

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.



In his contribution this month, Prof Toh Han Chong reminisces about the medical show *ER*, stating that, "As a busy internal medicine resident, I did not watch *ER* much as I did not want to relive my day job after work."

For the same reason, I generally avoid books or shows that heavily feature medicine, especially those with a focus on mental illness and psychopathy. Nevertheless, the crime and thriller genres are peppered with these elements and, while I am at it, let me throw in my own recommendation of *The Silent Patient*, if anyone has a few hours to spare to binge a book.

Like it or not though, my social media algorithm knows that I am in healthcare and continues to show me clips from clever series like *House* and *The Good Doctor*. I must admit, there is something about these shows

that hooks you, when it is done well.

Admittedly, *House* remains my favourite Western medical drama.

February being what it is, we wanted to focus on something lighter, thus the spotlight on medicine in reel life. While not strictly about the medical treatment of diseases (that is what medical school, residency training and conferences are for), medicine in reel life showcases the less quantifiable aspects of being in the profession – the art of medicine, the heartaches, the dynamics, the crushing constraints of different healthcare systems and the fact that we are, fundamentally, flawed individuals working with other imperfect human beings. Anyone who thinks otherwise is probably living a reel life themselves.

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*.



Medical drama is in a unique genre of its own, not merely serving as a source of entertainment but also spurring reflections and soul searching on matters of life and death. From the likes of Western dramas such as *Grey's Anatomy* and *ER*, to Chinese dramas like *The Heart* and *Healer of Children*, and Korean dramas such as *Hospital Playlist* and *Resident Playbook*, medical dramas blend in high-stakes, emotional and tear-jerking storylines with healthcare professionals often struggling with ethical dilemmas and their own fair share of personal woes in fast-paced hospital scenarios.

As the audience remains on tenterhooks seeing how doctors and nurses in these shows resuscitate patients in emergency rooms, undertake complex emergency surgeries and other procedures to save lives, we are also constantly touched by the kindness, compassion and professionalism that healthcare professionals have for their

patients, as well as the resilience, camaraderie and friendship that the healthcare team have forged in the most challenging of all times.

Although life in reality as a healthcare professional may not be as dramatic as what is often portrayed on screen, the values and spirit exemplified by these characters are certainly highly relatable and are what we frequently see among peers in real life.

In this February issue of *SMA News* on "Reel Medicine, Real Reflections", we are excited to hear from a few of our Editorial Board members their thought-provoking, witty and humorous commentaries on medical series and shows. We also have Dr Chong Yik Yan sharing her reflections on the TV series *Inside Crime Scene*, in which our Editorial Advisor A/Prof Cuthbert Teo was one of the experts featured.

So, as you sit back and read this issue, I hope you have fun watching your own favourite medical drama series as well! ♦