

The Editors' Musings

DR TINA TAN

Editor

Dr Tan is a psychiatrist in private practice and an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. She treats mental health conditions in all age groups but has a special interest in caring for the elderly. With a love for the written word, she makes time for reading, writing and self-publishing on top of caring for her patients and loved ones.



This issue continues last month's theme of charity and giving. We have collated a slew of contributions from doctors who have served in overseas humanitarian missions, both on long- and short-term bases, in the hope that this will inspire more to do the same within their capabilities. Or at the very least, give our readers a feel-good start to 2024.

Dr Natarajan Rajaraman and Dr Hakim Young share about their experiences serving over an extensive period, in Timor-Leste and Afghanistan respectively. Dr Natarajan has a particularly humorous way of describing volunteering with Maluk Timor (see if you can

find the part where he compares his work to an elephant).

In addition, have a look at Dr Koh Jun Rui Don's reflection on his trip to Cambodia with Project Lokun 2023, and Dr Hoe Pei Shan's article about the unique and eye-opening collaboration between Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center (MMM & MC).

Each article struck me in different ways as I read through them. What I have taken away from all of this is that there are those who serve in a far greater way than I possibly could, and such dedication is truly inspirational.

DR CHIE ZHI YING

Deputy Editor

Dr Chie is a family physician working in the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the National University of Singapore and is a designated workplace doctor. She enjoys freelance writing and writes for Chinese dailies *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Shin Min Daily News* and health magazine *Health No. 1*. She can be contacted at chiezhiying@gmail.com.



Time flies and in the blink of an eye, we have bid goodbye to 2023 and the new year of 2024 has begun.

Penning this editorial near the year-end festive season, one cannot help but feel an air of nostalgia as evergreen Christmas songs play melodiously in the background and stunning Christmas trees greet us everywhere we go. As we celebrate and reflect on the past year, the spirit of giving is in the air and beckons us to help those around us.

In this issue on "doctors beyond borders", we present to you doctors who have, out of sheer compassion and altruism, embarked on journeys of humanitarian mission and global health work to help overseas needy communities.

We are privileged to have Dr Natarajan Rajaraman, executive director of the non-governmental organisation Maluk Timor, share his insights into what volunteering for global health work entails and the meaningful work being done to transform the healthcare landscape in Timor-Leste. We also have Dr Hakim Young share with us his 18 years of amazing medical humanitarian

work in war-torn Afghanistan, and advice to those interested in following his footsteps.

Dr Hoe Pei Shan chronicles how the SGH Orthopaedics Ilocos Norte mission team undertook several complex joint replacement and foot and ankle surgeries in the rural City of Batac, Philippines, to help those who were suffering from the pain of injuries and degenerative conditions. This was an unprecedented collaboration with the Filipino government-run MMM & MC.

Lastly, Dr Koh Jun Rui Don also shares updates on resuming the familiar Project Lokun, a humanitarian project aimed at serving underprivileged villagers in the Pursat province of Cambodia, after a hiatus from COVID-19 disruptions.

Nelson Mandela once said: "We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in your hands to make a difference." As doctors, we are blessed to be able to help our patients in whatever little ways we can, and seeing the smiles on their faces really makes one's day.

Wishing all our readers a very Happy New Year and may all your wishes come true! ♦