

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.



One thing I have noticed as a psychiatrist in private practice is how much patients trust their family doctors. Such a therapeutic relationship is usually brought up in the first couple of sessions when I am getting to know a patient and is often accompanied by a statement to this effect: "My GP referred me to you/recommended you, and I trust my GP. If he/she says I should see you, then I will listen."

Putting aside the honour that the referring GP trusted me enough to care for his/her patient's mental health needs, there is also the fact that the patient and their family have what must be a deep and enduring connection with their family doctor. I can attest to the same, for my family has one or two doctors whom we entrust our care to. One, in particular, has vaccinated my kids as babies, seen them through their countless coughs and colds, and

even ingrown toenails. This doctor has watched me "grow up" from my days as a medical student to the day I popped by his clinic and handed him my new clinic business card. (If you are reading this, you know who you are.)

Therefore, the recent move by the Ministry of Health to recognise family medicine (FM) as a specialty is something I welcome. Family doctors are the backbone of medicine in the community. And if I feel this way, I can only imagine the sense of accomplishment that my primary care colleagues are experiencing at this news. Therefore, I wish all FM practitioners the best in the coming years as they make strides in this arena.

Finally, as we end the year, please join me as we welcome Dr Lim Ing Ruen and Dr Tan Chin Yee to the SMA News Editorial Board. We look forward to their contributions here at SMA News.

See you in 2026.

DR CHIE ZHI YING

Deputy Editor

Dr Chie is a consultant family medicine specialist working in NHG Polyclinics. 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*.



As the season of year-end festivities is in full swing, it is the time of the year for everyone to come together to celebrate joy and happiness, reflect on the past year, and look forward to new beginnings with excitement and hope.

With FM attaining the golden milestone of being recognised as a specialty, we celebrate this historic moment and give thanks to the many generations of healthcare leaders, whether from the FM community or the various professional bodies, for advancing FM as a specialty. This moment underscores the pivotal role that FM plays in delivering the three Ps (personal, primary and preventive care) and three Cs (comprehensive, continuing and coordinated care) to our patients and their families as the cornerstone of our robust healthcare system.

We are honoured to have two prominent senior leaders of our FM fraternity share with us their invaluable insights and thoughts on FM attaining specialty status and what lies ahead, in this December edition on "Family Medicine Comes of Age".

We have Dr Wong Tien Hua, President of the College of Family Physicians Singapore who practises at Mutual Healthcare Medical Clinic, sharing his perspectives of the journey of FM as it grew from humble beginnings to having structured training and professional accreditation, to recognition as a specialty over the years and beyond.

We also have A/Prof Karen Ng, Chief, Primary Care, Population Health, NHG Health and CEO, Family Physician and Senior Consultant, NHG Polyclinics, sharing her thoughts on the impact of FM as a specialty on primary care and our healthcare system as well as her personal journey on embarking on FM postgraduate training.

As we enter the new year, we are delighted to include a collection of hopes and wishes from family physicians and GPs practising in various institutions from both the private and public sectors on their aspirations for FM, patient care and the year ahead.

On this note, here is wishing everyone and your loved ones a bountiful, healthy and joyous New Year! ♦

WELCOME ON BOARD

Dr Lim Ing Ruen is an otorhinolaryngologist with fellowship training in rhinology and advanced sinus surgery from the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. She was also a clinical lecturer involved in the teaching of medical students during her fellowship year. Upon her return, she built up an ENT and rhinology service in Alexandra Hospital and was on the Hospital Planning Committee for Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. She is currently practising in Mount Elizabeth Hospital.

She has served on the Medical Advisory Board of Mount Elizabeth as the ENT specialty representative, the Operating Theatre Committee, the Tissue Committee, the Transplant Committee and the Proton Therapy Tumor Board Committee.

She enjoys being part of the teaching faculty involved in endoscopic sinus surgery workshops. She also volunteers on medical mission trips with A Call to Share Singapore. Always devoted, always committed. She is a mother of two boys, an avid traveller and a gastronomist.



Dr Tan Chin Yee is an internal medicine junior resident in Singapore Health Services. He has interests in basic science research especially in the domains of microbiology, immunology and genetics/genomics. He is an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School and the Duke University School of Medicine. Outside of work, he enjoys running, doing research and drinking beer on his balcony with his wife. He does not enjoy completing MedHub assessments.

“Dear readers, Chin Yee here. Medicine and science have been intertwined since the very beginning. It took about two decades for the basic science of checkpoint blockade immunotherapy to make its way from Allison’s and Honjo’s labs to breathe hope for cancer patients today. This observation highlights the patience and resilience required to transform medicine through studying basic biology. In my writing, I hope to discuss seminal discoveries in today’s science that will improve the health of our children and generations to come.”



The SMA News Editorial Board, led by Editor Dr Tina Tan and Deputy Editor Dr Chie Zhi Ying, meets regularly to discuss the latest topics relevant to the profession and how best to invite and publish articles on these topics to inform, educate and update our Members. To find out more about our Editorial Board members and our work, visit <https://www.sma.org.sg/page/About-SMA-News> or scan the QR code. ♦

