

# College Special Interest Groups - A Year On

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## **THEIR PURPOSE**

College Special Interest Groups(SIGs) were announced at the Family Medicine Convocation of the College of Family Physicians' Convocation in 2003. The idea was to create forums to enhance the clinical skills of family physicians. Also, the focus was in areas where there are societal & professional needs to enhance the clinical skills. The areas identified were mental health; eldercare; practice & quality; & research in FM Research.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Mental health and/or the lack of it are important clinical concerns in the care of patients at the community level. What is also important is mental dysfunction can be part of a medical, social or more complex problem. The presence of mental ill-health may also be crowded out by the attention to biomedical issues. The Grand Rounds on Mental Health had cases to illustrate such aspects.

## **ELDERCARE**

Eldercare in the community is multidisciplinary in nature & involves the geriatricians, primary care doctors with interests in care of the elderly infirm in the community. These can range from ambulatory patients to those who are housebound or are in nursing homes & day care centres. Some of the sessions

of the eldercare SIG meetings were devoted to the discussion on the organization & delivery of eldercare services. The goal is to develop a seamless & integrated service where stakeholders can contribute effectively. Dr Tan Boon Yeow has reported on the discussion with Dr Forsyth from Cambridge & a discussion with Dr Pang on the care delivery models on eldercare & their application in the S'pore setting.

## **PRACTICE & QUALITY**

Practice & Quality SIG has found its place with the increasing attention being paid to the quality of care initiative around the world. The study tour to Glasgow sponsored by the NHS Scotland to a group of family medicine leaders had much to report on the quality initiative that UK is presently embarking upon. There is a big scope for activities focused on the transformation of primary care to be organized in the coming year, particularly in the wake of Prof Chee Yam Cheng's Sreenivasan Oration on challenges, changes & computers.

## **FAMILY MEDICINE(FM) RESEARCH**

FM research is now beginning to claim attention as a necessary part of development of the discipline. The road to develop, organize & build capacity in research capability takes time. The

clusters, the university & the College are working on it. The FM research SIG hopes to be a forum for exchange, discussion, and collaboration in FM research activities on how care can be better organised, delivered more effectively, & also how patient & provider behavior could be better understood.

## **EARLIER PUBLICITY**

One of the feedback on the SIG activities is that it is not well publicized beforehand. It was suggested that perhaps the whole set of activities could be made available to interested doctors at the beginning of a 3 or 6 months' period, more doctors could participate in the activities.

## **THE END IN MIND**

We could also work with the end in mind for the various SIG activities. To be truly useful and meet the objectives for them to be set up in the first place, there would be a need for participants to take an active part in helping the organizers of the SIGs suggest topics & ideas on how to run the sessions to enhance the skills of practicing doctors. Drop us a line today.

## **References**

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