

29th FAOBMB Conference



Terrence Piva reports on the fully online FAOBMB Conference hosted in Shenzhen, China, and the virtual FAOBMB Council meeting.

The 29th FAOBMB Conference incorporating the annual 2022 meeting of the Chinese Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (CSBMB) as well as sessions sponsored by the International Union of Biochemistry and Biology (IUBMB) was held from 20–22 October 2022. This meeting was initially scheduled to be a hybrid meeting, but due to an outbreak of COVID-19 in Shenzhen, this conference was run online, attracting over 1,000 participants.

The theme was Biochemistry and Molecular Biology for Human Health. The conference web portal allowed registrants to view as well as move easily between the online presentations, which were delivered in real time. Registrants were also able to view posters and listen to short recordings about the posters. Apart from one or two minor glitches that were quickly rectified, the conference ran extremely well in the online format.

The conference contained nine Plenary lectures and 17 parallel sessions. The sessions covered broad aspects of molecular sciences, including genomics and proteomics, virology, lipidomics, immunology, cell biology, plant biology, metabolism and enzymes. These sessions were populated by 90 invited speakers, mostly from FAOBMB countries. There were 65 posters hosted online during the conference. There were two Australian plenary speakers, Nirma Samarawickrema (Monash University) and Archa Fox (University of Western Australia).

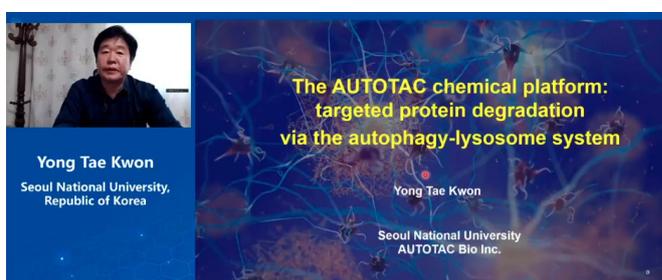


Akira Kikuchi at the Welcome Ceremony.

The Welcome Ceremony was chaired by Paul Gleeson (FAOBMB Fellowship Chair) and featured Lin Li (CSBMB President) and Akira Kikuchi (FAOBMB President). Baoliang Song (China) delivered the first Plenary lecture on the role the deubiquitylase USP20 plays in cholesterol metabolism and how inhibitors of this enzyme may be used to treat diseases associated with hypercholesterolaemia. The second Plenary lecture was delivered by Rui-Ping Xiao (China), who discussed the role played by the myokine MG53, in particular its E3 ligase activity, in cardiometabolic function, and how it can be used to devise strategies to treat ischaemic heart disease.



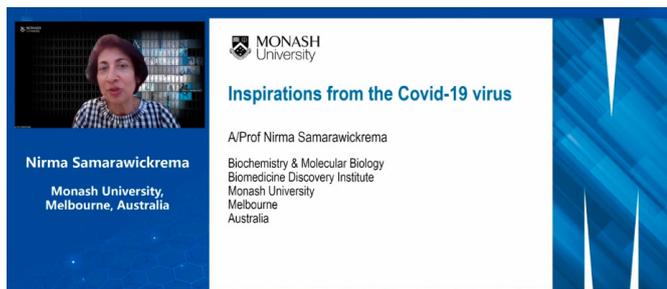
Rui-Ping Xiao's Plenary lecture.



2022 FAOBMB Award for Research Excellence winner, Yong Tae Kwon, delivers a Plenary lecture.

The recipient of the 2022 FAOBMB Award for Research Excellence, Yong Tae Kwon (Republic of Korea), delivered the third Plenary lecture. This award is given annually to a distinguished biochemist or molecular biologist from the FAOBMB region. Yong Tae's presentation focussed on the AUTOTAC technology, which can selectively target proteins to autophagosomes for degradation in the autophagosome/lysosome system. This talk was highly informative and initial studies on the use of AUTOTAC in the degradation of tau neurofibrils in Alzheimer's disease mouse models were impressive and highlights the potential use of this technology in research, drug development and clinical applications in being able to degrade specific cellular proteins. Recipient of the 2022 FAOBMB Education Award, Nirma Samarawickrema, gave the fourth Plenary lecture. Nirma spoke of the challenges faced by all academics who had to switch from classical face-to-face teaching to online as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. The use of digital technology was employed to instruct students in online lectures, workshops, practicals and lectorials as the new medium of information transfer. Given these changes in teaching, new authentic assessments had to be devised. This was a very informative presentation and highlighted the challenges all academics faced since the onset of COVID-19. The last Plenary talk on Day 1 was delivered by Hidenori Ichijo (Japan), who spoke of the role played by ASK family members in cellular stress responses.

