

THE PATH UPON

Graduation

After the whirlwind of the academic year comes to an end, summer break is a welcome respite for the Singaporean medical students studying in the UK. Summer is not a time of inactivity and dormancy for the Singapore Medical Society of the United Kingdom (SMSUK) however. We pack this three-month break with many workshops, talks and events to engage and educate our members for their medical school journey.

We started off our summer series of events with the annual Pre-Employment Grant (PEG) Information Talk on 10 July 2021. Successful PEG applicants shared their tips on handling the interview, personal thoughts on the grant and how they made the choice between Foundation Year in the UK and becoming a house officer (HO) in Singapore. In the same vein, SMSUK also conducted our annual "Surviving your First On Call" workshop in August. Targeted at medical students in their clinical years, this

workshop is an interactive and immersive workshop set to equip participants with the skills needed to handle on-call duties as an HO. During the workshop, participants undergo simulated on-call scenarios based on real-life on-call experiences in different breakout rooms, facilitated by experienced clinicians.

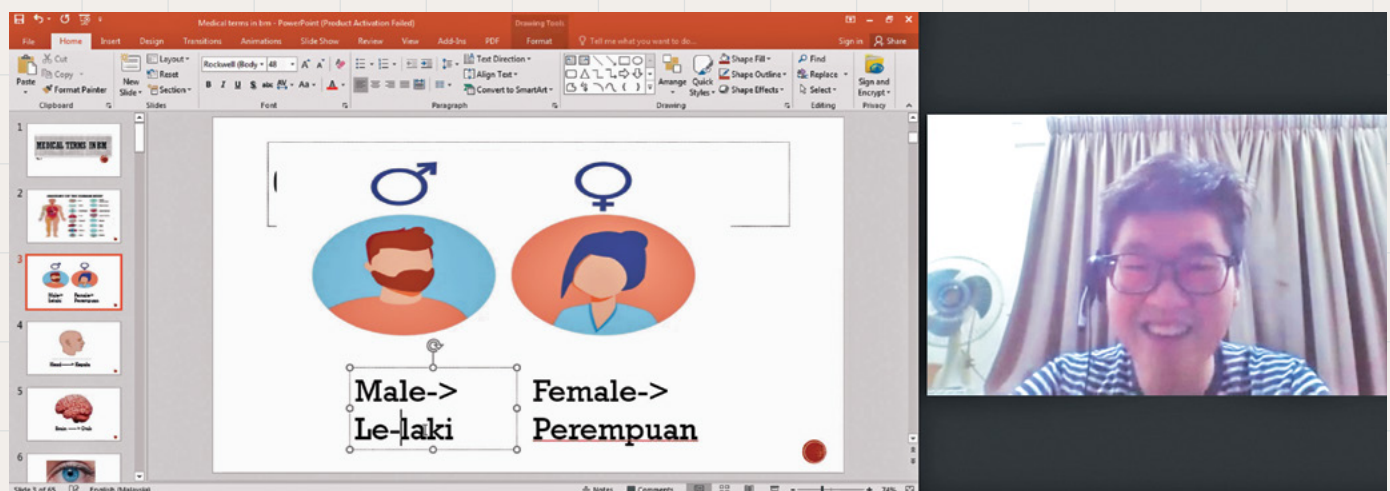
Given the multiracial make-up of Singapore's population, being conversant in languages apart from English can greatly elevate a doctor's ability to build rapport with patients. That is why SMSUK also organises language classes for our members over the summer break. Over a span of two online Zoom sessions per language, attendees were given a crash course in Chinese and Malay this round. Aside from basic conversational Chinese and Malay phrases, our speakers also compiled a vocabulary list of commonly used Chinese and Malay words in the clinical setting.

Last but not least, SMSUK also hosted our Pre-University Talks for prospective medical and dental students from over ten pre-tertiary institutions. Attendees were advised on the application process for medical school in the UK and what living abroad in the UK entailed.

SMSUK hopes that our events thus far have been beneficial and informative for our members. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the many speakers who have volunteered their time to facilitate our events, helping to make them a success.

For many Singaporean students studying in the UK, the choice of whether to remain in the UK or return to Singapore to practise is a huge dilemma. Hence, this month, we asked our members to share their plans post-graduation and the reasons for their choice.

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Chin Sue-Kay, Editor, SMSUK



Language class



Text by Tee Zi Heng

Zi Heng is a Year 3 medical student in the University of Aberdeen.

In the blink of an eye, the midpoint of my medical school journey is approaching. The truth is, the question of my post-graduation plans remains

a huge dilemma and is hard to answer definitively. But for the moment, returning home remains my plan after graduating from medical school.

Why return to Singapore? Some argue that remaining in the UK offers better work-life balance and career opportunities. However, being away from Singapore has always made me miss home, especially spending time with family and friends over home-cooked meals or local delights.

While it may seem all rosy at first glance, it is a stark contrast assimilating into Singapore's hospital scene after returning from the UK. Some of my concerns include having to relearn the array of standards of procedures and guidelines as opposed to what we were familiar with in the UK. Furthermore, as compared to local graduates who have spent a longer time in Singapore's

hospitals, residency selection and training may prove to be more competitive. As I progress nearer to graduation, reaching out to my seniors as well as senior doctors working in Singapore for advice will hopefully help to ease my assimilation. I also plan to seek out research and elective opportunities in Singapore to help me better understand the academia and healthcare system. Learning some basic dialects has also been on my to-do list before graduation!

I have always been grateful to have had the opportunity to study in the UK. Returning to Singapore to help my family and friends as a doctor would be meaningful as they have always supported me during my medical school journey. In the meantime, I hope to make the most out of my medical school journey and enjoy the process!



Text by Kimberly Tiang

Kimberly is a Year 4 medical student at the University of Dundee.

To stay in the UK or go home to Singapore? This is a topic that I deliberate upon quite often, especially in the past year as I progressed through medical school. I am sure I am not alone in this predicament as I come up with the pros and cons of both options before concluding that I have no idea which to pick.

As of now, I would say I am leaning more towards the side of returning to Singapore. A big factor for me would be being around my family and having access to all things Singaporean (ie, all the food!). I am also entering my fourth year where I will be getting more

clinical exposure, which I hope will help me understand my character and working style better. Most of us know that working in the UK likely provides a better work-life balance as compared to Singapore, and that is one of the factors that makes me constantly reconsider my decision of what to do after graduation.

As a medical student, if this is a source of stress for you, I suggest speaking with a family member, friend, senior or colleague about it. It will help in giving you a better idea of what to expect in both situations and vocalising your thoughts may even give you a sudden "eureka!" moment. ♦