

56th Annual Congress of the Philippine College of Physicians

May 3-6, 2026

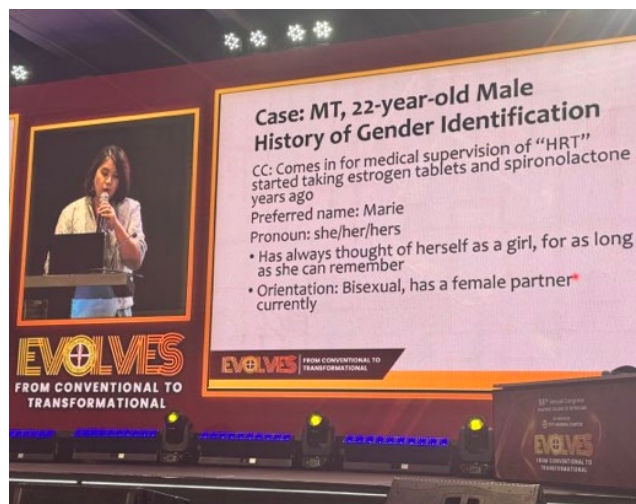
Manila, Philippines

ACP Global Ambassador reflections by: Isaac Opole, MD, PhD, MACP

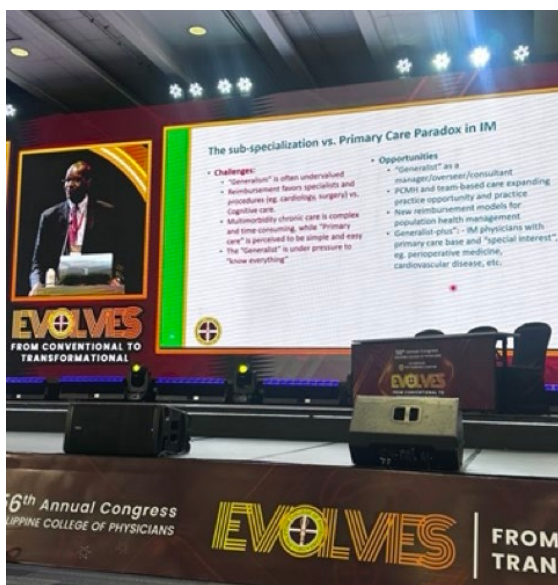
I had the pleasure of attending and representing the American College of Physicians (ACP) at the 56th Annual Congress of the Philippine College of Physicians (PCP), which was held from May 3 to 6, 2026, at the SMX Convention Center in Manila. The theme of the congress was “PCP Evolves: From Conventional to Transformational,” and it brought together internal medicine specialists, subspecialists, residents, fellows-in-training, medical educators, researchers, and health care leaders from across the country and internationally. As an ACP Global Ambassador, I was invited to participate and give a global view on primary care and transgender health care as it relates to the Philippines. The invitation of ACP was emblematic of the strength of the collaboration and long-standing academic and professional ties between the two organizations.



The breadth and quality of the scientific sessions at the congress were very impressive. The program reflected contemporary developments in internal medicine while also addressing the realities and constraints of health care practice in the Philippines. Sessions covered a broad spectrum of topics, including primary care, cardiovascular disease, infectious diseases, endocrinology, oncology, pulmonary medicine, nephrology, rheumatology, geriatrics, preventive medicine, transgender health, digital health, and evidence-based clinical practice. The congress theme itself emphasized transformation, innovation, and adaptability in modern health care delivery.



The scientific sessions balanced academic rigor with practical applicability. Rather than focusing solely on highly specialized tertiary care topics, many speakers focused on improving everyday clinical decision making among practicing physicians. This approach remains especially important in the Philippine setting, where internal medicine physicians frequently function as front-line physicians managing complexity and multimorbidity across diverse health care environments in the absence of subspecialty expertise. This was the focus of one of my lectures entitled "Redefining the Internist's Role: Primary Care at the Heart of Modern Internal Medicine."



