

(continued from Cover Page: Family Doctors - Leading the Way to Better Health)

our courses have evolved, and we now run courses for the Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine, the Master of Medicine (FM) course, and the Fellowship course. Due recognition must also be given to our colleagues in the public sector polyclinic clusters, who run the excellent FM residency training courses in their institutions.

Our training programmes have been very successful, and to date, we have over a thousand compatriots qualified with the Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine, 557 with the Master of Medicine (Family Medicine), 305 with Collegiate Member of the College of Family Physicians Singapore, and 166 with the Fellow of the College of Family Physicians, Singapore.

It has been proven time and time again that a healthcare system that has primary care as its core, with care delivered by family doctors, achieves the best health outcomes at the lowest cost, and with greatest patient satisfaction.

As family doctors, our lives can be very hard and demanding. We are like the Sherlock Holmes of the consultation room, teasing out the truth about the real cause of illness, and these may often involve social, psychological and environmental ills as well.

For many of us, especially those in primary care, be it in public or private practice, we have patients in every age

group, complaining of every imaginable symptom and discomfort, with the expectation that we have the answer for them. In this modern 21st century, many people seek out their own medical information for themselves. They do a quick study, and teach themselves all sorts of things, including how to read and understand research reports!

They come for consultations very well-informed, often armed with thick dossiers of the latest literature on their condition. Very often they have seen many doctors already; they question, challenge, and sometimes have already made up their own mind. It can often be very challenging for us, but has every potential of enriching the doctor-patient relationship.

Our advantage is that we have every opportunity to get to know our patients well over long periods of time. This long-term relationship is key to the doctor patient interaction we have in family medicine.

Patients want care that is accessible and at a level they can afford. They want care that is "holistic", which is a good word, but what does it really mean? Care that treats the whole person - a person with unique experiences, including aspects of his family and social life? People often lament that they have so many appointments to the hospital to see various specialists. Is that what they want? Some of our patients will need specialist treatment in hospitals. We are in the best position to co-ordinate this.

"... a healthcare system that has primary care as its core, with care delivered by family doctors, achieves the best health outcomes at the lowest cost, and with greatest satisfaction."

Reflections from Family Medicine Review Course (FMRC 2018)

Dr Wong Peng Yong Andrew, MCFP(S)

The Family Medicine Review Course 2018 was held at the Health Promotion Board on the afternoon of 19 May 2018, in conjunction with World Family Doctor's Day. This is the third consecutive year of its running and our Fellowship Class of 2017-2019 is privileged to organise the event with the support of the College of Family Physicians, Singapore (CFPS) and the Chapter of Family Medicine, Academy of Medicine Singapore (AMS).

Time flies as I recount the many blessings our class had received from conception (coincidentally 9 months back) to execution of this event. Though

it seemed daunting initially for a small committee to put together a large event like this, our hearts swelled with excitement and satisfaction when we eventually overcome every major hurdle together as one (e.g. planning the theme and programme, confirming speakers, securing the venue, canvassing for sponsorships, arranging the catering and stage management). We knew that we were continuing the legacy of growth and empowerment for our family medicine fraternity.

The labour was worth it as we witnessed the fruition of our efforts. Despite the rainy weather, we were

As family physicians, we are very often the guardians of our patients' care needs, overseeing their many treatments, ordered by different doctors, looking out for dangerous drug interactions and contraindications, working out the most appropriate regime for them. This should be something we aim to do for all our patients!

Our health system is undergoing a massive transformation now, with a tremendous effort to bring more focus to the community.

Minister of Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong spoke in his Committee of Supply speech in 2016 of the "3 beyonds":

1. Beyond healthcare to health
2. Beyond hospitals to community
3. Beyond quality to value

These are lofty goals, with the ultimate goal of a true integration of our healthcare services across sectors.

Beyond Healthcare to Health

How can primary care and family physicians help achieve this?

We can indeed, and family doctors will be called more and more to lead the way to make this a reality.

Our world class healthcare institutions, staffed with highly skilled professionals providing first class healthcare, are equipped with cutting edge treatments which are the latest

in technology. All these come at a price, and when you think about it, are really treating people who have conditions that are entirely preventable or if detected at a much earlier stage, could have avoided the need for such expensive treatment.

Health and the prevention of disease is indeed the way forward. How wonderful it would be if our silver tsunami consisted of healthy fit elderly, able to live independently and continue to contribute meaningfully to society!

The hospital bed crunch would become a thing of the past as the frequent fliers would be much reduced, as with in-patient care. As the old adage goes, prevention is better than cure!

Once these primary care elements are in place, we will be able to witness as reality the transfer of more and more of the care to be based in the community, grounded in team-based services in the community.

