



# The EDITORS' 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.

Junior doctors – it is undeniable that our public healthcare institutions cannot function without them. Each of us has gone through our own harrowing experience of housemanship, and while it can be argued that “it was different last time” or “nowadays, *blah blah blah*”, junior doctors of today function in a vastly different landscape from the past, and overt comparisons simply are not helpful or relevant. It is heartening to know that there is a keen awareness of this, exemplified by contributions from members of the SMA Doctors-in-Training (DIT) Committee as well as the National Healthcare Group Resident’s Council. This series of articles features efforts to see to junior doctors’ welfare, especially in the past two years of the pandemic.

The welfare of junior doctors is a perennial issue that continues to vex even the most brilliant of minds. But the problem is best summed up by the authors of our Feature article: “The key is to consider how to better protect junior doctors’ welfare without compromising on clinical care”. At the very root of this complex issue is the fact that all of us are doing our best to ensure our patients receive the care they need. And what better way to do that than to ensure that the doctors caring for our patients are also taken care of?

With social distancing measures much more relaxed and public areas buzzing with activities in recent months, I’m sure your calendars are bustling with social events and meet-ups. This is such a stark contrast to the early days of the pandemic when virtually everything came to a halt.

Having had the privilege to be part of the SMA DIT Committee Advisory Panel, I got to hear firsthand how some junior doctors felt overwhelmed and drained by the surge of workload as a frontline worker soldiering on in this pandemic.

In line with the July issue of *SMA News* on “Supporting the Next Generation: Junior Doctors’ Wellness”, we are privileged to have the National Healthcare Group Residency Wellness Committee share with us their efforts to help their DITs deal with burnout and to take care of their welfare.

As part of the SMA’s ongoing efforts to reach out and support our junior doctors, we are delighted to have Dr Ivan Low, chairperson of the SMA DIT Committee, share with us the latest DIT welfare initiatives such as the SMA House Officer (HO) Helpline, a platform to quickly direct our junior doctors to important resources like the HO Handbook and other

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hotlines. Members of our SMA DIT Committee who are part of the National Junior Doctors’ Wellness Committee also shed some light on the work they have done to champion for junior doctors’ welfare and interests.

Our junior doctors are our beacons of hope and future leaders of our healthcare system. To our junior doctors: no matter how tough life can be, just remember that there are people out there who hear and support you. Hang on in there and you will find your pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. ♦