

# IMR NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH MALAYSIA

Institute for Medical Research

► ISSUE: 2/2019

## Our Director Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin's Farewell

PG - 11



Migration  
to NIH,  
Setia Alam



Launch of  
IMR  
Strategic  
Plan

► 04



► 05

"Love Research, Love IMR, Love Nation"



# IMR DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As this is my last message as the Director of IMR, I am happy to have had the opportunity to work in IMR and sad that I will be leaving the service. My best times were here in IMR and am highly appreciative of everyone who has given me the trust and support to lead IMR. The great achievements you all have accomplished, have made me very proud of IMR and my heart is heavy to leave all of you behind. Am sincerely touched by such a heart-warming farewell and I thank you all very much.

Our effort over the past years for the migration to the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Setia Alam has finally materialized, and I applaud the hard work of our staff. The new facilities at Setia Alam will create a more conducive and comfortable working environment and I strongly believe this would boost the productivity and quality of our research.

Today, on my retirement, it gives me great pleasure to launch the IMR Strategic Plan 2019-2030 which would serve to continue and sustain IMR as the premier biomedical research institute of Malaysia.

I wish to convey my best wishes and may IMR continue to rise and shine with many more achievements in the years to come. Thank you.

**Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin**  
**Director**  
**Institute for Medical Research (IMR)**  
**Kuala Lumpur**

8 April 2019



“ Our effort over the past years for the migration to the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Setia Alam has finally materialized, and I applaud the hard work of our staff. ”

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## NEWSLETTER

EDITOR IN  
CHIEF'S MESSAGE

Greetings,

Am honoured to be taking over as the Editor-In-Chief for the IMR Newsletter from Mr. Mohd. Zahari Tajul Hassan who has greatly contributed towards the development of this newsletter. Would also wish to thank our director Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin who has inspired and led us to greater heights during her directorship.

It is our hope that this Newsletter would serve as a tool to disseminate information and enhance collaboration among the institutes of NIH and other agencies within Ministry of Health. I would like to take this opportunity to seek comments and suggestions to improve and enhance this platform to serve our readers better in the future.

My thanks to everyone, especially the editorial team for contributing in this newsletter and I very much look forward to working with everyone.

**Dr. Balvinder Singh Gill, Head of MRRC**



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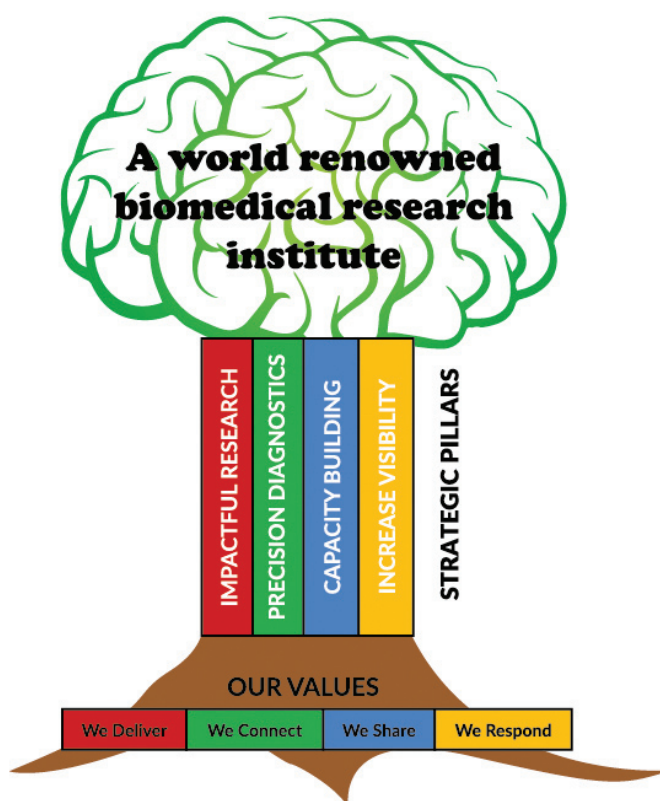
# LAUNCH OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF IMR 2019-2030

• 8 APRIL 2019

Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin, launched the IMR Strategic Plan 2019-2030 on her retirement day. This Strategic Plan aims to provide direction for the IMR transformation towards becoming a prime biomedical research institute of the country and at the global level.



