



P R E S I D E N T ' S C O L U M N

New Milestones in Vocational Training and Continuing Education

(Based on speech delivered at the Commencement of the Family Medicine Year 2002/3, 29th June 2002)

In the FM year 2001/2, the College attained new milestones in vocational training as well as in continuing medical education of family physicians (FPs).

In vocational training, the College has set up the Institute of Family Medicine (IFM) to integrate all activities leading to diplomas and degrees in Family Medicine (FM). For the first two decades after its inception in 1981, it developed the infrastructure for post-graduate training and conducted professional examinations leading to the award of the MCGP(S). It discontinued the College award when the Master of Medicine was awarded in 1993. However, it is still providing the bulk of the training and contributes to the conduct of that examination. It also developed the private practitioner stream (PPS) by setting up two community-based training centres. The Graduate Diploma programme which commenced in 2000 is built upon these structures. The College successfully concluded its first two-year GDFM course this year and is conducting the first examination in July 2002 under the auspices of the National University of Singapore.

Vocational training at diploma, master and fellowship level is now in place. The IFM envisaged as far back as 1973 by the late Professor Seah Cheng Siang in the SMA lecture ⁽¹⁾ entitled 'On Specialised Medicine – training and certification' provides the framework. With the additional funding provided by the Ministry of Health to further develop the GDFM, these vocational programmes would be further consolidated. Yet more work has to be done. An advisory panel for the IFM has been set up to advise the College Council on how to further harness resources to enhance such vocational training.

In continuing medical education (CME), the College's role has changed with times. In the first two decades, it was the main provider of CME for FPs. With the increasing interest of the institutions, specialised societies and then pharmaceutical companies in reaching out to FPs, the last decade has seen the College's role moving from centre stage as organisers to facilitators and now accreditors of CME. In accepting the additional role as the sole agency to determine what CME should be for FPs, the College can ensure that CME further level up the practice of FM in Singapore⁽²⁾.

Membership of the College has increased by more than 100 in the past year. The 1,000 mark would soon be breached. When CME is made compulsory by the Singapore

Medical Council next year, many members would look to the College for leadership not only to achieve their personal quota but also to facilitate quality CME that would directly benefit them. The College is working out its strategies on this matter.

The year 2001/02 would be remembered by the College as a year in which both vocational and CME in FM received a fillip. This is the watershed year in which vocational training programmes and further training through CME are consolidated. The stage is now set for Singapore to move to the next level of excellence, which is the practice in developed countries for formal FM vocational standards to be used as pre-requisites for new members joining their colleges as well as for new doctors wishing to practice independently in the community.

REFERENCES

1. CS Seah. SMA Lecture 1973 On Specialised Medicine: Training and Certification. Singapore Medical Journal 472-476 Vol 14 No. 4 December 1973.
2. Cheong Pak Yean President's Column Core CME for the Family Physician Defined. The College Mirror Vol 28 (1) CM 1 - 4 January-March 2002.

A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean
President, College of Family Physicians Singapore

F R O M T H E E D I T O R ' S D E S K

Coming to you this quarter is a totally revamped College website accessible at <http://www.cfps.org.sg>. Visitors to the website can now expect a greater ease of navigation than before.

Besides updates on CME events organised for family physicians, information on the various family medicine training programmes conducted by the College, such as the Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM), Masters of Medicine in Family Medicine (MMed FM) and the FMTP Modular Course (FMTC) can also be easily accessed at the click of your mouse. Furthermore, the online editions of “The Singapore Family Physician”, and “The College Mirror” have been revived. Each issue would be made available on the website three weeks after publication date. Do visit the website regularly for updated news and information!

In this issue, we are pleased to include a list of new members in the “News from the College”. For those who have not been able to participate in the activities and courses organised by the College, do check out the “Events Coverage” section to catch a glimpse of the College events held over the past months.

Meanwhile, enjoy your reading and see you next quarter!

Ms Emily Lim
Administrative Executive

Welcome To New Members

A warm welcome to the following new members who joined the College in April/May 2002. We look forward to your participation and support in the College's activities!

