

Submitted: 1 April 2024
Accepted: 20 August 2024
Published online: 1 October, TAPS 2024, SP01, 4-7
<https://doi.org/10.29060/TAPS.2024-SP01/SP002>

The University of the Philippines, College of Medicine: ASEAN Medical Schools Network partner

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine Medical School was established by virtue of a legislative act passed by the Second Philippine Commission in 1905. It opened in 1907 predating the establishment of the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1908 and the Philippine General Hospital (which is the training hospital for the school) in 1910. In 1923, the name was changed to University of the Philippines College of Medicine (UPCM) (University of the Philippines Manila, 2019).

Re-organisation of the UP led to the establishment of the UP Health Sciences Centre in 1967 to provide training and research in various health sciences. It became an autonomous member of the University of the Philippines System in 1979 and was renamed and re-organised as the University of the Philippines Manila (UPM) in 1982. The UPCM is one of nine colleges of the UPM, the others being the UP College of Nursing, UP College of Dentistry, UP College of Pharmacy, UP College of Public Health, UP College of Allied Medical Professions, UP College of Arts and Sciences in Manila, UP School for Health Sciences, and the National Teacher Training Centre for the Health Professions.

The UPCM currently has about one thousand medical students trained by 750 academic staff members while its teaching hospital, the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), caters to 600,000 patients annually. There are currently twenty-two residency and seventy-eight

specialty and subspecialty fellowship training programs. The UPCM has been accredited by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU), the organisation tasked to visit medical schools for accreditation in the Philippines. Currently the UPCM holds a Level IV accreditation status as conferred by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) valid until 2026. It was declared a Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Centre of Excellence for Medicine in 2015, and it is due for revisit by the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance in 2026.

II. ASEAN MEDICAL SCHOOLS NETWORK

The ASEAN Medical Schools Network (AMSN) was established in 2012 to promote collaboration among the leading medical schools in the ASEAN region to achieve excellence in medical education and healthcare, share human resources, assist one another in capacity building in medical education and research, and to work as one community as part of the ASEAN Economic Community. To this end, an annual ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit (AMDS) has been organised and has been hosted by an ASEAN country on rotation basis. (Special Issue ASEAN Medical Schools Network) (Mahidol University, n.d.). The University of the Philippines Manila College of Medicine (UPCM) is a founding member of the AMSN and has been an active participant in this endeavour. This paper chronicles the contributions and participation of the UPCM in the

AMSN.

III. ACCREDITATION

In its initial meeting, the AMSN identified four working groups: Medical Education curriculum, Medical Electives Exchange, Research and Accreditation. The UPCM volunteered to participate in the Working Group on Accreditation, which was convened by Dean Prasit Watanapa, head of the Working Group on Accreditation, in Siriraj Hospital, Thailand on July 25, 2014. Each country representative shared a presentation on the status of accreditation of medical schools in their country. After the meeting, the group representatives resolved that:

- Accreditation of medical schools ensures quality assurance.
- Each country's representative is obliged to meet with other medical institutions within his/her respective country to disseminate information regarding this meeting.
- Presentations will be reviewed to identify common standards of accreditation for consensus.
- Each country will work towards identifying or establishing an accrediting agency for medical schools within the country.

The Accreditation Group will conduct regular meetings to share and learn how to use accreditation to leverage the standards of medical education.

As reported in the 3rd AMDS in Singapore on September 12-14, 2014, only six out of ten respondents had some form of external accreditation, five were mandatory and one was voluntary. Accreditation was mandatory for publicly funded schools and more commonly applied to postgraduate medical education. Most accreditations at that time utilised local guidelines. The World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) guidelines were not widely used. The WFME is a global organisation dedicated to enhancing the quality of medical education worldwide. WFME accreditation guarantees that the accredited medical institutes uphold the highest standards of education and training in medicine. and international medical schools would need to be accredited by an agency recognised by the WFME. During the 4th AMDS in the Philippines, the AMDS acknowledged the establishment of the Association for Medical Education Accreditation (AMEAc), an autonomous entity based in Thailand to serve as an accrediting agency for medical schools in Thailand and ASEAN countries where accreditation was not yet available. In the recent 13th AMDS in Bangkok, Thailand, the UPCM announced that the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and

Universities (PAASCU), the accreditation body of medical schools in the Philippines, is now recognised by the WFME as an accrediting agency effective April 2023 to 2033 (PAASCU, 2023). Malaysia and Indonesia likewise have agencies accredited by WFME.

