



# THE College Mirror

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## CFPS Commencement Ceremony 2016

*The director of Division of Graduate Medical Studies (DGMS), A/Prof Chen Fun-Gee, was the Guest-of-Honour at the CFPS Commencement Ceremony on 30 July 2016.*

Good Afternoon  
Professor Lee Kheng Hock  
President  
College of Family Physicians Singapore  
Members of the College Council

Friends and Colleagues

I am very honoured to be invited to be at this year's Commencement for the College training programmes in Family Medicine. The College has been very active and committed to improve the standards of Family Medicine practice in Singapore since 1971. The College took the lead in establishing a diplomate examination as a requirement of College membership and this was the first postgraduate qualification in Singapore. This was around the same time that the School of Postgraduate Medicine, the predecessor of the DGMS was set up. Synergies between the College and the NUS enabled the setup in 1993 of the first Masters of Medicine in Family Medicine degree and with that Family Medicine became a formal academic discipline, on par with the likes of Internal Medicine and Surgery. In 2000 the College recognised the need for many doctors who had been in private practice to undergo formal training and set up the Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine (GDFM). This enabled many General Practitioners to be Family Physicians and enter the FM registry in 2013.

In 2006, the GDFM was recognised as an entry requirement for Programme B of MMed Family Medicine and candidates undergo modular training in the programme before undergoing the



*Guest-of-Honour,  
A/Prof Chen Fun Gee*

same MMed Family Examination that our current residents go through. This certainly was not an easier route, as the practice requirement of 6 years of GP practice remains an examination entry requirement.

In 1998, the College started a 2-year Fellowship by Assessment programme. Participants had to be MMed FM graduates, and had to complete a portfolio of case studies, topic reviews, teaching activities, pedagogy skills course, medical writing and research. There were formative and summative assessments and successful participants were admitted as Fellows of the College of Family Physicians Singapore. In recognition of the high standards that the College set for Fellowship, the Academy of Medicine, the premier body of Specialists in Singapore started admitting such family physicians as Fellows of the Academy. Many of the fellows are here today in the audience.

Singapore has had a good reputation for health services. We have one of the lowest infant mortality rates. We have good accessibility to good healthcare even for those who are not well off. We have good infrastructure thanks to the foresight of our leaders in government.

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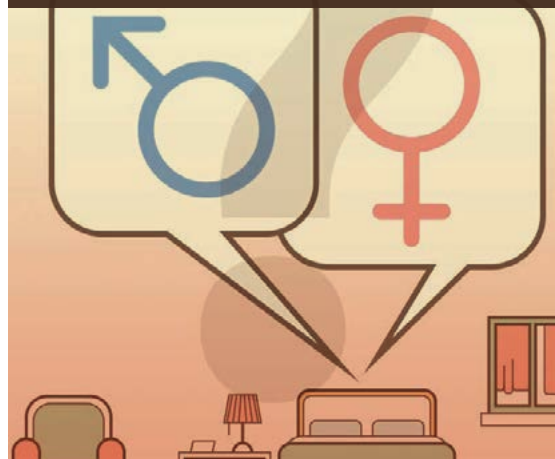
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most..." or something really close along that line. I was pleasantly stunned! What I had just witnessed was the spirit of honor and magnanimity coming from a gentle-giant! Something which I thought had been largely lost in our current competitive society, found again in the heart of a humble man who will continue to influence the hearts of many aspiring young clinicians and staff alike who works closely with him. As the saying goes, "近朱者赤, 近墨者黑". It is little wonder why my friend Dr Lawrence Tan always speaks so fondly of his head, Prof Pang. Along these lines of "lost-and-found", I also recently witnessed the lost-and-found of "team family medicine" spirit. More of this is found in my article in this issue.

And as usual, our team always strives to give you a different flavor of family medicine with all our issues. This time is no different. We have invited Dr Richard Tan to tell us more about how he uses acupuncture to complement his daily practice as a physician in a community hospital. We have also invited Dr Jean-Jasmin Lee (with guidance from Dr Ang Seng Bin) from KKH family medicine service to tell us more about how family medicine has gone beyond the bedroom to tackle some of the patients' sexual health issues. A statement from her article reads "Studies have shown that one third of women aged 75-85 are sexually active..." Interested enough? Read on!