Ordinary Membership

Dr Ang Lai Lai (Private practice)
Dr Ang Su Lin Vivien (Private practice)
Dr Au Kah Kay (Government practice)
Dr Chang Chee Chea (Private practice)
Dr Chinnappan Vangadasalam (Private practice)
Dr Chng Chee Kiong Ronnie (Private practice)
Dr Chua Chi Siong (Government practice)
Dr Chuah Chin Khang (Private practice)
Dr Diraviyam Davamani (Government practice)
Dr Foo Yong Bock (Private practice)
Dr Ho Kai Kwong Jeffrey (Private practice)
Dr Lee Siow Kiang Georgia (Private practice)
Dr Lee Wee (Private practice)
Dr Lim Heng Lee Lawrence (Private practice)
Dr Lim Jiak Woon (Government practice)
Dr Lim Mien Choo Ruth (Government practice)
Dr Lim Swee Hock (Private practice)

Dr Ng Poh Heng (Private practice)
Dr Ng Kwee Choon (Private practice)
Dr Ng Soon Yin (Private practice)
Dr Sim Chin Sing Evan (Private practice)
Dr Soh Ling Ling (Private practice)
Dr Soo Mun Fong (Private practice)
Dr Tan Chu Hui Anne Regina (Private practice)
Dr Tang Wern Ee (Government practice)
Dr Tse Wan Lung Derek (Government practice)
Dr Wong Seung Tang (Private practice)
Dr Yang Chyan Han Jasper (Private practice)

Associate Membership

Dr Aung Thein (Government practice)
Dr Beh Chong Teck Peter (Government practice)
Dr Chua Sing Hue Eunice (Private practice)
Dr Chua Thiam Eng (Private practice)

Dr Eu Tieng Juoh Wilson (Private practice)
Dr Goh Shu Huey (Private practice)
Dr Hoe Wan Sin (Government practice)
Dr Khi Yue Ling Audrey (Private practice)
Dr Khoo Chooi Yong (Government practice)
Dr Loh Cher Zoong (Private practice)
Dr Loke Mun Choy Eugene (Private practice)
Dr Lye Tin Fong (Government practice)
Dr Nahid Tofail Iftekhar (Government practice)
Dr Nam Min Fern Alvina (Locum)
Dr Ng Keng Loong Gideon (Private practice)
Dr Nyi Nyi Tun (Government practice)
Dr Ong Ming Jiunn (Government practice)
Dr Tan Ching Wah (Private practice)
Dr Woodworth Belinda Ann (Private practice)
Dr Wong Khai Hong (Government practice)
Dr Whey Poh Yee Elizabeth (Private practice)

Clinical Cholesterol Management Course for GPs (2nd & 3rd March 2002)

The Clinical Cholesterol Management Course was held in conjunction with the Singapore Cardiac Society's 14th Annual Scientific Meeting. This is the first collaboration between the College and Singapore Cardiac Society. The theme of the course was "The Expert Consensus Practice of Cardiology".

Dr Richard Pasternak, a committee member of the NCEP III expert panel, gave the plenary session on the NCEP III cholesterol guidelines. There was a dinner symposium on "High Priority Challenges in Clinical Cholesterol Management" which included well-

known local speakers Dr Tan Chee Eng and Prof Chia Boon Lock.

The course provided for a comprehensive 8-hour review on the subject of cholesterol management, and was well attended by over a hundred family physicians. Besides familiarising



themselves with the new NCEP III guidelines, the participants had lectures on the cholesterol content of local foods and issues on giving dietary advice to patients.

Dr Kwan Yew Seng

E V E N T S C O V E R A G E

Tips & Techniques on ENT Exam (9th March 2002)

Conducted at the SGH-Postgraduate Medical Institute (PGMI), the “Tips & Techniques on ENT Exam” was well attended by 47 participants. This was one of the skill courses organised jointly by the College and Singapore Health Services (SingHealth). Areas covered included ear examination and syringing; removal of foreign bodies, anterior rhinoscopy and application of ear drops and nasal spray.



**DR RILLY RAY, ONE OF THE
COURSE PARTICIPANTS, GOING
THROUGH A EAR
EXAMINATION.**

The First GDFM Examination – Preparation Works

Coming this July, the first intake of Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM) trainees would be sitting for their examination. Here, we give you a glance at the preparation works the examiners had undergone:

GDFM Examiners' Training Workshop (16th & 23rd March 2002)

After months of preparation, the Censors Board was all geared up for the 1st GDFM Examiners' Training Workshop held at Clinic C, Institute of Health Polyclinic. The gist of the training sessions was to familiarise examiners with the examination format, particularly the OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) section, which interestingly involved role-playing between doctor-and-patient. Invigilators also attended the



DEBRIEF SESSION.