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2022 FAOBMB Education Award winner, Nirma Samarawickrema, delivers a Plenary lecture.



Archa Fox's Plenary lecture.

The afternoon sessions of Day 1 and sessions on Day 2 were devoted to presentations arranged in 17 different sessions, and a workshop on scientific writing and publishing. On the afternoon of Day 2, the Education in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology session was co-chaired by Grace Yu (Philippines) and Cong-Zhao Zhou (China), and included presentations on the future of biochemical teaching followed by a roundtable discussion. It was easy to move online from one session to another. In between the sessions and Plenary talks, there were advertisements of new research products and future conferences, such as the FEBS Congress in Tours, France (2023) and BioMolecular Horizons 2024, the IUBMB Congress which will be held in Melbourne. I enjoyed the musical videoclips of cell metabolism.



Metabolism videoclip shown during session breaks.

The first Plenary talk on Day 3 featured Archa Fox, who spoke of the role played by the DNA and RNA binding protein, NONO, in neuroblastoma. This was a very interesting and highly informative presentation of this unusual nucleic acid binding protein. Incoming FAOBMB President, Joon Kim (Republic of Korea), delivered the second Plenary lecture on the

development of anti-fungal drugs to treat candida infections as a result of changes to *C. albicans* exposed to stress. The last two Plenary lectures were delivered by Shengcai Lin (China) and George Fu Gao (China). Xiaolong Liu (CSBMB Vice President and Secretary General) chaired the conference Closing Ceremony and handed the baton to Tuangporn Suthiphongchai (Thailand) to host the next FAOBMB Conference in Bangkok in November 2023.

FAOBMB Council meeting

The FAOBMB Council meeting was held via Zoom on 5 October 2022, with Australian participants Terry Piva as the ASBMB delegate and Paul Gleeson as Chair of Fellowships Committee. The meeting was attended by delegates from 18 of the 21 constituent member societies/countries, along with the six members of the Executive Committee. The Council meeting was chaired by the FAOBMB President, Akira Kikuchi (Japan), and the Secretary-General, Sheila Nathan (Malaysia). Akira discussed the impact that COVID-19 had on the FAOBMB's activities, especially in regard to hosting a face-to-face meeting. He looked forward to seeing everyone attend the FAOBMB Conference in Bangkok in 2023 in person. Akira discussed the role of the FAOBMB's interactions with the IUBMB and highlighted the role that biochemistry and molecular biology will play in overcoming issues that currently affect the region. He also discussed the key role that FAOBMB plays in bringing scientists together. In 2023, Joon Kim (Republic of Korea), will assume the role as President and will serve in this role until the end of 2024. Shannon Au (Hong Kong) was re-elected as FAOBMB Treasurer for another three-year term.

Reports on the previous FAOBMB Council Meeting (November 2021) and the FAOBMB Executive Committee Meeting (April 2022) were tabled. There were discussions on the Council's finances, as well as reports from the Education Committee, Fellowships Committee, IUBMB, as well as discussions on the FAOBMB Awards. Reports from the 16th FAOBMB Congress in Christchurch (2021), 29th FAOBMB Conference in Shenzhen (2022), 30th FAOBMB Conference in Bangkok (2023) and 17th FAOBMB–26th IUBMB Congress in Melbourne (2024) were tabled. The Committee approved changes to the FAOBMB Awards and Fellowship Schemes, as well as appointing an Auditor and Archivist (Phillip Nagley). Zengyi Chang (China) was made an Honorary Member of the FAOBMB.

The next FAOBMB Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 22–25 November 2023.

As this is my last report as the FAOBMB Representative for ASBMB, I would like to thank all who have assisted me in this role over the past five years. I wish Nirma Samarawickrema all the best as the incoming FAOBMB Representative for ASBMB.