

A decade in postgraduate FM education - GFMC expands to take on new role

By Dr Julian Lim, FCFP & A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, FCFP

The Graduate Family Medicine Centre (GFMC), a body approved by the College, NUS and the Singapore Medical Council to conduct structured core FM CME has chalked up yet another milestone. From July 2004, the Masters of Medicine (FM) training would be conducted in Dr Lim's clinic at Teban Gardens while the Jalan Jurong Kechil (JJK) venue would be devoted to the new College Professional Development Programme (CPDP) leading to the Collegiate Membership of the College (MCFP). (See Pg 8)

The GFMC had its beginnings in 1993 when Family Medicine trainees were posted for their 2-week private practice attachment to Cheong Medical Clinic. Formal teaching sessions based on the 'hospital' model of case presentations and topic reviews were conducted. Other learning tools like Portfolio-based Learning were innovated later. These weekly sessions soon attracted many doctors. The late Professor Wong Poi Kwong used to attend both to teach and to learn. Many specialist colleagues have also been to the lecture room above the clinic to share their knowledge and skills.

In 1995, the NUS FM Committee recognized the GFMC as a training centre for the private practitioners' stream (PPS) of the Masters. A/Prof Chan Nan Fong came abroad as a supervisor and due to the increased interest, a new FM postgraduate centre, the NUS Centre was started under her direction. The two



Professors John Murtagh and Lewis Ritchie, our guests with primary care leaders at the official opening of the centre. *Standing (L-R):* Dr Swah Teck Sin, Dr Siaw Tung Yeng, Dr Paul Goh, A/Prof Shanta Emmanuel, Dr Julian Lim, Dr Kwan Yew Seng, Dr Tan Chee Beng, Dr Lim Kim Leong & A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean. *Seated (L-R):* Dr Lam Sian Lian, Prof Lewis Ritchie, Dr Alfred Loh, Prof John Murtagh & A/Prof Goh Lee Gan

another milestone when the first FM Fellowship Programme was launched in GFMC to train the first batch of Fellows of the College by assessment. Professor John Murtagh, the world renowned FM Professor from Monash University delivered the inaugural lecture. The inauguration in July 2004 of the new programme towards the Collegiate membership (MCFP) would be another 'first'.

trainee actually paid \$1500 of his own money to donate one so that the class can photocopy transparencies and notes when needed. When a borrowed overhead projector had to be returned, a second-hand OHP was purchased for \$100 after a frantic but fruitful search of the Straits Times classified.

One trainee described the JJK centre as his 'scout den' of learning where he would meet fellow doctors every week to learn to be better doctors. The rag-tag and memorabilia on the notice boards surrounding the lecture room attest to this. The eclectic mix of donated and second-hand furniture and equipment completes the ambience.

A decade has past. A new challenge lies ahead. We hope that this same spirit of voluntarism and camaraderie would see both the Master's and the new Collegiate programme attain new height of learning in the years ahead. We also hope that with the new thinking, training resources in Singapore will be marshalled to level up all sectors of primary care.

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centres for training family doctors in private practice have since produced 44 of the 195 MMed(FM) trained in Singapore to date, the other 151 being sponsored by the Ministry of Health and the clusters.

On 9th October 1998, the GFMC attained

The GFMC was and still is a voluntary body that does not receive any financial funding. It remains a self-help group surviving because of the love of learning. The trainees and supervisors somehow manage to get things going. When there was a dire need for a photocopier, one

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One-page feature in "The Straits Times" Sept 27, 1996, Life At Large section. The above published photo was captioned "A child psychiatrist in private practice discussing a case study with a group of part-time Masters of Family Medicine students."



The tutorials and clinical sessions attracted many doctors to the centre.



Dr Thirumorthy, dermatologist demonstrating skin signs on patients brought by the trainees.



Fellowship class in session that trained the first batch of College Fellows by assessment.

Case Presentations And All

Traditional hospital-style case presentations
 History, clinical signs and investigations
 Discussion on differentials and management
 Come to the point and spare us the torment

Topic reviews to dig into the case
 Give out more information just in case
 Really over loaded with academic information
 When do we really get to put it into action

Literature review for the brave hearted hor
 Sourcing for the right articles a chore
 Trying to remember studies a bore
 Not to mention all the numbers and all

What to do if there are no real patients
 We break up the body into different stations
 Slides and trainees modeling should work we hope
 And not forgetting the marvelous digital stethoscope

Clinical sessions are refreshing
 Especially when we get good teaching
 Of course it depends on the cases we get
 See once and not easy to forget

Mock viva can be quite intimidating
 And we are not very accommodating
 Candidates can feel the doom and gloom
 Well, better now than in the examination room

The specialist talk is informative
 Helps us in our practice
 But we must not forget the grand picture
 That is to pass the exam for sure

The curriculum, training, assessment sandwich
 We finally found an interesting way to teach
 It's case based modeling to simulate an examination
 Cognition, psychomotor and affect - what an innovation

*Dr Julian Lim
 19 May 2004*

With mock vivas just over and Diploma in Family Medicine exams around the corner, Dr Julian Lim, FCFP and a supervisor of the MMed (FM) programme shares about his passion about teaching family medicine, through verse. He continues to explore innovative ways of training doctors for the real world of general practice. One of his work on portfolio-based learning has been published in the Singapore Medical Journal.

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