

The Medico-Legal Seminar on Mental Capacity Assessment

CARING FOR PERSONS LACKING MENTAL CAPACITY

Text by Jasmine Soo, Executive, Event and Committee Support

Topics Covered

Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

- Introduction to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities – Dr T Thirumoorthy
- Background of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities – Dr Bhavani Sriram
- Assessing Mental Capacity with the Assessment Tool – Dr Giles Tan Ming Yee
- Overview of Mental Capacity Assessment for Doctors – Dr Wei Ker-Chiah

Caring for Persons with Diminished Capacity (Temporary/Fluctuating)

- Introduction and Overview on Caring for Persons with Diminished Capacity – Dr T Thirumoorthy
- Overview of Dementia and Clinical Aspects of Temporary Fluctuating and Permanent Loss of Capacity – Dr Bharathi Balasundaram
- LPA Certification and Mental Capacity Assessment – A/Prof Goh Lee Gan
- Mental Capacity Assessment Reports for the Courts – Ms Lim Hui Min

The Medico-Legal Seminar on Mental Capacity Assessment, a collaboration between the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), held two runs on 30 September 2017 and 14 April 2018 at the Health Promotion Board with 47 and 83 participants, respectively. Participants hailed from varying specialties including general practice, psychiatry, paediatrics and neurology.

Both runs covered topics relevant to Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PWIDs), while the latter had an additional afternoon session covering topics relevant to both PWIDs and dementia patients.

During the morning sessions, a video clip of a mental capacity assessment consultation between a patient and Dr Bhavani Sriram was shown. Referencing it, Dr Giles Tan provided participants with a step-by-step guide on how to utilise the Mental Capacity Assessment Tool – a tool developed in 2017 by the SMA and MSF to assist doctors in filling up the Medical Report (Form 224).

This session helped participants to better understand the Mental Capacity Act and the assessing of mental capacity, and guided them on making good clinical judgements in the area of mental capacity.

The afternoon session emphasised the five statutory principles in protecting persons who appear to lack capacity and

also advised that if the patient is unable to **Understand, Retain, Weigh and Communicate** the information (URWC), he/she is deemed unable to make a decision for himself/herself.

The session also included a checklist for assessing mental capacity, the Mental Capacity Assessment Framework and a role play session. During the role play session led by Ms Lim Hui Min, participants learnt how to assess patients lacking capacity and what should be included in a medical report.

The seminars ended on a great note after a fruitful panel discussion, as participants leave with improved knowledge on the topic.

We would like to thank the organising committee for their tremendous effort and all our speakers for taking time to share their expertise. Last but not least, we would also like to thank the following Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) for supporting the event: Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore, Down Syndrome Association and Association for Persons with Special Needs. The booths they set up helped to raise awareness of what these organisations do for PWIDs among the doctors. ♦

Legend

1. Speakers and panellists. L to R: Dr Giles Tan Ming Yee, Dr T Thirumoorthy, Dr Bhavani Sriram, A/Prof Ruby Lee and Dr Wei Ker-Chiah

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