

In Memory of Professor Soon Bong Suh

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A dermatologist, Professor Soon Bong Suh was a pioneer and great scholar of Korean medical mycology. He received his doctoral degree from the Graduate School, Kyungpook National University with the dissertation "Study of dermatophyte infection in Korea", a significant work on medical mycology. He continued to publish many reports on medical mycology, especially in the area of dermatophytoses. He also established the Korean Society for Medical Mycology to build a network among mycologists, to communicate information on research work, and to encourage mycologists' research. Professor Suh will be remembered as a distinguished teacher and researcher in the field of medical mycology.

Key Words: Medical mycology, Soon Bong Suh

I. INTRODUCTION

Soon Bong Suh was a dermatologist and professor at the Kyungpook National University School of Medicine and the Kyungpook National University Hospital (Fig. 1). He graduated from Daegu Medical School (the former name of the Kyungpook National University School of Medicine) in 1944. At the department of dermatology at Kyungpook National University Hospital, he served patients and taught residents in the as full-time lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, from 1946 to 1987. He participated in a residency-training course in the department of dermatology in the Skin & Cancer Hospital in Philadelphia from 1954 to 1956, traveling to the USA by ship in 1954 and taking a month to get there. After returning to Korea, he received his doctoral degree from Kyungpook National University in 1960. Suh retired in 1987 and began his work as honorary professor at Kyungpook National University and as advisor to the Catholic Skin Clinic in Daegu. He also devoted himself to mycological



Fig. 1. Photograph of Professor Soon Bong Suh

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research at the Catholic Skin Clinic in Daegu until the end of his life. This review article commemorates his life and academic achievements.

II. Academic Achievements

1) Academic achievement in mycology

Soon Bong Suh was a pioneer and leader in the field of medical mycology in Korea. He wrote a doctoral thesis entitled "Study on dermatophyte infection in Korea" in the Kyungpook National University. He also had eminent achievements in the field of medical mycology, including, in 1958, isolating *Trichophyton schoenleinii* from patients with favus, and *Microsporum canis*. He also published many studies of medical mycology, including three studies of dermatophytes in Korea: tinea capitis (1959)¹, tinea cruris (1960)², an overview of pathogens in Korea (1960)³, a study on tinea capitis in Ulleung Island (1961)⁴, a supplementary study on tinea capitis in Daegu City (1962)⁵, two cases of cutaneous sporotrichosis (1964)⁶, an improved method of brush culture for tinea capitis (1965)⁷, an examination of the antifungal effect of griseofulvin on various dermatophytes (1965)⁸, an observation of air-borne fungi (1965)⁹, studies on baiting methods for the isolation of keratinophilic fungi (1966)¹⁰, a study of keratinophilic fungi in soil (1966)¹¹, studies of the reactions between skin and fungi on the surface of the human skin and clothing (1967)¹², a study of the distribution of fungi and *Aspergillus* sp. in soil (1967)¹³, studies on female pruritus vulvae with special reference to *Candida* sp. and *Trichomonas vaginalis* (1967)¹⁴, a basic examination of fungi (1967)¹⁵, an improved method of baiting for the isolation of keratinophilic fungi (1968)¹⁶, a case of onychomycosis caused by *Aspergillus sydowii* (1968)¹⁷, studies on the identification methods for *Malassezia furfur* in tinea versicolor (1969)¹⁸, studies of *Microsporum gypseum* and its perfect form in soil (1969)¹⁹, a study of the classification and distribution of fungi in Korea (1971)²⁰, a study on the distribution of *Sporotrichum schenckii* in soil (1972)²¹, a study of the characteristics of *Sporotrichum schenckii* isolated from soil (1973)²², a case of sporotrichosis that developed after a double-eyelid operation (1975)²³, an examination of airborne fungi in Korea (1975)²⁴, studies on mycological characteristics and distribution of *Cryptococcus neoformans* derived from bird droppings (1975)²⁵, three cases of sporotrichosis confined to the face (1976)²⁶, mycological and clinical observations of dermatophytosis (1976)²⁷, clinical and mycological studies of *Microsporum canis* infections (1977)²⁸, a new Plexiglas hanging drop-culture apparatus (1977)²⁹, an ultramicroscopic

