

Subspecialty – Ocular Microbiology and Ocular Infectious Diseases



Professor Donald TH Tan (Singapore) and presenters from the Asia Cornea Society

- **Symposium on Microbial Keratitis: A Pervasive Threat to Sight in Asia**

“This symposium will concentrate on epidemiology of a regional situation – particularly Asia versus the western world – and the risk factors, etiology and challenges in the management of microbial keratitis.”

“There will be an emphasis on the necessity of collaborative study among various Asian countries with the view to developing common microbiology protocols for a better understanding of emerging challenges in this part of the world.”

“The symposium will provide a new perspective of contact lens-related microbial keratitis, and a unique challenge for Asia – fungal keratitis – as well as an increasing awareness of parasitic keratitis in this locality. The presentations will be supplemented with an update on various infectious-keratitis studies by the Asia Cornea Society.”

Note: All effort has been made to check facts with each presenter. The writer accepts responsibility for any inadvertent errors in transcript.

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Dr Prashant Garg (India)

• Challenges in Microbial Keratitis – Asia v/s Rest of the World

Dr Garg is Associate Director and G Chandra Sekhar Distinguished Chair of Education, L V Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, India. During the APAO Sydney Congress in March, Dr Garg will provide an overview of the challenges in microbial keratitis in Asia compared with other countries around the world.

“Corneal infection is an important cause of ocular morbidity in developing countries, including countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It is estimated that nearly 1.5 million cases of corneal ulcer occur each year in developing countries. The epidemiology of corneal ulcer varies from region to region. Even within the Asia-Pacific region itself, there is wide variation.”

“While contact lenses are an important predisposing factor of keratitis in Singapore, Hong-Kong and Australia, trauma is the most important predisposing factor in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. There are also regional differences in the common microorganisms causing keratitis. Bacteria are the commonest organisms causing keratitis in Hong-Kong, Singapore and Australia, whereas fungi accounts for nearly 50 per cent of all keratitis isolates in India and Bangladesh. Even the antimicrobial susceptibility is variable.”

“Besides regional variations in epidemiology, there are emerging challenges. Microsporidia is becoming important as a cause of keratitis even among immuno-competent individuals. There is increasing resistance to fluoroquinolones among both gram-positive and negative bacteria. Community acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is creating a new challenge for ophthalmologists. The lecture will focus on various challenges related to microbial keratitis in Asia Pacific region.”

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