

An Intellectual Feast of Ideas on Quality

by Dr Lee Kheng Hock, FCFP, Chairman of Practice & Quality SIG(PQSIG)

The PQSIG was very lucky to have a steady stream of quality advocates of Family Medicine(FM), visiting our College.

Associate Professor Steve Trumble is the Director of Education at the University of Melbourne. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of the Australian Family Physician, a renowned family medicine journal published by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. He was the external examiner for the Fellowship by Assessment 2004. We took the opportunity to invite him to give a talk on "Training for Quality" on the 23 Sept '04. The very interesting session was chaired by Dr Tham Tat Yean, Vice-Chairman of the PQSIG. Many of the Fellowship trainees took the opportunity to have a practice sparring session with their external examiner.

They were not disappointed as Prof Trumble gave a very frank discourse on the limitations of the examination process & the various ways that people had tried to improve on the validity & reliability of the summative assessments. He concluded that stringent & challenging summative assessment must be balanced by an encouraging, supportive formative assessment system that

promotes professional development. Trainees of our various programmes must be cheering in agreement.

Dr Moya Kelly is a familiar friend of the College. Dr Kelly and her co-workers played host to our College study group



Signing of Guest Book: (L-R) Dr Tham Tat Yean, Dr Paul Goh, A/P Goh Lee Gan, A/P Steve Trumble, A/P Cheong Pak Yean & Dr Lee Kheng Hock

when they visited Scotland between 20-27 March '04 to study the primary care system in the United Kingdom. Her first visit to Singapore was six years ago when she was invited to participate as a trainer for the family medicine course of the MMed (Family Medicine) training programme. Dr Moya Kelly is the Assistant Director of NHS Education for Scotland. This year she was invited to Singapore as the external examiner for the Masters of Medicine (Family Medicine) Examinations 2004. The PQSIG took the opportunity to find out about the latest quality improvement developments in the UK.

On 21 October 2004, Dr Kelly was invited to give a talk on "Rewards for Quality Clinical Practice". Dr Kelly gave an overview of the strategy to improve quality in primary care in the United Kingdom. The latest innovations in quality were implemented in April 2004 as the "New Contract" for GPs in UK. The United Kingdom is the first country in the world that has implemented a comprehensive system that pays primary healthcare providers based on how well they meet performance indicator for the management of a range of chronic diseases. Most members of the audience were very impressed and felt that it was a very well designed system that took into consideration most of the important aspects of primary care. It is still early days in this bold initiative in paying for quality. So far the results are encouraging. The lecture made many of us reflect on the causes of the low quality of primary care in Singapore. One member of the audience was so inspired after attending the talk that he later wrote an article for the College mirror (See page 18)



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