

# Meet a New ASP Member

ASP continues to welcome many new members to the Society throughout the year. Dr. Ramiro M. Murata is currently Associate Research Scientist at New York University, College of Dentistry in the Department of Basic Science & Craniofacial Biology. We are grateful to Dr. Murata for taking time from his busy schedule to give us the opportunity to get more acquainted with him.

By Dr. Diane S. Swaffar

## Well, first, we are curious to find out how a dentist heard about ASP?

The first time I heard about the ASP was during my PhD program. My mentor and his colleagues work with natural products, so Pharmacognosy always was an area of interest.

## So, you are a dentist with a PhD degree? Which degree did you receive first and what other degrees do you have?

I received my DDS degree first and then my MS in Pharmacology and PhD in Pharmacology from the Dental School of Piracicaba, State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Piracicaba/SP, Brazil.

## Have you practiced dentistry before obtaining your PhD degree?

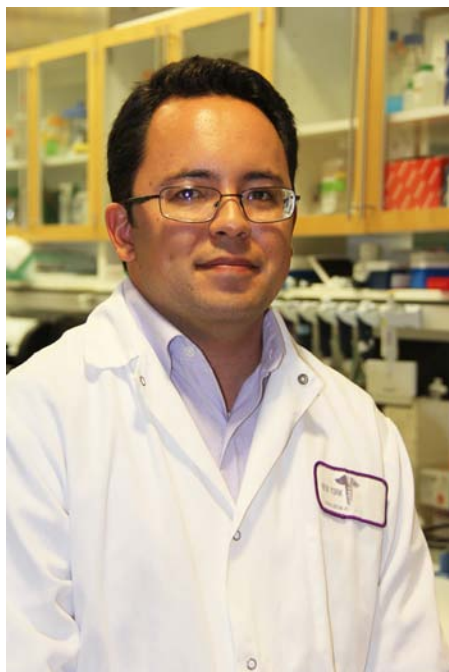
Yes, I worked as a dentist for 2 years in a hospital right after obtaining my MS degree.

## What is your scientific background since obtaining your PhD degree?

In 2006, as a PhD candidate, I was a visiting scholar at the Center for Oral Biology, University of Rochester, New York, for 12 months. Since 2008 I have been an Associate Research Scientist at New York University (NYU) College of Dentistry.

## What are your current research interests in pharmacognosy?

I have been doing research in pharmacognosy since I was an undergraduate stu-



dent, working first with *Apis mellifera* bee propolis against oral pathogens. During my undergraduate and graduate work I studied the effects of natural products against virulence factors of oral microorganisms *in vitro* and *in vivo* (dental caries in rats) and also the effects of natural compounds against cancer cells. Since last year I have been working as principal investigator in the mentored phase of my K99/R00 grant from National Institute of Health, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. This project relates the influence of natural compounds (benzophenones) on HIV infection and opportunistic infections, such as candidiasis.

## Why did you join ASP?

I would like to build collaborations with the members of ASP and stay updated with all the newest research in the pharmacognosy area.

## Do you belong to any other scientific societies?

Yes, I am also member of the IADR (International Association for Dental Research), AADR (American Association for Dental Research), and SBPqO (Brazilian Division of the International Association for Dental Research).

## What would you like to achieve through your membership?

I would like to interact with the researchers in ASP so we can learn from each other about new techniques.

## What do you like doing in your spare time?

Currently I do not have a lot of spare time, but when I have some, I enjoy cycling, cooking and spending time with my family and friends. I'm interested in sports too (swimming, basketball, and soccer).