

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.



Just this month, our local mainstream media announced that the long-awaited Health Information Bill will most likely come into effect in 2025. A major component of this bill will involve the contribution of health information available in the private sphere (including private hospitals) to the National Electronic Health Record (NEHR). Therefore, this month's issue of *SMA News* is timely, because our Feature article by Mr Tham Hsu Hsien and Ms Leong Yi-Ming focuses on the key considerations for private practices when it comes to cybersecurity protection and their legal implications.

In addition, Adj A/Prof Raymond Chua has contributed an important and informative article, in which he summarises the key points from the Ministry of Health's Cyber and Data Security Guidelines into the acronym SAFE HEALTH.

Allow me to illustrate one of A/Prof Chua's points: "T" for "Train staff". Back in my hospital days, my institution used to send out suspicious emails to test employees on their ability to recognise phishing attempts. Those who clicked on the link or attached document were then sent a follow-up email to attend additional cybersecurity training. I can safely say that more than a few doctors I knew fell for the phishing emails, especially the very first one, because there was no warning.

What does this all mean? Like it or not, we live in an increasingly connected world that is reliant on technology to administer healthcare and to store patient information digitally. As Mr Tham and Ms Leong state, "This should improve healthcare delivery for patients, but the increased connectivity also increases the risk of cyberattacks..." We need to be more careful, and we need to always be vigilant. And yes, do not carelessly click those links.

DR CHIE ZHI YING

Guest Editor

Dr Chie is a family physician working in the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics and is a Fellow of the College of Family Physicians Singapore. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the National University of Singapore and is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health. She enjoys freelance writing and has written for Chinese dailies *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Shin Min Daily News* and health magazine *Health No. 1*.



In this digital age, technological advancements have made it possible for us to live our lives so conveniently with a simple click of the computer mouse or a swipe of our smartphones' screens – something unthinkable just decades ago. From online banking and e-commerce to virtual meetings, social media, entertainment and smart homes, our lives are inextricably intertwined with technology.

However, the increased connectivity of this era has also increased our vulnerabilities to cyberattacks. It is not uncommon to read about cyberattacks all over the world across various industries. As our healthcare sector moved rapidly towards digitalisation, we have seen cyberattacks on healthcare institutions that resulted in data breaches. Ransomware and phishing scams can also cripple healthcare organisations and bring daily operations to a halt, with potentially catastrophic impact on healthcare services and lives.

In this issue of *SMA News* on "Securing Data, Protecting Patients", we are privileged to have Adj A/Prof Raymond Chua shed light on how we can ensure cyber and data security in healthcare practices, summarising these top tips in the SAFE HEALTH acronym. We are also delighted to have Mr Tham Hsu Hsien and Ms Leong Yi-Ming give us a legal perspective on cybersecurity protection for private practice.

Aside from the topic of cybersecurity, Rabiatal Idham, a medical student from King's College London, shares with us a webinar organised by the Medicine Special Interest Group of the Gallus Society on mental health to promote mental health literacy among peers, parents and teachers.

Whether in our work or personal life, ensuring cybersecurity and remaining on high vigilance for cyberattacks are of utmost importance. Let us do our part and stay cyber safe! ♦