I call on all of us in family medicine in Singapore to work more closely to bring this vision to fruition, to be united in one common goal, of making family medicine the foundation on which our health system is built.

In the words of Helen Keller:

"Alone we can do so little, Together we can do so much."

CM

very encouraged by the warm presence of earnest learners (from trainees to veterans), distinguished speakers from various clinical disciplines, respected mentors in our Family Medicine fraternity and meticulous logistical support from the College Secretariat. Equally heart-warming was the sight of our Fellowship class promptly assimilating the different roles in this event (from emcees, ushers, stage managers to IT support), each exemplifying leadership which the College yearns to hone in every generation of Family Physicians (FP).

The afternoon began with a series of pharmaceutical company-sponsored talks on the



management of heart failure in the community, with perspectives both from a specialist and an FP. Following that, FMRC 2018 officially kicked off when our College president, Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee and AMS chapter chairman A/ Prof Lee Kheng Hock gave their welcome addresses. We were then brought through 2 exciting common plenary sessions: Addressing the practice of defensive medicine and updates on the management of transaminitis and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

That wasn't all. After tea, our intellects were stimulated again by 2 concurrent talks.

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The gynaecology and dental track saw us gaining knowledge on the management of menopause and common oral conditions in primary care. Likewise, the paediatrics and palliative care track empowered listeners with skills to manage screen time in kids and palliative challenges in the community. The variety of topics covered truly reflected the broad-based training required of a FP these days across practice settings.

As the event drew to a close, we were particularly grateful for all the help and support from

the College, AMS, Sponsors, Secretariat, seniors, supervisors and course-mates, without which we would not have enjoyed this sweet taste of success. As the organising chairman, my take-home message is: Do leverage on the talents of others as you never know how much more you can learn from them. It is through sharing our talents and experiences that the practice of Family Medicine can help to advance the healthcare of our nation.

I look forward to the next FMRC in 2019!



Dr Charmaine Kwan, MMed(FM)

My batch mates and me had the privilege of organising the Family Medicine Review Course this year.

One of our first tasks was to decide on the focus and topics for this year's session. We chose topics that we felt were relevant in the current landscape of Family Medicine in Singapore. In addition, we also took a look at topics that had been covered by various FM events recently to avoid duplication. Having members working in various locations was really helpful, as we were each able to bring different perspectives to the table - this helped us to better consider what was relevant to Family Physicians in practicing in different clinical settings.

We also had the task of deciding on the location for the FMRC this year, as well as searching for various sponsors for the event. This was new to many of us, and the mentorship from our tutors as well as advice from the previous senior batch was helpful in guiding our process.

Leading up to the actual day of the event, there was much coordination needed to be done - with the administrative team assisting us, the printing company for the event booklets, the various speakers, the caterers, the sponsors, as well as engaging the help of the rest of our batch mates in the running of the actual event.

As the members of our team had varying skill sets, we were able to work well together, with each one of us contributing in different ways. In this regard, I also felt the importance of a group leader - we were fortunate to be under the leadership of Andrew, who always had a bird's eye view of the entire situation, and worked tirelessly to ensure that all the "parts" of the team were running smoothly.

While the process was an uphill task for all of us, I believe that we were able to come away with a great learning experience, especially with regards to what goes into the planning and behind-the-scenes work of such an event.

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Dr Wong Wei Teen, MCFP(S)

I applaud my colleagues who had spent much time and effort to put this event together – by engaging relevant stakeholders, approaching prominent experts in their field, mustering the logistics together, and synthesizing an array of topics relevant to family medicine and primary care, especially so in areas we are not so 'familiar' with and where we would do well to acquire knowledge and management skills, to better care for our patients.

As the emcee of the session, I had to privilege to contribute a small part for our fellowship batch, and provide some lighter notes to a teaching session post-lunch on a rainy afternoon. This would not have

been possible without the committed efforts of the organising committee and the constant support of our administrative helps from College.

As the theme of this year's World Family Doctors Day 2018 states: Family doctors – leading the way to better health. May we continue to learn well, and grow well to be finer persons and physicians for our patients and our community!

Dr See Qin Yong, MCFP(S)

When I was tasked as to lead the plenary sessions for FMRC 2018, I was apprehensive and concerned if I would be up to task. Thankfully, with the guidance of our supervisors and my fellowship course mates, and especially the administrative staff from the College, the event ran smoothly. Through the process, I learnt a lot about organising events and bonded closer with my class through teamwork.

Being an emcee, coordinating and working with the speakers were indeed a good learning process. As the trainings of the specialists and family Physicians vary, I learnt to work together with the speakers to personalise the knowledge for our FP colleagues.

Finally, as a FP, I have also learnt much about Woman's Health, Dentistry, Paediatrics and Palliative Medicine. I look forward to integrating and assimilating this new knowledge to my practice.

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