“A good springboard for bringing out the best in every dental school and student”

An interview with Kime H. Cabalquinto, the Philippines, winner of DENTSPLY Asia’s 2011 Student Clinician Program competition in Singapore

Twenty-four-year-old Kime H. Cabalquinto is a dental student at the Centro Escolar University's College of Dentistry in Malolos, the Philippines. As the first representative of her country, she won DENTSPLY’s Student Clinician Program (SCP) in Asia in 2011. Dental Tribune Asia Pacific had the opportunity to speak with her about the competition, dental education in the Philippines and her plans for the future.

DT Asia Pacific: Dear Ms Cabalquinto, as the winner of DENTSPLY’s Asia Pacific Student Clinician Program in 2011, you recently attended the American Dental Association meeting in San Francisco. How was the trip, and what were your experiences of the US and the event in general?

Kime Cabalquinto: I have been to the US several times before but I’ve never been to San Francisco, so I was really excited to visit the place, attend the American Dental Association convention and meet my fellow student clinicians from around the globe.

DENTSPLY was a great host, as always, making sure our needs were met and our expectations exceeded. I made some new friends and together we were able to exchange insights about a variety of subjects — from our research topics to the dental schools that we are from, and even our countries’ rich cultures.

Overall, it was a great and humbling experience. I felt so blessed to be chosen to represent South-East Asia at the prestigious American Dental Association convention.

You won the 2011 DENTSPLY Asia SCP in Singapore with your presentation on okra mucilage extracts as an alternative to common denture adhesives. Why did you choose this topic, and could you give us more details about your results?

While browsing the Internet for potential research topics, I came across some articles about lawsuits being filed against manufacturers of denture adhesives. Owing to the toxic effects of such adhesives, the complainants were reported to have paralysis of the upper and lower extremities that eventually led to Bell’s palsy, all of which are due to using a substantial amount of denture adhesive per week.

We tested it on a variety of complete-denture patients in our clinic, and it yielded impressive results on a par with the commercially available ones.

Are you planning to develop this concept further?

We are taking it one step at a time and are currently working on improving the okra adhesive as a product. Despite this, we have potential plants that may be a suitable adhesive, okra crossed my mind right away. I sought my adviser and mentor Dr Shirley S. Wong’s input on this and she immediately recognised the plant’s potential. So why not put this sticky substance to good use, right?

You recently attended the American Dental Association convention. I want to be a source of encouragement to those who want to pursue research, let them know that all things are possible through hard work, the right motive and faith.

Kime H. Cabalquinto (centre) posing with other Philippine delegates at the 2011 DENTSPLY SCP in Singapore.

Thank you very much for the interview.