study of *Cryptococcus neoformans* derived from pigeon droppings (1977)³⁰, a case of non-lymphatic sporotrichosis in a 1-month-old (1978)³¹, the punch method to detect the causative organisms of onychomycosis (1978)³², the susceptibility of dermatophytes to antifungal drugs (1979)³³, clinical and mycological studies of *Microsporum gypseum* infection (1980)³⁴, a study of tinea capitis in Jeju (1980)³⁵, a study of tinea capitis in Daegu (1980)³⁶, an examination of leukonychia striata caused by *Trichophyton rubrum* infection (1981)³⁷, an investigation of the mating type and mycological characteristics of the *Microsporum gypseum* complex (1981)³⁸, two cases of onychomycosis due to *Aspergillus repens* (1981)³⁹, clinical and mycological observations on tinea corporis (1982)⁴⁰, an examination the simplified hair baiting technique and its practical applications (1982)⁴¹, a study of the prevalence of *Microsporum canis* infections (1983)⁴², clinical and mycological observations on dermatophytoses in infants (1983)⁴³, mating study of *Microsporum canis* isolated in Korea (1983)⁴⁴, the perfect state of *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* and related infections (1984)⁴⁵, the file method to detect the causative organisms of tinea unguium (1986)⁴⁶, clinical and mycological observations on tinea faciei (1988)⁴⁷, a case of fungal granuloma caused by *Trichophyton violaceum* (1989)⁴⁸, study of the tinea capitis of adults in Taegu city for 11 years, from 1978 to 1988 (1989)⁴⁹, an investigation of the distribution of causative fungi in the home environment of patients with tinea capitis caused by *Microsporum canis* (1990)⁵⁰, an examination of the contamination of dermatophytes in the clothes of patients with tinea cruris (1991)⁵¹, a delineation of the mycological features of *Trichophyton verrucosum* isolated in the Taegu area (1992)⁵², clinical and epidemiological studies of *Microsporum canis* infections (1983~1992 and 1996)⁵³, a study of dermatophytosis and its causative agents in Korea (1996)⁵⁴, a case of primary subcutaneous phaeohyphomycosis caused by *Drechslera dematioides* (1996)⁵⁵, reports of three cases of tinea barbae due to *Trichophyton verrucosum* (1997)⁵⁶, an assessment of the prevalence of tinea pedis in college students and their families in Taegu (1997)⁵⁷, a case of black dot ringworm caused by *Trichophyton tonsurans* (1998)⁵⁸, three cases of kerion celsi caused by *Trichophyton tonsurans* (1998)⁵⁹, an epidemiologic study of *Epidermophyton floccosum* from 1976 to 1997 (1999)⁶⁰, a study of chromoblastomycosis treated with occlusive dressing of amphotericin b cream (2000)⁶¹, mycological and molecular biological studies of *Arthroderma benhamiae* isolated for the first time in Korea (2004)⁶², clinical and epidemiologic study of *Trichophyton tonsurans* infections from 1995 to 2003 (2004)⁶³, an examination of chromoblastomycosis caused by *Rhinocladiella aquaspersa* (2004)⁶⁴, a clinical mycological and epidemiologic

logical study on tinea barbae over the previous 24 years, from 1981 to 2004 (2006)⁶⁵, a clinical observation of *Trichophyton verrucosum* infections over the previous 19 years, from 1986 to 2004 (2006)⁶⁶, a case of cutaneous alternariosis due to *Alternaria alternata* (2007)⁶⁷, a case of tinea corporis caused by *Microsporum ferrugineum* (2008)⁶⁸, and an assessment of chronic recurrent cutaneous mucormycosis due to *Rhizopus arrhizus* (2008)⁶⁹. He developed a fungal culture medium called the Chilgok plate, which he supplied throughout the country, beginning in 1986. Chilgok culture media were of great use in distinguishing *Trichophyton rubrum* from *Trichophyton mentagrophytes*. He also investigated the infection route of zoophilic fungi from animals, such as cats, rabbits, and cows, to humans. In addition, he was the first to identify *Trichophyton tonsurans* on a Korean judoist. He established a center for medical mycology research, where he researched medical mycology and supported other medical mycologists in identifying dermatophytes.

2) Academic achievements in leprology

In addition to his work on mycology, Professor Suh also frequently reported on leprosy, including the statistical observation of leprosy patients in Ae-Seng Leprosarium (1958)⁷⁰, an examination of the then-current policy of leprosy control in Kyungpook Province, Korea, and a reinvestigation of domestic cases (1958)⁷¹, examination of bacilli from a leprosy patient (1958)⁷², a clinical survey of leprosy patients (1960)⁷³, hematological studies of leprosy patients (1960)⁷⁴, an examination of the therapeutic effects of DDS for leprosy using the bacillary index (1962)⁷⁵, an epidemiological survey of domestic and colony leprosy patients in Kyungpook Province (1963)⁷⁶, studies on early leprosy-part 1 classification (1964)⁷⁷ and part 2 the actual conditions of out-patients (1964)⁷⁸, studies on leprosy control by paramedical workers in the Kyungpook area (1969)⁷⁹, an investigation of the significance of diagnoses on the auricular region for leprosy patients (1970)⁸⁰, a sociological study of leprosy (1973)⁸¹, the significance of seeing dermatology out-patients to detect leprosy (1976)⁸², a study on serum T-lymphocyte of lepromatous leprosy patients (1977)⁸³, a determination of serum cholesterol, phospholipids, and triglycerides in leprosy patients (1979)⁸⁴, recent trends in leprosy patients in dermatologic clinics (1981)⁸⁵, a determination of serum lipids and high-density lipoprotein cholesterol in leprosy patients (1981)⁸⁶, a determination of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and individual cholesteryl esters in leprosy patients (1985)⁸⁷, and changes in lipids and apoprotein moieties of serum high-density lipoprotein in patients with leprosy (1987)⁸⁸.

