

From the Editor's Desk

It is a new lap ahead for the College Mirror.

With the Singapore Family Physician Journal taking on the added role of being a resource material for the Family Practice Skills Course, its sister publication the College Mirror undergoes a smooth and timely separation that will allow both to carry on distinct lives yet with a common parentage that will bring about synergy. College Mirror continues to be the newsletter for the GP community and will be published quarterly. It has a 3-fold intent:

1. To promote collegial spirit and sense of family medicine ownership by coverage of important college events and happenings, as well as articles that showcase the history and roots of family medicine

2. To encourage vocational training (various layers of diplomate, masters and fellowship programme) and CME for GPs by highlighting available CME opportunities and article updates.

3. To promote a sense of professionalism among GPs by focusing on articles and contributions by the family physician community.

It is a new lap ahead as well for the GP community.

We catch a breath in this issue as we reflect on the tumultuous events that have hit the GP community before preparing for yet the next

lap. SARS was foremost in GPs' minds, having shown our human vulnerabilities the best. So this September **SARS Focus** reflects images of the GP front during the SARS outbreak not least the emotional toll it exacted on frontliners. It also reflects areas we can affirm ourselves such as dedication and courage in line of duty in clinics. Behind the scenes, quietly, many GPs have been standing forth to make a difference, from volunteering to do

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infection control audits to running training sessions with professionalism and resolve. There was support for one another through informal networkings as well as through the Hotline for Frontline and other College initiated meetings.

In troubled times we can celebrate human resilience and courage and **Down Heritage Trail** features excerpts from Dr Wong Heck Sing's memoirs *The Batam Years*. These were war years in which he describes the trepidation in facing horrific war wounds as a pre-medical student and yet when faced with the horror proceeds to do his best. He also describes his experience with the infectious scourge Malaria that was rampant at that

time. It makes me take heart that those who have run ahead of us faced equally challenging and unknown times and yet have risen to the occasion. Much has been said about courage. Perhaps in wars and crises, courage is about taking resolute action while others just stare in horror.

You also may have wondered about the recent exchange of forum letters regarding pre-hypertension where Straits Times writer Dr Andy Ho comments on JNC VII Hypertension update- "Prediseased-has medicine gone mad?" (ST, Aug 9). Read the latest JNC VII Hypertension update yourself in **Practice Corner** to familiarize with this latest hot topic. **Hint and Tips** is a new feature column that brings you effective medicine in digestible doses. We definitely welcome homespun sound wisdom from our fraternity out there.

We also continue to highlight CME for our doctors - July saw the commencement of academic year 2003. The commencement ceremony for the different layers of family physician professional development saw the coming together of those doing their Diploma, Masters and Fellowship in Family Medicine programmes. That day saw the launch as well of the E-learning website that is interactive and an excellent mode of learning for the busy GP.

So in the new lap ahead, let's continue to practice with competence, compassion and certainly a clear-headed relevance to the times we live in....



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Thoughts, comments and contributions that is of interest to your fellow family physicians are welcome. Please address correspondence to: The Editor, Email : collegemirror@cfps.org.sg

Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Acting Minister of Health on the qualities of a good General Practitioner(GP)...

" I am a strong believer in every citizen having a good GP who is your family practitioner..He is really your adviser, who will call you up for your PAP smear regularly;who will measure your cholesterol if you forget to measure;who will remind you to exercise at least three times a week;who will remind you to please go a little bit easy on your char kway teow.And if, sometimes,you need secondary or tertiary care, he will be the one to recommend that, for this medical condition.

And when the patient is admitted, I think he continues to be concerned about your care in the hospital, may even drop in at your ward, and just take a look at you.and if you are an orthopaedic patient who needs longer- term care but not in an expensive general hospital, he will look after you in the community hospital." (Page 5 , Straits Times, Aug 26 2003)