

The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



Dr Tina Tan

Editor

Dr Tan is a psychiatrist with the Better Life Psychological Medicine Clinic, and a visiting consultant at the Institute of Mental Health. She is also an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. Between work and family life, she squeezes time out for her favourite pastimes – reading a good (fiction) book and writing.

As a tongue-in-cheek opening, who here is *actually* following which Disease Outbreak Response System Condition level we are at, or which Phase post-circuit breaker we are in?

By the time this issue is in your hands, dear reader, the COVID-19 pandemic will have spanned a whooping two years. Unfortunately, it did not go the way of SARS as we had all been hoping for in the beginning, and it proved to be a rather wily, constantly evolving virus that all of us have had to constantly adapt to. It is a positive thing then, to see that the Government's stance toward COVID-19 is to go the way of a slow and steady reopening, rather than risk yet another lockdown or "heightened alert". With that in mind, I am pleased that we are able to feature an article by A/Prof Lim Poh Lian, as she writes about

Singapore's reopening efforts and what it would take to keep things going during this phase of things. Emerging data is showing that the Omicron variant is less deadly than Delta, and it is a sign that we are truly heading toward endemicity. I sincerely hope that means no further booster shots for all of us.

Life continues during the pandemic, and we definitely seem to have hit a new normal of operation (in fact, we have hit multiple instances of new normal along this bumpy road). I remain optimistic about how this year will go, especially in light of the Government's efforts to vaccinate our younger children, as well as the loosening of travel restrictions.

Speaking of children, there was a period of time last year when many of us were confused by the Ministry of Health guidelines for Stay Home Notices (SHN), Quarantine Orders (QO) and Health Risk Warnings (HRW) – the acronyms are endless. It was a memorable time simply because there was so much to remember. I wish to highlight Dr Darryl Lim's account of what he, his team of like-minded paediatricians and artist friends did to churn out an e-book that succinctly summarised important information for parents and families of children infected by COVID-19, or whom had the illness. It is folks like Dr Lim that remind me of why we do medicine

– when the need arises, we rise up to the challenge and advocate to ensure our patients are well informed and can focus on recovery, rather than be overwhelmed by a myriad of information.

Dr Alex Cheng has contributed another fascinating medico-legal article, this time focusing on the ethical aspects of the pandemic and how the boundaries of these ethical principles were truly pushed to their limits. It is likely that years from now, future medical students will be studying "our time" to learn about the principles involved in making certain national policies and medical decisions.

Hopefully, the rest of us will simply smile (or cry) at the memories we retain of these times, without having to memorise more acronyms.

Here's to a peaceful 2022 for all. ♦