

LETTER FROM ASIA-PACIFIC AND BEYOND

Letter From Malaysia: Advancing Respiratory Frontiers Through Innovation, Education, and Collaboration

Ahmad Izuanuddin Ismail^{1,2,3}  | Lai Ngoh Hooi³

¹Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Sungai Buloh, Malaysia | ²Hospital Al Sultan Abdullah, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam, Malaysia | ³Malaysian Thoracic Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Correspondence: Ahmad Izuanuddin Ismail (ahmadizuanuddin@gmail.com)

Received: 14 July 2025 | **Accepted:** 23 July 2025

Funding: The authors received no specific funding for this work.

Keywords: asthma | continuing medical education | inhaler education | interstitial lung disease | lung cancer | Malaysia | paediatrics | respiratory medicine | spirometry | thoracic society

As Malaysia transitions into the post-pandemic era, the Malaysian Thoracic Society (MTS) continues to redefine respiratory medicine through education, service development, advocacy, and international collaboration. The 2024–2025 period marked further expansion of the Society's reach, deeper engagement across healthcare sectors, and significant elevation of the national discourse on lung health.

The MTS 2024 Annual Congress, held for the first time in Johor Bahru, set a new milestone with 698 registered delegates and 25 international participants from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The programme featured plenary lectures, themed symposia, and three full-day pre-congress workshops attended by 183 participants. Topics included multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, paediatric asthma, lung physiology, and the application of artificial intelligence in thoracic imaging. A total of 131 scientific abstracts were received, with selected papers presented in oral and thematic sessions. The Gala Dinner—held on Merdeka Day and themed 'Bangsa Malaysia'—celebrated unity in healthcare and featured a moving tribute titled 'Hana: The Flower of Hope', recounting the journey of a young survivor of near-fatal asthma and underscoring the human impact of respiratory disease.

The MTS Spirometry Certification Programme continued to expand, with fully subscribed Phase 1 and Phase 3 workshops in 2025. A new module tailored for occupational health physicians is under development. The Inhaler Education and Training Certification Programme continued to provide structured, standardised training for multidisciplinary teams across the country.

In October 2024, the inaugural Respiratory Fellow Masterclass brought together trainees and faculty for expert-led lectures, mock viva sessions, and interactive hands-on workshops, setting a new standard in advanced clinical training.

Recognising the unique complexities of paediatric respiratory care, MTS significantly expanded its outreach through targeted initiatives. The Tuberculosis in Children Workshop series, launched in May 2024 at Hospital Tunku Azizah, was subsequently extended to hospitals across Sarawak (Sibu and Kuching), Pahang (Temerloh), and Johor (Kluang) throughout 2025. Organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, these workshops aimed to build national capacity in paediatric TB diagnosis and management through multidisciplinary engagement and standardised care pathways. Concurrently, the Paediatric Respiratory Virtual Grand Ward Rounds, now in their fifth consecutive year, remained a cornerstone of continuous professional development. Held monthly, each session attracted between 120 and 190 participants and covered a wide range of topics including haemoptysis, airway obstruction, respiratory disorders in children with Down syndrome, oncologic airway compression, and neonatal lung disease. These sessions continue to support equitable access to high-quality paediatric respiratory education nationwide.

In the area of research, MTS maintained its support for disease registries and investigator-initiated studies. The Severe Asthma Malaysia Registry and Lung Cancer Registry remain active, generating real-world insights on treatment patterns and outcomes.



FIGURE 1 | Promoting APSR Congress 2026 during APSR 2024 in Hong Kong.

In 2025, two research grants were awarded to studies on preschool wheeze and post-infectious bronchiectasis in children, reflecting the Society's prioritisation of paediatric respiratory research and long-term outcome tracking.

MTS members contributed to global respiratory discussions through participation in international forums such as the Australasian Pleural Series, ERS Satellites 2025, World Bronchiectasis Conference, and the Asia Thoracic Cancer Care Summit. The Society also endorsed the Dengue Vaccination Position Paper and the Early NSCLC Surgical Guidelines developed by national coalitions. Preparations are well underway for the 30th Congress of the Asian Pacific Society of Respirology (APSR), to be hosted in Penang from 19 to 22 November 2026, supported by subvention from the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau and in partnership with regional and international societies (Figure 1).

In May 2025, MTS and the Lung Foundation of Malaysia issued a national press statement urging swift enforcement of Act 852 (Control of Smoking for Public Health Act 2024) in response to the surge in youth vaping. The Society continued to promote public awareness through campaigns on pneumococcal vaccination, interstitial lung diseases, and environmental lung health. Its digital presence remained active, with increased usage of the MTS Education Portal—integrated with the Malaysian Medical

Association CPD system—and continuous engagement via Facebook and X (formerly Twitter).

The Malaysian Thoracic Society stands at the forefront of respiratory medicine in the region. Through strategic partnerships, grassroots outreach, and evidence-based advocacy, it remains committed to empowering clinicians, improving patient outcomes, and advancing innovation in respiratory health. As Malaysia prepares to host APSR 2026, MTS reaffirms its dedication to excellence, inclusivity, and regional leadership.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the MTS Council, Special Interest Groups, and Secretariat for their contributions to the initiatives outlined.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.