Update on the growth of the International Intermedical School Physiology Quiz

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The International Intermedical School Physiology Quiz (IMSPQ) was created in 2003 at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with a small group of seven local medical school teams. Our first article in this journal (4) in 2010 on the 7th IMSPQ described the event when an enlarged international physiology quiz event was stimulating interest, with 35 medical schools from 12 countries participating.

Now, in August 2015, at the 13th IMSPQ, the IMSPQ has mushroomed and grown into a global event, with 88 medical schools from 23 countries gathering for a 2-day event in Malaysia.

Format of the IMSPQ. The first day of the IMSPQ is a written test consisting of 100 true/false statements covering all major physiological systems. All team members are obligated to do the test. The mean score of each team is computed, and the top best 40 teams are selected to continue into the second day of the IMSPQ. The second day is an oral competition before a live audience. Teams are grouped as determined by their ranking in the written test and compete against each other over several rounds of questioning by a Quiz Master. The Quiz Master together with two other invited judges from among the accompanying lecturers help facilitate the oral quiz proceedings. A quick response bell system is also used at certain points in the oral quiz.

In the final round, the top three teams tussle for the first, second, and third winner positions in each IMSPQ.

Initiation of national quizzes outside Malaysia. The Malaysia IMSPQ has also catalyzed the initiation of national quizzes in several countries. Lecturers who accompanied their teams to the IMSPQ were inspired and enthused to use a similar quiz event to stimulate interest in physiology learning and teaching. To facilitate and help initiate a national physiology quiz event along the format of the IMSPQ, one of us (H. M. Cheng) would arrange to be the Quiz Master of the first event in that country. The IMSPQ has also provided valuable insights in students’ learning and understanding in a unique batch of international teams has become a regular feature of the IMSPQ.

Timeline of participating IMSPQ teams (2003–2015). Table 1 shows the growth of the IMSPQ event, which especially accelerated after the 5th IMSPQ in 2007. An increasing number of international teams has become a regular feature of the IMSPQ.

The education benefits of the IMSPQ extend beyond the 2-day quiz event to generate some useful resources for teaching. The IMSPQ has also provided valuable insights into student’s learning and understanding in a unique batch of international students who are tested with conceptual physiological questions. Some of the common misconceptions derived from analyzing the answers in the IMSPQ have appeared in this journal (2). A selected collection of IMSPQ-related questions has also recently been published as a book (3).

We welcome more participation, especially from the Americas and Europe, to the 2016 14th IMSPQ, which will be hosted for the first time by a new host country, Indonesia. The 14th IMSPQ, scheduled for July 29 and 30, 2016, will be at the University of Gadjah Mada, in Jogjakarta, the cultural capital of Indonesia, home of the Borobudur Complex.

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The Refresher in Neurophysiology at the 14th IMSPQ will be given by Prof. Susan Barman (Michigan State University).
“Hidup Fisiologi!” In Malay, that means “Long Live Physiology!”

DISCLOSURES

No conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, are declared by the author(s).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author contributions: H.-M.C. drafted manuscript; H.-M.C. and S.-Z.H. edited and revised manuscript; H.-M.C. approved final version of manuscript.

REFERENCES


Table 1. Numbers of participating universities at the Intermedical School Physiology Quiz in Malaysia from 2003 to 2015

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