

19th Sreenivasan Oration: Family Practice of the 21st Century - Computers, Changes & Challenges

By Dr Ong Jin Ee, MCFP, Editor

A/Prof Goh Lee Gan gave the citation on Clinical Professor Chee Yam Cheng & College Mirror extracts his personal account on Prof Chee's contribution to the discipline of Family Medicine(FM).



A/P Goh Lee Gan

Made family medicine training happen

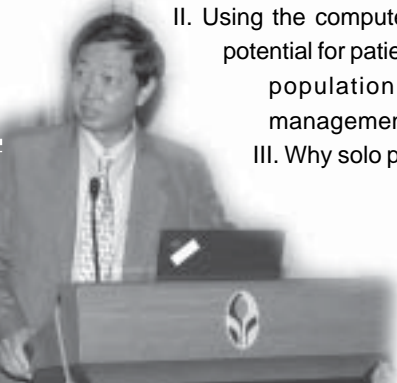
"...Perhaps the most memorable thing that I will say of Prof Chee in my perspective of him is the contribution he has given to FM. Great historical happenings often have simple beginnings. For family medicine's recognition as a discipline for training & practice it was certainly so.

It began as an almost casual telephone call from Prof Chee one day in 1988 as the Director of Manpower in the Ministry of Health(MOH). He asked me how many postings does a GP need to be trained. I

(The full text of the Oration would be published separate as an occasional paper of the College)

Prof Chee in his oration addressed the challenges ahead for the family practice of the 21st Century. He addressed three key issues:

- I. The need for clinical quality care at every patient-doctor contact;
- II. Using the computer to its full potential for patient care and population health management; and
- III. Why solo practitioners



Clinical Prof. Chee Yam Cheng

will find it harder and harder to survive. "It is, as it were, apoptosis(or programmed cell death) for the solo family physician, if each continues to practise as of today – alone, long hours(when a 5 day week is

replied that it is a short question that required a very long answer & suggested that we form a vocational steering committee in FM to look into this. He did & the traineeship in FM became a reality.

We formed a tripartite vocational steering body made up of the MOH, College of Family Physicians & the Graduate School of Medical Studies. Under the tenure of Prof Chee as Director of Manpower, we were able to have 3 monthly postings for doctors wanting to take on a career in FM. Prof Chee took a personal interest in the professional development of the FM traineeships and he ran feedback sessions. With that headstart we got on.

Prof Chee also contributed professionally in teaching the FM trainees & being a member of the panel of examiners in the Master of Medicine (FM) Examinations. For his contribution to the College, the College Council elected him to be a Honorary Fellow of the College of Family Physicians, Singapore in 1999."

the norm), poor family and personal life and little time for CME, audit and accountability activities."

He concluded "the culture of our profession will shift towards more teamwork, continuous improvement, learning and timely implementation of lessons learnt. This will help us achieve higher clinical quality at lower cost. The specialist is not above the family physician

"....clinical quality care at every patient-doctor contact.....using the computer to its full potentialapoptosis (or programmed cell death) for the solo family physician..."

nor vice versa. We need every member in the team to do best the part we have been trained for. Only then will our patients receive increasingly higher quality care at lower costs."

Clinical Professor Chee Yam Cheng

- Born in 1949 & married with 2 children
- Prof Chee Yam Cheng currently Senior Physician & Head in the Department of General Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital . He has been an enlightened administrator both in the Ministry of Health, at the level of the hospital, and now in the healthcare cluster as Assistant CEO (Clinical) of the National Health Care Group.
- Prof Chee has a long string of portfolios covering general administration and special areas like technology assessment, case-mix, biotechnology, renal dialysis, neuroscience, tuberculosis, research, nursing, ethics and professional conduct during his days of working in the Ministry of Health.

Awards and Milestones

- ACS Old Boys' Association Meritorious Silver Medal 'O' levels
- ACS OBA Gold Medal 'A' Levels
- Medical School NUS :Bailey Memorial Medal, the Albert Lim Liat Juay Medal, the Gordon Arthur Ransome Essay Prize
- Best Teacher Award in the Division of Medicine TTSH in 1999.
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh; the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons (Glasgow); the Royal College of Physicians (London); the Royal Australasian College of Physicians; Fellow of the American College of Chest Physicians.
- Recognized by the American Biographical Institute Chosen for distinguished standing and conferred with an honorary appointment to the Research Board of Advisors.
- Pingat Perkhidmatan Awan (PPA), Certificate of Appreciation from the Ministry of Health, and the Long Service Award in the National Day Award in 1999.