The overall academic quality of the lectures and poster sessions was quite strong. The PCP congress mirrored international standards in conference organization and scientific discourse. Speakers emphasized updated clinical guidelines, evidence synthesis, multidisciplinary coordination, and patient-centered care. The inclusion of emerging subjects, such as health care transformation, digital systems, transgender health care, and integrated care models, also reflected broader global trends in internal medicine and primary care reform.



Attendance at the congress was substantial, continuing the PCP tradition of hosting one of the largest gatherings of internal medicine specialists in the country. This year's congress was reported to have attracted more than 12,000 attendees and remains a flagship event for Philippine internal medicine. The congress also serves as a venue not only for continuing medical education but also for professional networking, institutional collaboration, and mentorship. The scale of participation underscored the PCP's central role as the umbrella organization for internal medicine specialists nationwide.



A particularly encouraging aspect of the meeting was the strong participation of trainees. Residents and fellows-in-training from several accredited institutions actively participated in oral presentations, poster sessions, interhospital competitions, and scientific discussions. This robust trainee engagement reflects the vitality of internal medicine training programs in the Philippines and demonstrates the PCP's commitment to cultivating future leaders in the field.



The poster sessions were among the most educationally valuable components of the congress. They provided trainees with opportunities to present original research, clinical case studies, quality improvement initiatives, and epidemiologic analyses. These sessions encourage scholarly inquiry and reinforce the principles of evidence-based medicine. Importantly, poster presentations also help young physicians develop critical skills in scientific communication, methodological thinking, and peer engagement.



Many of the presented studies reportedly focused on clinically relevant health care problems in the Philippines, including chronic disease management, infectious disease burden, primary care, health care accessibility, and outcomes research. Locally grounded research is essential because it generates data directly applicable to Filipino patients and health care systems rather than relying solely on extrapolation from Western populations.



The resident quiz competitions likewise remained a highlight of the congress. These academic contests have long been a respected tradition within Philippine internal medicine training. Beyond testing factual knowledge, they cultivate discipline, teamwork, rapid clinical reasoning, and healthy academic competition among training institutions. The enthusiastic participation of trainees in these activities showed the strong educational culture that continues to characterize internal medicine residency programs in the Philippines.



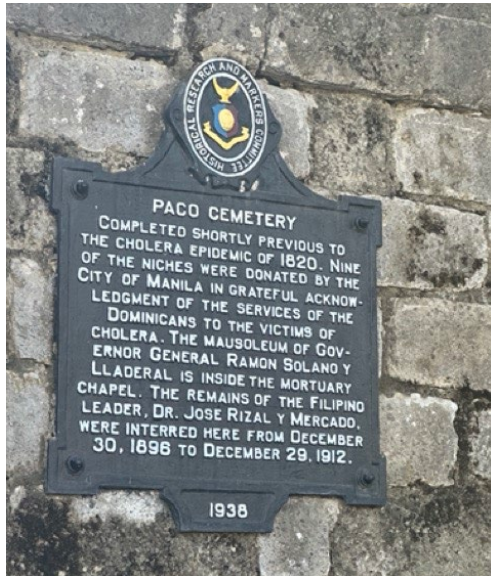


The PCP–ACP relationship also symbolizes the globalization of medical education. In today's health care environment, physicians must navigate rapidly evolving evidence, technologic change, and increasingly interconnected public health systems. Therefore, international collaboration enhances not only scientific knowledge but also institutional resilience and professional solidarity.



Overall, I felt that the 56th Annual Congress of the PCP was highly successful in advancing scientific exchange, professional development, trainee engagement, and international collaboration. The strong participation of residents and fellows demonstrated a healthy pipeline

of future internal medicine specialists, while the quality of the scientific sessions reflected the growing sophistication of Philippine medical scholarship. Collaboration between the PCP and ACP further strengthened our international academic linkage and reinforced our shared commitments to excellence in internal medicine.



As health care systems continue to evolve, meetings such as the PCP Annual Congress remain critically important. They provide a venue where clinical science, education, leadership, mentorship, and professional identity converge. The 2026 congress ultimately affirmed that Philippine internal medicine continues to evolve dynamically—not merely adapting to change but actively helping shape the future of health care in the country and the region.

