.

The *raison d'être* for the board certification were condensed into the following points:

- To address growing concerns on the inhomogeneity of training & practice of nuclear medicine in Asia.
- To strengthen training programs by developing curriculum of appropriate content that integrates the radiological sciences into molecular imaging.

- To form a resource for use when designing or strengthening national training programs.

Mr. Maurizio Dondi. Head, Nuclear Medicine Section, Division of Human Health of the IAEA was also present at the meeting and was supportive of the idea. With IAEA support the necessary resources would be available to undertake the planning activities leading to the board and afterwards too (Table 2). IAEA support will be especially useful in designing and running the several training courses under the *ad hoc IAEA project* currently being formulated, this is entitled "Group Training for New/Emerging Member States". This will address the training needs of member developing countries as well as least developed countries. Post board activities are detailed in Table 3.

What the Board will offer

Fellows of the board will have demonstrated knowledge and skills in nuclear medicine and cross-sectional imaging adequate for independent reporting and supervision of most current nuclear medicine procedures.

Successful fellows of the board will have an assurance of specialist competence in nuclear medicine within the purview of the awarding organization.

These will include but will not be limited to the following subjects and topics:

- Diagnostic Nuclear Medicine.
- Basic cross-sectional imaging techniques and interpretation.
- Therapeutic Nuclear Medicine.
- Current trends and future directions in Nuclear Medicine

What the board will *not* offer

The legal standing of the ASBNM will depend on its legal standing as determined by individual nation governments.

The ASBNM on its own will not give the post-holder the right to seek employment as a nuclear medicine specialist.

ASBNM will provide an objective assessment of skills and knowledge in nuclear medicine but this will not supercede national training certification.

It is hoped that the ASBNM will become a prestigious certification of skills and competence in nuclear medicine. The fellows will have the expertise to undertake leadership roles in the science of nuclear medicine and become not only effective and efficient practitioners but also teachers who can ensure excellence in imparting instruction and training to future generations of nuclear medicine physicians

Table 1 Members of the ABNM Board

1	Durr-e Sabih (PAK) Chair
2	Dong Soo Lee (KOR)
3	Jun Hatazawa (JAP)
4	Jerry Obaldo (PHI)
5	Tawatchai Chaiwatanarat (THA)
6	Mohammed Ali Abdul Khader (MAL)
7	B.R. Mittal (IND)
8	Heather Patterson (AUS), <i>ex-officio</i>
9	Mohammed Eftekhari (IRN), <i>ex-officio</i>
10	Thomas Neil Pascual (ASNM Executive Director, currently detailed in IAEA), <i>ex-officio</i>