DR TAN CHEE BENG (LEFT) AND DR LAU HONG CHOON, CENSOR-IN-CHIEF (RIGHT), DEMONSTRATING A ROLE-PLAYING EXERCISE TO THE EXAMINERS.

workshop to familiarise themselves with the examination set-up.

Besides being briefed on the marking and calibration system, the training workshops also provided the examiners and invigilators an opportunity to undergo simulated OSCE stations set up by the Censors Board.

GDFM Clinical Revision Course (13th & 20th April 2002)

The College and the Division of Graduate Medical Studies (NUS) jointly conducted a mock examination, which was held over 2 weekends. Trainees went through a mini exercise on the written paper in the College's lecture room and also got into action at the simulated OSCE stations at Clinic C, Institute of Health Polyclinic.

WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Conference

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (31st March – 4th April 2002)

The Singapore and Malaysian Colleges had close ties since our formation in the 1970s. The first joint Colleges Conference was held in 1975 between the Colleges of Australia, Malaysia and Singapore. It was probably the first time that family doctors from different Colleges in the region met for a joint conference.

Continuing this tradition of regional co-operation, the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia played host to the 12th WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Conference. Our College was invited and sent a delegation comprising A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Lee Kheng Hock, Dr Tan See Leng, Dr Matthew Ng, Dr Wong Weng Hong, Dr Lucienne Tan and Dr Tan Ngiap Chuan to support our Malaysian colleagues.

It was a very successful meeting well attended by doctors from all parts of the Asia Pacific as well as WONCA members from outside the region.



OUR A/PROF GOH LEE GAN, REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT OF WONCA, ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE AT THE OPENING CEREMONY.



THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION WITH MEMBERS OF THE HOST ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

At the conference, our founder Vice-President Dr Wong Heck Sing was awarded the Honorary Fellowship of the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia in recognition of his contribution to the family medicine in the region. Another recipient of the Honorary Fellowship is a good friend of both our Colleges, Prof Wesley Fabb. This conference marked the initiation of the Wesley E Fabb Oration. The first orator was none other than the namesake, Prof Wesley Fabb himself. He enthralled the audience with his depth of knowledge and his visionary ideas. The second milestone is the launch of the Asia Pacific Journal of Family Medicine. The launch of this journal is evident of the progress that the discipline of family medicine in the region.



PAST PRESIDENT DR WONG HECK SING (CENTRE) WITH DR M K RAJAKUMARAN (LEFT) AND PROF WESLEY FABB (RIGHT) AT THE AWARD.

If you had missed this wonderful conference, take out your 2003 calendar and mark out the 5th – 8th November. We will see you at the 13th WONCA Asia Pacific Regional Conference at Beijing.

Dr Lee Kheng Hock

6th Annual Surgical Update For Family Practice (11th & 12th May 2002)

This is the 6th year that the Annual Surgical Update for Family Practice is being held. This year's focus was on "Update on Non-Orthopaedic Trauma" and "Advances In Minimal Access Gynaecological Surgery" and other related issues.

Held over the weekend at the College of Medicine Building Auditorium, lectures were conducted by various leading specialists. The participants also had an enriching time at the interactive workshop demonstrations.

INTERACTIVE DEMONSTRATIONS:



LECTURES AT COMB AUDITORIUM.



CARDIAC RESUSCITATION.



BURNS DRESSINGS.



GYNAECOLOGICAL PROCEDURES.

3rd SGH-CFPS Minor Surgical Procedures Course For Family Physicians (18th & 19th May 2002)

This MSP course conducted by the College has always been popular among the family physicians. Attractions of the course include both the hands-on practice and “live” surgery demonstrations.

The “Live” Surgery demonstrations were conducted via a 2-way audio-visual link between participants in the lecture theatre and surgeons in the operating theatre. Procedures such as the excision of sebaceous cyst, subcutaneous lipoma, papilloma, wedge excision of ingrown toenail, rubber band ligation and injection of haemorrhoids were demonstrated on the patients.

PRACTISE TIME –
EXCISION OF INGROWN
TOE NAIL.



HAVING VIEWED THE “LIVE”
SURGERY, PARTICIPANTS ATTEMPT
TO HONE THEIR SKILLS
ON SIMULATED MODELS DURING
THE HANDS-ON PRACTICE.



DR TAN KIM ENG – ONE OF
THE SATISFIED COURSE
PARTICIPANTS, AFTER
HAVING SUCCESSFULLY
REMOVED A ‘CYST’.