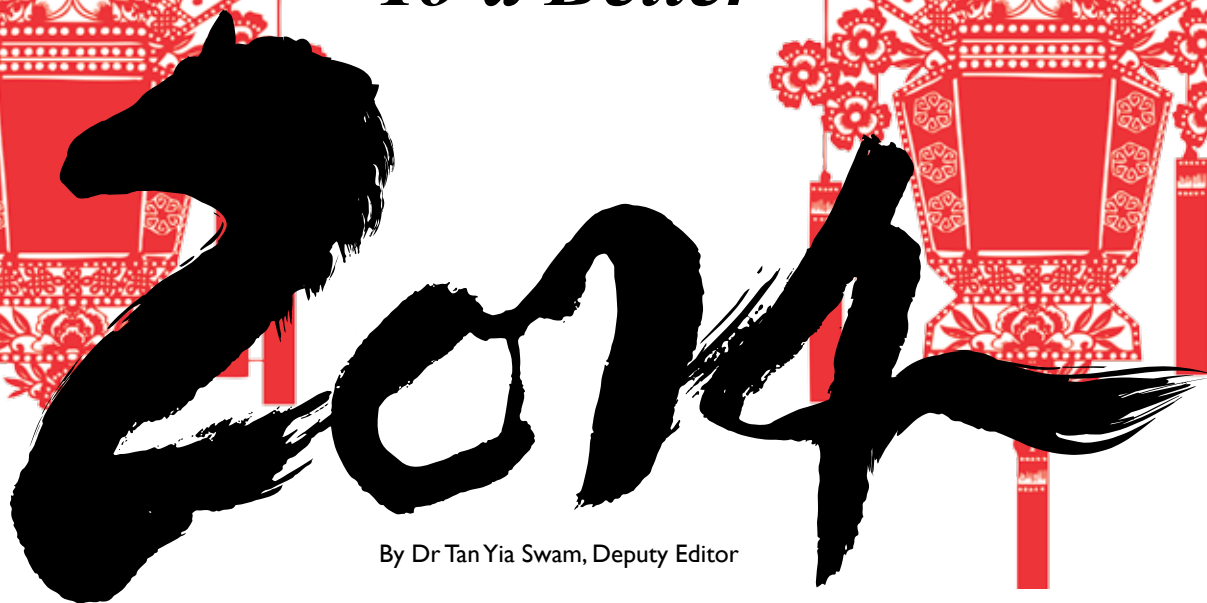


To a Better



By Dr Tan Yia Swam, Deputy Editor

2013 PASSED by very fast for me, both personally and professionally. Keeping up with a toddler is every bit as tiring as what I have previously heard from friends who are mothers. Returning to work after maternity leave took a bit of a jump-start for me, and doing a six-month stint in a different hospital also brought about a unique set of challenges for me to learn and adapt to different workflows and organisational cultures.

In 2013, friends and colleagues in my age bracket faced these following situations – all stressful, whether it was “happy” stress or “sad” stress: job promotions, lack of job advancement, marriages, newborn babies, soured relationships, personal health problems, major illnesses or deaths in the family. Life events that seemed so far away when we were teenagers or students are now up close and personal. (Disclaimer: if you think I’m talking about you – rest assured, I’m not! Too many things have happened to too many friends and acquaintances of mine!) All that has happened last year have taught me some important life lessons:

1. True friends are sometimes found in those you least expect;
2. A good social network is important – this may be in the form of friends, family or colleagues; and
3. Not everyone can be a doctor, but everyone will be a patient.

My experiences the past one year have hopefully helped me to become a better and more compassionate healer, and a “better” human being. Not better than anyone, but better than the person that I was before.

I hope it is not presumptuous of me to hope that we, as doctors, will also look back at the “bad stuff” that happened over the past year, and make a collective resolution to stay strong and united as a profession, to improve and introspect.

Together, we can make 2014 an even better year!

Challenges facing the healthcare profession such as bed shortages, potential training inadequacies and abuse of emergency services are far too big for any one person to solve, but it should not be solely left in the hands of non-clinicians to decide on relevant policies to alleviate such situations. We have to take ownership of these problems and actively contribute with real solutions that can work, and not just complain about them. Likewise, I also hope that power-holders in positions of authority continue to engage those of us on the ground in active dialogue, and incorporate our ideas in their decision making.

My interest still lies in reaching out to “young doctors”, even though with each passing year, I’m getting nearer and nearer to the point where I’m no longer considered “young”. I do hope that our student members, house officers, medical officers, residents, registrars, and ANYONE who still consider themselves young at heart – continue to read and contribute to *SMA News*, and be the Voice of our Profession.

SMA News has plans for special themed issues throughout the year, so do keep a lookout for our announcements in these pages and on our FB page – if you don’t understand what FB is, you probably don’t belong in the young category anymore. :) Ditto if the smiley face irritated you too.

Conversely, if you don’t know how special *Hobbit* is to *SMA News*, you are probably too young as well. *Hobbit* was quite distraught recently to hear from us that young doctors only know about Tolkien’s hobbits nowadays. So I would like to take this opportunity to invite young readers to check out *SMA Hobbit* on FB, at <http://www.facebook.com/hobbit.sma>.

I wish all of you a good 2014, and may this year be “better” than the last in everything. Cheers! **SMA**