

APLAR CONGRESS 2023

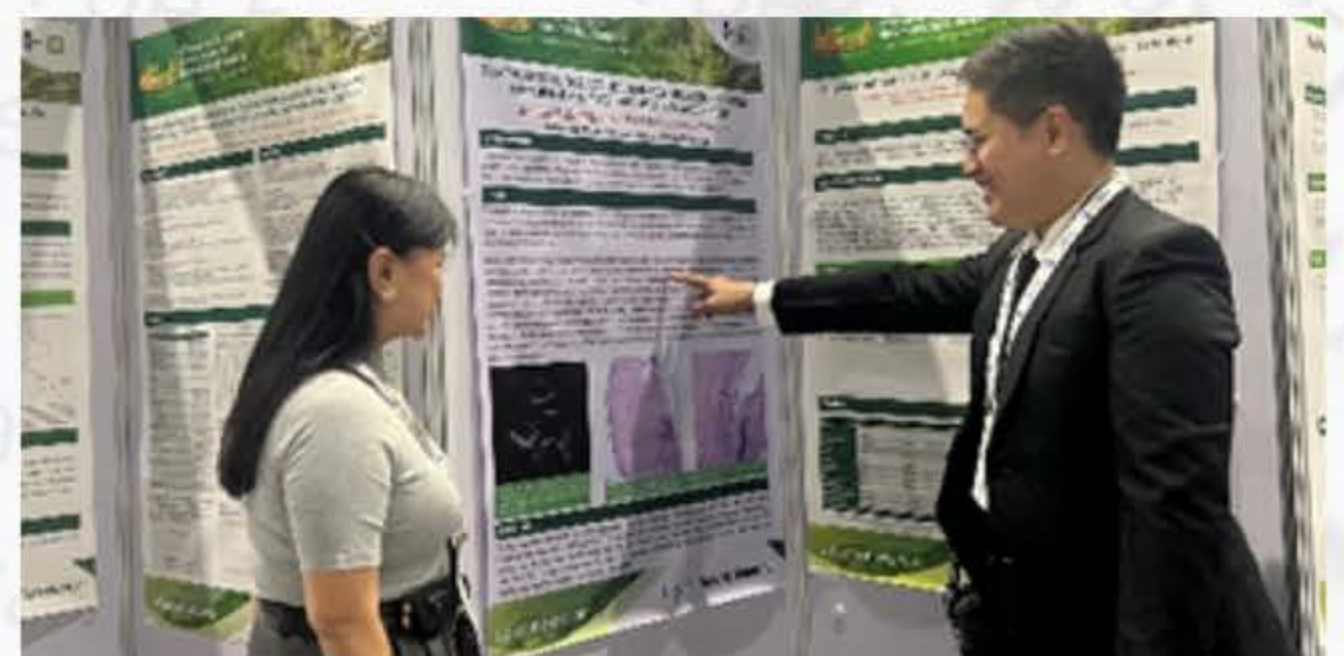
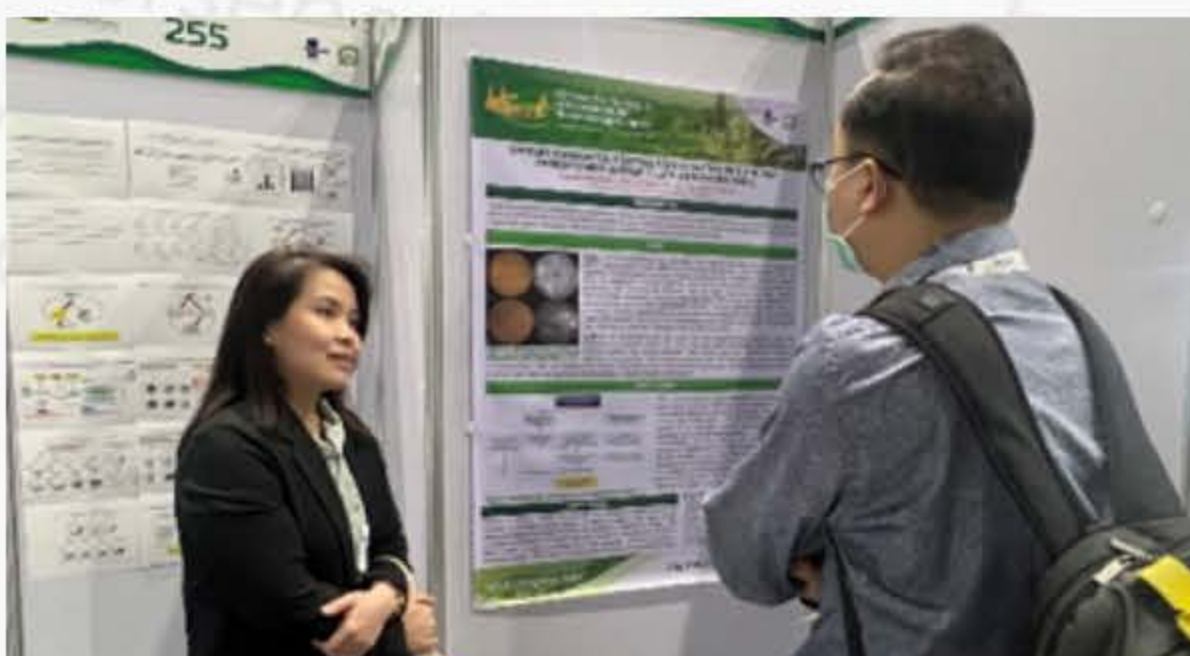
By: Jan Erico D. Pabustan, MD