IMR Strategic Plan 2019-2030





## NEWSLETTER

## MIGRATION OF IMR TO NIH, SETIA ALAM

IMR began its relocation to National Institutes of Health (NIH), Setia Alam in December 2018. The first to move was the library and IT services, followed by the other research components of the respective centres and units. The migration was carried out in stages and is expected to be completed by July this year.

This migration would not involve IMR diagnostic services, Biomedical Museum and Animal House which would remain in Jalan Pahang. Till date the migration has been carried out smoothly and on schedule, with many commending the excellent facilities in NIH. The feedback from researchers were extremely positive, especially the eco-friendliness of the new facility and everyone was looking forward to be working in an environment conducive for research. More updates on this migration will be reported in the next newsletters.



## CME JAN 2019: MY 7 YEARS JOURNEY, AS RESEARCH FELLOW IN A\*STAR



### • 11 JANUARY 2019

Dr. Ramapraba Appanna, a Research Fellow from the A\*STAR, Singapore was invited to give a talk to share her 7 years experience in A\*STAR, Singapore.

She had an important key-point on submission of manuscripts for publication where she believes in aiming high and quoted "If the manuscripts are sent to a higher impact journal, authors may obtain more beneficial comments to improve the quality of the paper, while serving as useful feedback for the research project itself".

She also engaged the IMR top management and provided several innovative strategies to improve research activities at IMR.



## OPENING CEREMONY OF DIPLOMA IN MEDICAL MICROBIOLOGY (DMM)

• 16 JANUARY 2019



An opening ceremony was held on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 for the 41<sup>st</sup> DMM by the SEAMEO TROPED Network Malaysia. The DMM programme began on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (5 months). A total of 11 students attended this programme (8 from Malaysia, 1 from Sri Lanka, 1 from the Philippines and 1 from Cambodia).

Director of IMR, YBhg. Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin, who is also the Director of the SEAMEO TROPED Network Malaysia, gave an opening speech. This was followed by introduction of the DMM management by Dr. Ahmad Faudzi Yusoff (Focal Point of DMM and Head of Epidemiology & Biostatistics Unit) and the introduction of the Module Coordinators by Dr. Ravindran Thayan (Dean of DMM and Head of Virology Unit, Infectious Disease Research Centre).



Among others present were the Deputy Dean of DMM, Dr Masita Arip (Head of Allergy & Immunology Centre); Head of Medical Research Resource Centre (MRRC), Dr Balvinder Singh Gill; Deputy Director (Management), Datin Sri Faizah Fazlina Dato' Rosli; Principal Assistant Director, Mr. Nur Sharezal Dato' Roslan; the Coordinator of the School of DAP&E/DMM, Mr. Aziz Ibrahim;

staff of the school, Ms. Nik Norazizawati Abdul Rashid and Secretariat of the SEAMEO TROPED Network Malaysia, Ms. Nur Fasihah Amir Jalaluddin.

During this ceremony, the students introduced themselves and was given the opportunity to get to know everyone. This was then followed by refreshments.



# THE SECRET TO BUILD A HEALTHY MIND & HAPPY WORKPLACE

• 30 JANUARY 2019

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The IMR Occupational Safety and Health Unit (UKKP) organized a half day programme in collaboration with the Psychiatric Department, Hospital Kuala Lumpur as an initiative to help IMR staff manage stress at the workplace. A total of 135 IMR staff attended and participated in this program.

There were four speakers from HKL: Dr. Hasniah Hussin, Dr. Ravivarma Rao, Dr. Nooraini Darus and Dr. Umi Adzlin Silim who spoke on various topics :

- i. Overview of mental health at workplace & early recognition of sign and symptoms
- ii. Stress & its types, Risk factors, Coping Skills & Resilience, Practical Sessions on Relaxation Techniques
- iii. Building support system at workplace : Real vs Perceived Support System; Professional Help & Boundaries

Participants' knowledge was assessed with regards to conditions categorized as mental health problems, effective treatment modalities and the importance of seeking professional care.



Activities were held to enable participants visualize and understand what stressed them, how to manage stress and whether they had sufficient support from their surrounding to help them in their difficulties; e.g. physical, emotional, social values ("kerohanian"), work and intellectual needs.





# TRAVEL GRANT AWARDED TO IMR RESEARCHERS

Two of our researchers were successful in obtaining the travel grant for the first International Global Health Security Conference (GHS 2019) to be held from 18th -20th June 2019 at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.

