



The Next IT Thing in Healthcare

Interview conducted by Dr Jipson Quah,
Editorial Board Member

In France, patients are given personalised data cards. With the right chain of approval, doctors of any specialty may review a patient, plug that patient's card into a secure system and view his entire medical history. Locally, with the updated National Electronic Health Record, MOH Holdings is also taking steps to provide all clinicians with a summary care record for each patient. This will eventually allow us to direct our management of the patient as a whole.

I understand that you have embarked on several endeavours in programming and app development, tell us more.

As a pet project, I created MedNet Locums, a handy mobile app for clinics to find locum doctors. It is currently available on both iOS and Android, and has helped me to explore the finer technical details of app development. (Download it at <http://www.mednet.sg>.)

Beyond that, I am currently working on a medical social platform to link doctors in Singapore with our patients. It is somewhat like a responsive directory with social networking features. This initiative, called SeeDoctor.sg (<http://www.seedoctor.sg>), has immense potential because it will revolutionise how patients find their specialist or family doctors. The social aspect also keeps patients close to their doctors. Such features are especially important as I aim to unveil this to other Asian countries in time to come. I hope to publish this project by next year.

What are some of your ambitions for the use of IT in local healthcare?

I would like to establish a solid medical social network for Singapore doctors so that we can draw from the expertise of our fellow colleagues more easily, and also enjoy closer yet professional relationships with our patients. This could come in the form of a comprehensive medical professional directory for all Singaporeans. Through this directory, patients gain better awareness of disease processes, screening protocols and available doctors. Hopefully, in the future, our patients will shed their reliance on randomly googled symptoms, management plans and doctors. ■

FOR THIS special issue, I speak to Dr Lim Heng Lip (pictured above), a medical officer with a burning passion for IT. In spite of the mind-boggling nature of programming, he has bravely ventured into the highly exciting field of app and web innovation, and hopes to contribute positively to the local medical industry.

Where and what are you practising currently? What first piqued your interest in IT in healthcare?

Currently, I am a medical officer doing my rotations in National Cancer Centre. Since my medical school days, I have always held an entrepreneurial perspective of healthcare and the infrastructure surrounding it. While IT has definitely taken hold of many industries, it still seems to be lagging behind in the practice of Medicine. In many other countries and even in developed nations, doctors still rely on paper records. The situation is not as dire in Singapore, where most of our tertiary medical institutions have sound IT infrastructure such as a Computerised Patient Support System and Citrix.

What IT-related improvements do you hope to see in current medical practice?

I do wish for a comprehensive medical history record for all physicians. Currently, a family doctor may see a geriatric patient, with multiple co-morbidities and numerous prescriptions, for the first time and only treat him superficially. But with a detailed past history, the doctor can manage the patient holistically.