The 25th APLAR rheumatology congress was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand last December 7-11, 2023. Participants from the Philippines were one of the largest contingents, included in it were 9 UST rheumatology fellows attending the event. Being the first live APLAR congress since the pandemic struck, this year's 5-day scientific program provided lots of interesting, high-yield topics and discussion with 50 scientific sessions including four plenary sessions and 16 SIG groups, 130 speakers invited from 18 countries, over 1,000 abstracts accepted and more than 1,500 registrants, this convention was truly a significant learning activity for clinicians and trainees in rheumatology.



The convention started with the pre-congress workshops on December 7, 2023. The first workshop was the 1st APLAR endorsed course on basic MSK ultrasound followed by MRI axial imaging course on axial spondyloarthritis and mimics. On the second day of the pre-congress, the mRSS assessment course and GRAPPA symposium happened. The AYR clinical skills workshop on labial salivary gland and muscle biopsy followed and provided a focused video-guided step by step procedure in performing these procedures. It also offered a chance for AYR members to ask questions to the esteemed speakers regarding these procedures. The second day ended with the opening ceremony headed by APLAR president, Dr. Debashish Danda and Congress Chair Professor Worawit Louthrenoo.

The third day, December 9, 2023, was the official start of the congress. The first two plenary sessions were held with interesting topics regarding vasculitis, scleroderma, ILD in CTDs as well as TNF and JAK inhibitors. Succeeding sessions featured topics on spondyloarthropathies, psoriatic arthritis, APS, reproductive issues in RMDs and clinical immunology. SIGs in scleroderma, myositis, pediatric rheumatology and genetics also held sessions for learning that were all well attended by the participants. The opening of the exhibition hall featured a total of 15 research abstracts of Thomasian rheumatology fellows accepted for poster presentation.



Thomsonian rheumatologists shared their expertise on the fourth day of the congress. Prof. Sandra V. Navarra spoke on the topic “Optimising glucocorticoid therapy in SLE” while Dr. Julie Li-Yu shared her knowledge regarding “Emerging treatment strategies for osteoporosis-sequential vs combination therapy”. Truly, they are inspirations to the Philippine rheumatology community, especially to the young rheumatologists and trainees.



The final day, December 11, 2023, was also packed with interesting and exciting lectures. The fourth plenary session was moderated by our very own, Prof. Sandra V. Navarra and Dr. Laniyati Hamijoyo, with sessions tackling about the new concepts and treatment directions lupus and lupus nephritis. Indeed, it just shows how rheumatology adapts to the changing needs of patients it takes care of. In the afternoon, Prof. Sandra V. Navarra gave a remarkable lecture on pregnancy outcomes in SLE as part of the session in reproductive aspect of rheumatic disease.

The 25th APLAR rheumatology congress conferred to its attendees a lot of learnings. Not only was it able to connect clinicians and trainees from different parts of the world, it was also successful in fulfilling its objectives in giving high-yield discussions and updates from its excellent speakers and presentations.