## POSTER PRESENTATION

Ms. Roziah Ali (Research Officer)

**Unit/Centre :** Entomology Unit, Infectious Disease Research Centre (IDRC)

**Title :** Entomological Study Associated With Zika Seroprevalence at Selected Sites In Malaysia



## ORAL PRESENTATION

Mrs. Yuvaneswary Veloo (Research Officer)

**Unit/Centre :** Occupational Health Unit, Environmental Health Research Centre (EHRC)

**Title :** Environmental Spread Of Antibiotic-resistant Bacteria In Poultry Farms: A Cause For Concern?



# SPECIMEN MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (SMIS)

The SMIS system developed by Mrs. Nik Awatif Kamil (Head of Specimen Management Unit, UPS) and Mr. Zaidi Dat (Senior MLT from Stomatology Unit) won 1<sup>st</sup> place for Primer Category during the MOH Innovation Day Award Ceremony in December 2018. As IMR provides specialized diagnostic and referral test to hospitals throughout the country, the purpose of this system is to ensure an efficient specimen management system. This web based application was deployed with full functionality from October 2017.



The Specimen Management Unit serves to receive specimens from all hospitals and distributes specimens to the respective laboratories in IMR for laboratory analysis. Upon analysis, results of the individual Laboratory Information System (LIS) and stand-alone systems from all 49 laboratories in IMR, are converted to pdf format for hospitals to download.



## A TALK ON RABIES FEATURED IN AL-HIJRAH TV

• 18 FEBRUARY 2019

Mrs. Tengku Rogayah bt Tengku Abdul Rashid (Research Officer) was featured on TV Al-Hijrah to talk about Rabies.


The interactive show covered issues regarding the status of rabies in Malaysia; method of transmission to humans; role and methods by IMR to determine and confirm the origin of rabies virus infections in Serian, Sarawak and subsequent cases; the measures that public can take to help contain the rabies epidemic and rabies vaccination.

Saksikan Rancangan  
**"Assalamualaikum"**  
TV Al-Hijrah saluran Astro 114

**Topik :**  
**"Rabies"**  
18 Februari 2019 (Isnin)  
8:00 pagi


Panel: Tengku Rogayah bt Tengku Abdul Rashid  
Pegawai Penyelidik Unit Virologi  
Pusat Penyelidikan Penyakit Berjangkit  
Institut Penyelidikan Perubatan  
Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia

## INFORMATION ON RABIES



### History of Rabies Outbreak In Malaya


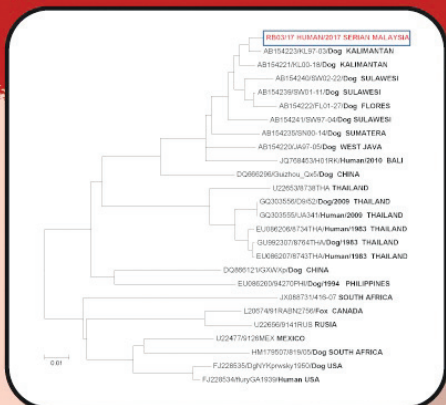
- 1884** Rabies first detected in Malaysia when a large number of dogs were imported into Malaya
- 1924** Rabies in human was first recorded in states bordering Thailand such as Kedah, Perak, Penang, Perlis and Kelantan
- 1945-1952** Spread of rabies in the particular states led to the establishment of the 'National Rabies Control Programme' as well as the formation of Immune - belt area at the Malaysia-Thailand borders
- 1999** Malaysia was declared free of rabies as there were no longer any spread of the disease in human and dogs
- 2015** Malaysia lost its rabies-free status upon the spread of the disease in dogs
- 2017** Rabies case was detected in a patient in Serian, Sarawak having symptoms of rabies
- 2017-2018** 16 rabies cases were detected in the state of Sarawak



- 96% of carrier of rabies is dogs, nevertheless rabies have also occurred in other animals such as cat, cow, goat, monkey, pig, horse, tiger and fox.
- Preventive measure for rare animals or pets is usually rabies vaccine especially in areas where rabies had been detected/spread

#### Unit Virologi, IMR

In Malaysia, the Virology Unit of IMR is the main laboratory involved in the research and identification of rabies in human. The methodology used is the Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) whereby the identification is based on the genomics of the rabies virus. Other test in use are sequencing of the virus genes identified to ascertain the origin of the virus.