The UPCM was host for the 4th ASEAN Medical Deans Summit from June 23-24, 2015. During the meeting, the AMSN Charter was presented and approved by nine deans/representatives from ASEAN medical schools who were present in the meeting. Dr. Jose Cueto, member of the Board of Medicine, Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) gave a clear exposition on the challenges of harmonisation of medical schools in the ASEAN region. He emphasised that harmonisation should focus on identifying equivalence among curricular systems rather than standardisation or uniformity of curricula. The ASEAN medical school deans agreed to:

- Work towards harmonising qualifications to make educational programs comparable to allow greater mobility and exchange of professionals and students in the ASEAN region.
- Support the ASEAN Students' Collaborative Project spearheaded by the Faculty of Medicine Universitas Indonesia designed to improve students' skills in developing health projects in a community within a collaborative framework.
- Recognise the importance of research on TB in the ASEAN with TRUNCATE-TB trial as lead trial, establish the ASEAN TB data base, and participate in research on dengue control.
- Establish a healthy campus initiative by generating evidence and intervention through survey of healthy lifestyle practices in campus, development of validated tools, and implementation of intervention appropriate to setting, and
- Participate in medical education research involving mapping of learning outcomes of ASEAN medical graduates, interprofessional education, and accreditation and quality assurance.

IV. MAPPING LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ASEAN MEDICAL GRADUATES

The 5th ASEAN Medical Deans Summit was held in Bogor, West Java in Indonesia from July 26-28, 2016. Results of the first phase of the survey on Mapping out Learning Outcomes of the ASEAN medical graduates were presented. Six of seven schools had an outcome-based curriculum which was developed in varied ways, e.g., by consensus building with relevant stakeholders, through a review of health outcomes data from Ministries of Health, or as defined by a national qualification agency or higher body of education. Common learning

outcomes were identified. Through a Delphi technique, these learning outcomes went through another round of comments on operational definitions, ranking according to importance and relevance, and a listing of competencies and standards for each learning outcome.

On March 28, 2018, Dr. Coralie Dimacali (UPCM) convened with Dr. Suwannee Suraseranivongse (Siriraj

Hospital, Mahidol University) and Dr. Cherdasak Iramaneerat (Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University) to finalise the competencies of an ASEAN medical graduate based on feedback from respondents (See Figure 1). These were then presented by Dr. Suwannee in the 7th AMDS meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam on August 23, 2018.

1. **Clinical competency:** Ability to approach, gather clinical information, diagnose, investigate, provide treatment, rehabilitate patients in clinical settings, health promotion, and disease prevention.
 - 1.1. Medical knowledge: preclinical knowledge, clinical knowledge, patient safety
 - 1.2. Clinical skills: history taking, physical examination, diagnosis, procedural skills, health promotion and disease prevention.
2. **Communication and interpersonal skills:** Ability to communicate and collaborate with others.
 - 2.1. Teaching skills: small group, large group, patient education
 - 2.2. Communication skills: written, verbal communication, media, presentation.
 - 2.3. Cultural competency: understanding and living with people from other cultures.
3. **Professional manner and ethics:** Ability to work in a professional manner under ethical and legal standards.
 - 3.1. Professional ethics: ethical principles and practice
 - 3.2. Legal standards: professional laws and regulations
 - 3.3. Social accountability
4. **Self-awareness and professional development through lifelong learning:** Ability to regularly reflect and update oneself by utilizing a variety of avenues for continuing personal and professional growth.
5. **Research skills:** Ability to systematically search and appraise literature and utilize new knowledge in patient care.
 - 5.1. Evidence- based practice
 - 5.2. Critical appraisal
 - 5.3. Medical information management
6. **Systems-based approach to healthcare:** Ability to identify and integrate available health systems in providing patient and population care in various health care delivery settings including times of disaster.
7. **Leadership and management of healthcare team:** Ability to work collaboratively and effectively as a leader or follower in a healthcare team

Figure 1. Common competencies for ASEAN Doctors (as compiled by Dr Coralie Dimacali, Dr Cherdasak Iramaneerat and Dr Suwannee Suraseranivongse)

Prior to the 6th AMDS meeting, schools were tasked to assess their medical education programs according to quality indicators developed in Thailand. Results based on eleven respondents representing ten ASEAN countries were presented in the 6th AMDS meeting held in Myanmar on July 27-28, 2017. Although the general scores were average, three areas needed improvement: Student, Curriculum and Program evaluation. They were identified as topics for discussion in subsequent AMDS meetings. The remainder of the meeting was spent on discussing updates on the Student Collaboration projects and research initiatives on tuberculosis, dengue, and healthy campus initiatives.

V. VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the UPCM continued to participate in the AMSN webinar series, the Global

classroom initiatives on Alzheimer's Disease and Ischemic Heart Disease, and the AMDS virtual conference hosted by University of Cambodia with the assistance of staff from the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS).

VI. SUMMARY

This article has detailed the participation of the UPCM as an active member of the ASEAN Medical Schools Network. The UPCM will host the 14th AMDS in Manila, Philippines on June 12-14, 2024.

Funding

There is no direct funding for this manuscript.

Declaration of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest for this publication.

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