



TRAINING TISSUE BANKERS IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION

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SUMMARY

With the development of tissue banks in the Asia Pacific Region, facilitated by the Regional Co-ordination Agreement (RCA) programme on Radiation Sterilization of Tissue Grafts since 1985, there was a need for training tissue bank operators in order to ensure the production of high quality radiation sterilized tissue grafts. Under the leadership of Professor Glynn Phillips, a draft curriculum was developed by the RCA member states in Suzhou, China in 1994. National University Hospital NUH Tissue Bank was appointed as the Regional Training Centre to train tissue bank operators in the Asia Pacific Region in 1997. The first IAEA/NUS Diploma Course on tissue banking was launched in November 1997. The draft curriculum was converted into an IAEA/NUS multimedia curriculum by Singapore in 1998. Since then, several updates have been made to this curriculum in three phases.

The diploma course was converted into an internet course in 2004. A total of 17 annual courses have been run annually by the training centre in Singapore. Over the period of 20 years, 254 tissue bank operators participated in these courses run by the National University of Singapore; 221 students have convocated - 194 from the Asia Pacific Region itself, 6 from Latin America, 10 from Africa, 9 from Europe and 2 from Australia. There was also a technology transfer from the Regional Training Centre in Singapore to Latin America. A training centre was set up in Buenos Aires, Argentina for Latin America. The curriculum from Singapore was converted into Spanish for use by the training centre in Latin America. The curriculum was also converted into Korean language to run Korean training courses in Seoul, Korea. A total of 12 courses were conducted during the period 2003 to 2015, with a total enrollment of 177 students. To date, 153 tissue bank operators have convocated from the Korean National Training Centre.

Challenges ahead include the need for continuing medical education by running workshops on a regular basis – procurement, processing, amnion, bone to update tissue bankers with the latest advances in technology and to show and adopt the latest best practices – perhaps in collaboration amongst a few countries. However, the question of advanced or “specialist training” is a difficult one – best explored nationally according to national needs and requirements.