■ CM

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Major challenges lies ahead. We have a very rapid aging population. Today 1 in 8 Singaporeans are above the age of 65 years old. By 2030, this ratio is expected to double to 1 in 4. Chronic diseases are prevalent. About 25% of Singaporeans above the age of 40 have at least 1 chronic disease. Not only will there be more chronic diseases with an aging population, the complexity of diseases will worsen.

Demand for healthcare will increase. The model of healthcare that we grew up with, centred around hospitals will have difficulty to meet these demands, and the Ministry of Health (MOH) has started the initiative to move to that of community based, integrated with the rest of the healthcare sectors.

Primary care is the critical element for this to succeed. The MOH has a vision of "One Singaporean, one Family Doctor". The family doctor is the trusted healthcare partner of every Singaporean. A strong family doctor-patient relationship enables the family doctor to have a holistic understanding of the patient and his family's medical and social care needs. He is the patient's health advocate monitoring the patient's risk factors in chronic

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diseases and offering timely advice from screening to prophylactic vaccinations. He is also the patient's navigator across our complex healthcare system, providing appropriate referrals as well as coordinating care within the community. The family physician thus is instrumental in the provision of good and affordable care to every Singaporean, to help them age and live well in the community.

Medicine has become more complex since I graduated from medical school. Many years ago, the medical training of 5 years and a year of housemanship provided sufficient knowledge and skills to function as a general practitioner. Many of my classmates became successful GPs and became pillars of our community. The 5-year medical curriculum today provides the basis for further medical training, and it is now challenging for a fresh medical graduate to have the necessary skills and knowledge to be a good family physician without further training.

I would like to acknowledge the immense contributions of the College of Family Physicians Singapore, in promoting the values and ideals of family medicine for the last 45 years. The College has been in the forefront of providing training to up skill our medical

graduates to cater to the evolving needs of our community. The College has been a valuable partner of the NUS in the setup of the Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine as well as the MMed Family Medicine programmes. Many of the graduates are leaders today in our healthcare system, and many have contributed by teaching and mentorship of our future leaders in Family Medicine.

Let me end by commending those who have taken this journey to up skill your competencies in Family Medicine. It is a challenging journey, as you have to juggle work with learning. Sacrifices will have to be made. The endpoint will certainly be worthwhile, as you become a very valuable member of the family medicine and healthcare community. I would like to also commend the teachers, who also despite having to juggle work and teaching have contributed so selflessly to the training programmes. It is individuals like you, in the tradition of the College of Family Medicine Singapore, who have made Family Medicine a very respected speciality of Medicine.

Thank you.



■ CM

## Our CFPS Academic Programmes

- *Advancing Family Medicine through academia*

by Dr Chan Hian Hui Vincent, FCFP(S), Council Member, College of Family Physicians Singapore

Family Medicine in Singapore has come a long way, since the founding of our College in 1971. The charter of our College has always been to bring greater recognition and prestige to our fraternity. The academic programmes available today, did not exist back then. Rather they were designed and created by our visionary and energetic College Pioneers. Through these programmes, we are gradually creating a strong cadre of highly trained Family Medicine specialists, physicians with the knowledge and standing, who can hold our own against that of other medical specialists.

Our programmes today are well established, and widely recognised both locally and internationally. Long forgotten in distant memory, was the saga where a few externals tried to remove our MCGP(S) designation from the Singapore Medical Council's list of displayable

qualifications, citing disdain for our programme then. This is why we must all realise that the prestige of our displayable Family Medicine titles is intrinsically linked to the strength of our College and her academic programmes. Thus, for those of us who have passed, do return to help improve and advance our programmes, so that the public, government and other colleagues have no doubt about the quality of our programmes.

With this, let me introduce our 3 main College Academic programmes:

1. Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM) course
2. Master of Medicine (Family Medicine) College Programme
3. Family Medicine Fellowship Programme

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