



Love at Work

DR KEVIN TAN, a senior consultant neurologist at National Neuroscience Institute, and his wife Jamie Lim, an advanced practice nurse at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, talk about their journey together in the healthcare industry, and how it all works out to be in their favour.

How did you get to know each other?

We met at work. Kevin was a medical officer doing his medical intensive care unit (MICU) posting and Jamie was a staff nurse in MICU. We bonded over our common interests in travelling, trekking and the outdoors.

How do you juggle your relationship and work commitments?

We both work rather long hours, but will often spend our evenings and weekends doing the things we enjoy together. We had also deliberately arranged to study for our Master of Science in Health Professions Education (offered by MGH Institute of Health Professions) together in 2014. Being fellow students and classmates allow us to share the same commitments in our studies, on top of having similar responsibilities as clinicians, educators and mentors in our own departments. Hence we can understand the struggles our partner go through at work better, and can bounce ideas off each other as we work out solutions.

Do you discuss work at home? How does it impact your relationship?

All the time! It helps that we are both healthcare professionals and can understand each other's work. At the

same time, it's good that we are in different roles and have slightly different perspectives when we deal with problems. We also operate quite differently – Kevin will think through and analyse an issue carefully before making a decision, while Jamie will speak out and act whenever she feels that an issue needs to be addressed. These differences are complementary and help balance us out. By sharing our views, we learn to understand each other better as well.

How does having a spouse who works in healthcare affect you in your work?

In the course of our discussions, we not only learn about how we think as individuals, but also how our professions shape our perspectives. This, in turn, helps us understand our medical and nursing colleagues better.

Could you tell us a funny anecdote of a time when the both of you worked in the same team?

When we first met in MICU, Jamie had a subungual haematoma from a trekking holiday in Nepal. Her toenail was slowly coming off, and though she wanted it to drop off naturally, it was taking a long time. Kevin then offered to do the toenail avulsion for her when he was manning the hospital staff clinic in the following month. Since he had not done one before, he diligently read up on the procedure the night before. On the day, he performed the procedure as he studied it, but forgot to tie the tourniquet when he did the digital block. Yet Jamie bravely bore the pain throughout the procedure. So you can see that love is not only blind, it can be an anaesthetic as well! ■