

Haematolymphoid Workshop on 04 May 2019

I boarded the first flight of Air Asia in KLIA2 heading towards Singapore. The arrival hall in the terminal 4 at Changi Singapore was very spacious and brand new which had impressed me for a low budget airport. I took a grab taxi to reach MD 11 building in NUHS. It was 7am in the morning. I was greeted by the registration staff who was diligently assisting me as the first few participants and was ushered to the auditorium. The programme was supposed to start at 8.45 am so the auditorium was only having few delegates. After I set up the wifi connection, I managed to access the online lectures recorded incredibly by A/Prof Tan Soo Yong himself, who was the organizer of this workshop. Those precious lectures were very comprehensive for a beginner like me in the field of histopathology. After knowing people like A/Prof Tan, my fear on reading histopathology slides slowly disappeared. He was really a great teacher that will enlighten me on such a dry subject.

There was a Mandarin conversation with a familiar voice which sounded like prof Tan breaking the silence behind. I turned my back to behind and delightedly saw A/Prof Tan Soo Yong. I greeted him and he introduced me to another associate professor Chen in histopathology from Taiwan. After 30 minutes, prof tan started to give an opening remark to the workshop. The objective of this workshop was to focus on trephine and skin histopathology as was previously commented by the participants in the previous workshop. He welcomed all his colleagues Dr. Susan Hue, A/Prof Ng Siok Bian in the trephine biopsy in lymphoproliferative disorders. I learned that lymphoblastic leukemia/lymphoma can be negative for 34 or TDT and about chronic active EBV infection which can be presented as HLH in children and also in young adult. If it was related to EBV related NK cell lymphoma the clinical course in adult will be aggressive whereas in children will have better prognosis. In the section, the best speaker was of course A/Prof Tan Soo Yong showing all the difficult lymphoma cases.

After the tea break, it was continued on to the trephine biopsy in Myeloid Conditions. These talks by Dr. Wang Shi and Dr Lee Shir Ying were very relevant to me and help me to recap a lot. Another amazing speaker was Prof Lorenzo Cerroni on the clinicopathologic Spectrum of Mycosis Fungoides. His lecture was full with pictures and cases and he could go on and on forever. I found it a bit difficult to catch up with his pace and luckily I met our Malaysian Dermatopathologist Dr. Lee Bang Rong who was giving me guidance throughout. I had to say all the skin biopsy look similar to me with all the description he gave like pouch like intradermal lymphocytes accumulation, epidermal tropism and microabscesses that were sounding Greek to me. I think he did a great job by putting the clinical picture of the skin lesions with distribution to make me understand MF better. This dedicated prof subsequently gave us 3 more lectures on intravascular proliferation of cells and cutaneous lymphomas. He was the old school histopathologist who did not do much immunohistochemistry to come to diagnosis and in fact he diagnosed cases with zero IHC! The most important message for clinician like me to take home was mycosis fungoides seldom have aggressive skin lesions and if the patient presented badly, must think of lymphoma and something more sinister. He also taught me that Lymphomatoid papulosis (LyP) a waxing and waning skin lesions which also express CD30 with similar looking HPE looking as ALCL. (This was emphasized by Dr. Lee Bang Rom).

I was exhausted at the end of the day of the workshop as I was too overwhelmed by wealth of information especially the dermatopathology lectures. It was a very successful workshop but the only thing I felt a bit inappropriate was A/Prof Tan was the one running the show ranging from organizer, emcee and speaker. In Malaysia, that probably would not happen in view of the filial piety culture instilled in our society, there would always be the younger generations within the fraternity to step forward and help out. We took a group photo as shown below and I rushed to catch the 7 pm flights of Air Asia to head home without spending an expensive overnight stay in Singapore. Last but not the least, I would like to express my gratitude to MSH educational grant committee for sponsoring me to attend such a meaningful event.

