

Junior Doctors Network Meeting 2014

By Dr Noorul Fatha As'art



Dr Noorul (first row, third from left) with delegates at the JDN meeting

THE JUNIOR Doctors Network (JDN) meeting was held on 27 April 2014, in Tokyo, Japan. Approximately 30 delegates from various countries, including Myanmar, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Brazil, Indonesia, France, Germany and Nigeria, attended the meeting. The delegates were from a broad spectrum of medical fields spanning General Surgery, primary care and public health. Japan and South Korea, in particular, sent large delegations to support the meeting.

Dr Wunna Tun, Communications Director of JDN, commenced the meeting with an update on the network's progress and activities in the past year. Subsequently, each country's representative shared about the difficulties and challenges faced by young doctors in training (DITs) in the respective countries. It was an enlightening experience to be apprised of the differences in healthcare systems, labour laws and cultural norms among the various nations.

Dr Patrick Ezie from Nigeria shared the challenges of medical manpower distribution in his country, where doctors prefer to work in major urban centres instead of rural communities, as well as the struggles doctors face when communicating with patients of different ethnicities. Meanwhile, through a gender-specific lens, our colleagues from France shed light on the challenges women DITs have to deal with as they juggle their careers and the demands of family and childcare.

On our part, delegates from Singapore discussed our own

twin challenges – an ageing population with the increased burden of non-communicable diseases, and the changes being implemented to equip our healthcare system for the future. Additionally, the Japanese delegates took the opportunity to share about their efforts to promote better understanding of global health, such as providing training programmes to both local and foreign (especially those from developing countries) healthcare workers and aiding foreign patients in the local Japanese community.

The meeting provided Singapore with a good opportunity to establish and reaffirm ties with our overseas colleagues and with JDN. We also came away with a greater appreciation of the trends and developments in healthcare systems around the world. Most importantly, the meeting gave us better insight into the challenges and problems faced by fellow DITs. By meeting and sharing our experiences, we gained a better understanding of how to address similar issues in our own country. We look forward to attending future JDN meetings. ■



Dr Noorul Fatha As'art is currently an Assistant Director (Non-Communicable Diseases) with the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health. Aside from her day job, she has an interest in medical ethics and professionalism. She also has a passion (but unfortunately not the time) for travel.