#### Phylogenetic analysis of rabies virus in Malaysia

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# A TALK ON 'LALAT: PENAWAR, PERISIK & PENDAKWA' FEATURED IN BICARA INSPIRASI TV1

• 26 MARCH 2019



Dr. Nazni Wasi Ahmad was featured on TV1 Bicara Inspirasi on the Maggot Debridement Therapy (MDT) which won the Dr Lee Jong-Wook Memorial Prize for Public Health in 2018.

Dr. Nazni shared how she started her research in the field of entomology, where she decided to work on flies, a species which people abhor or dislike, as it settles on faeces and carcasses. She took this research as an opportunity to change the public perception and further enhance research on flies as studies are limited in Malaysia.

The link to this youtube video is <https://youtu.be/v-22iV8rqD4>.

The team started the research on MDT in 2002, based on work by Dr. Ronald Sherman, who applied this therapy in US and Europe for treating wounds caused by diabetes. The benefit of maggots was first noticed during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War when injured soldiers abandoned on the battlefield had their wounds healed faster when infested with maggots. Dr. Nazni emphasized that the fly (maggot) is not used to treat diabetes but rather the wound of a diabetic patient. The species chosen for treatment is crucial as some could lead to detrimental outcomes as it may feed on live tissues. Type of fly maggot used in our research was *Lucilia cuprina*. In this therapy, the first stage of sterilized maggot (24 hour old) is placed on the wound and bandaged. The bandage is opened after the 3<sup>rd</sup> day and the maggots are 7-10 times larger by then as they eat up the necrotic tissues.

When asked if the patients were afraid to use this treatment method, Dr. Nazni explained that there were patients who actually requested for it in the hope of avoiding limb amputation. Fifty one hospitals have been using this therapy till date and 6,000 patients have been successfully cured. The first patient was a male policeman from Lumut. Wounds with pus can be successfully treated with this therapy with the exception of wet wounds.





## NEWSLETTER

## OUR DIRECTOR'S FAREWELL



Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin, officially retired on 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, leaving many great moments and memories as our Director for almost 3 years. The entire IMR family from Jalan Pahang and NIH Setia Alam had come together at the Majlis Sanjungan Budi & Semarak Kasih, Auditorium Ungku Omar, IMR, Jalan Pahang.

Dato' was welcomed by a traditional Bajau dance named Tarian Igal-igal @ Daling Daling, performed by IMR's very own dance group 'SeniTari IMR' led by Mr. Faizal Habib Ahmad from Molecular Pathology Unit. The dance was choreographed by Ms. Fifi Shawani Aftab from Haematology Unit and Ms. Audrey Fanty Anak Jangan from Molecular Pathology Unit.

A video montage was presented of our Director's illustrious journey in the civil service since her time in HKL in 1984 to this moment as the Director of IMR. Staff from all IMR centres conveyed their best wishes to her in their very own way in this video. Subsequently, Dr. Zubaidah Zakaria gave a speech on behalf of IMR, highlighting the interesting and hilarious tales of their time as medical students. Dr. Zubaidah expressed and emphasized the brilliant and multitalented nature of Dato' Dr. Fadzilah which forms the exceptional person she is today.



Dr. Zubaidah Zakaria giving speech on behalf of IMR



A full house crowd

## OUR APPRECIATION

In her speech, Dato' provided words of encouragement, motivation and support to us; expressing how touched she was for the commitment and support she received by the staff throughout her time in IMR. She was presented with gifts and tokens of appreciation from all the IMR Centre Heads. The event included a cake cutting ceremony with a birthday song followed by "Allah Selamatkan Kamu", which she mentioned would leave her with a cherished memory.





## PERFORMANCES

Towards the end, Mr. Faizal Habib Ahmad rendered a few dance numbers from Michael Jackson's top hits solo as well as with his dance team from 'SeniTari IMR'.



Mr. Muhamad Shafiq Md Lani from Admin Unit (left) and Mr. Maccallyster ak Isa from Parasitology Unit (right) singing 'Kenangan Yang Terindah'.



The MC Mr. Mohd Zahari Tajul Hassan recited a poem specially written for Dato' by Mrs. Rozilawati Rasli of Entomology Unit, IDRC.

## FINAL GOODBYE



Dato' Dr. Fadzilah Kamaludin bidding farewell to all IMR staff



A final 'punch out' ceremony was held for our Director Dato' Dr. Fadzilah. It was an emotional event for everyone who wished a happy retirement to her.