III. Assignment to a position in the Academy, Kyungpook National University Hospital, and Kyungpook National University School of Medicine

1) Assignments within the Academy

Professor Suh was the Korean representative to and vice president of the First Leprosy Seminar of the Western Pacific area in the Philippines in 1965. He was appointed the 22nd vice president of the Korean Dermatological Association in 1970 and became the 23rd president of that organization in 1971. He became president of the Korean Leprosy Association in 1972. He served as chairman in the Third Joint Meeting of the Korea-Japan Dermatological Association in Gyungju in 1983, and he established the Hannam Dermatological Association in 1985. He founded the Korean Society for Medical Mycology in 1994.

2) Assignment in the Kyungpook National University Hospital

Professor Suh was appointed director of Kyungpook National University Hospital in 1961.

3) Assignments within the Kyungpook National University School of Medicine

He became dean of the Kyungpook National University School of Medicine in 1969 and director of that university's graduate school of public health in 1984.

IV. Awards and Certificates

Professor Suh was widely recognized, winning many awards, including the Order of Presentation Merit, Green Medal (1960); a Presidential Citation (1967); the Kyungpook Culture Prize (1968); an Award Certificate from the Minister of Health and Welfare and Order of Civil Merit, Camellia Medal (1970); an Appreciation Certificate of the Korean Dermatological Association (1972); an Appreciation Certificate from the Mission of Relief of Leprosy of England (1974); an Order of Presentation Merit, Green Medal (1975); an Appreciation Certificate from the Mission of Relief of Leprosy of Germany (1984); an Appreciation Certificate from the Daegu Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church (1986); the Order of Civil Merit, Peony Medal (1987); the Kung Sun Oh Memorial Award (1993); and the Anhaeng Grand Prize from the Kyungpook National

University School of Medicine (2004).

V. Ohun Memorial Lecture

In 2008, the Ohun memorial lecture was instituted in the memory of Professor Suh. The Ohun memorial lecture has regularly been given at the congress of the Korean Dermatological Association since 2008. Funds supporting the lecture were donated by the family of the deceased. Awards are given on the occasion of the lecture to those who are dedicated to dermatology, especially mycology and leprology, and the recipients have been distinguished Korean dermatologists. In 2008, the first annual recipient was Hee Jun Yu of Hanyang University; the second was Jong Soo Choi of Yeungnam University; the third was Moo Kyu Suh of Dongguk University; the fourth was Mi Woo Lee of Ulsan University; the fifth was Dong Youn Lee of Sungkyunkwan University; the sixth was Yang Won Lee of Konkuk University; the seventh was Weon Ju Lee of Kyungpook National University; the eighth was Sung Yul Lee of Soonchunhyang University; the ninth was Kyu Joong Ahn of Konkuk University; and the tenth was Mi Ryung Roh of Yonsei University, who received her award in 2017. These lectures prompt the public's interest in medical mycology and other aspects of dermatological science. Professor Hee Jun Yu made a presentation on the 'Clinical characteristics, cure rates and relapse rates of patients with onychomycosis after treatment with antifungals'. Professor Jong Soo Choi presented a lecture on the 'Study on dermatophytes detected from animals'. The lecture 'Phaeohyphomycosis in Korea' was presented by Professor Moo Kyu Suh. Professor Mi Woo Lee delivered a special lecture on 'Recent epidemiology of deep cutaneous fungal infections in Korea'. Professor Dong Youn Lee gave the memorial lecture on 'Clinical and histopathological diagnosis of onychomycosis'. Professor Yang Won Lee presented on the 'Evaluation of expression of lipases and phospholipases of *Malassezia restricta* in patients with seborrheic dermatitis'. Professor Weon Ju Lee provided interesting information on 'The trend of dermatophyte infection in south-eastern Korea between 1979 and 2013', and Professor Kyu Joong Ahn lectured on '*Malassezia* research in Korea'.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

Looking back on the life of the late Professor Soon Bong Suh, we can see his great academic achievements in the fields of medical mycology and leprology for his generation. He set a milestone with his research on medical mycology,

especially dermatophytes, and he was also a good teacher, providing deep inspiration to the younger generation. His name will live for all eternity in our hearts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In relation to this article, I declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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