

The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



Tan Yia Swam

Editor

In the past weeks, two prominent events were highly featured on my social media feed: the death of Mr Aloysius Pang while on Operationally Ready National Service reservist, and a \$100,000 fine.

Like most people, I was saddened and shocked by Mr Pang's death, especially in the wake of the other training-related deaths, and I await the results of the official inquiry with great vested interest. My three boys are still young, but they will be serving National Service in the years to come and I want to know how such tragic events could be avoided.

The \$100,000 is another life-changer, at both a professional and national level. A lot has been said on this – some learned, some not so much. We carry an adapted version of the Hobbit's article in this issue. With her usual insights and bluntness, she gave a critical analysis of the event right after the news broke. There have been many developments; meetings, parliamentary questions and answers. The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) held a meeting with key appointment holders of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS), College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) and SMA to clarify the processes that resulted in the \$100,000 fine. Dr Lim Kheng Choon gives a brief report (see page 13). There is ongoing discussion on the problems that this has caused. The medical fraternity awaits proper guidance.

Social media is powerful and can create social unrest if used

inappropriately. But it can also be used well to inform and educate. The petition with more than 6,000 signatures seems to have triggered a wave. Clicking a button is easy, but one wonders how much real change it can do. The professional bodies are not as ineffective or gormless as some of my acquaintances think. Real change happens when there is a meeting of like minds and real life action in slow gradual steps.

I appeal to the disgruntled keyboard warriors to step up and join committees in the professional body of their choice and be the change they want. There are the SMC, SMA, CFPS, AMS, and Alumni Association. Take your pick, or set up your own if you really feel that none of the above meets your needs.

Onto more light-hearted updates – the Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day have always been about family, friends and loved ones for me. With a family theme in mind, we have brothers – Drs Reuben Soh and Benjamin Soh, and twins Drs Keith Liang and Kevin Liang – share their thoughts about brotherhood in medicine. (Off hand, we didn't know of many sisters in medicine; if you are keen to share your stories, I'd love to hear from you!) Dr Tan Tze Lee and his wife run a clinic in the north where they have managed their practice successfully while raising their kids over the past 20 years. He shares pearls of wisdom on maintaining a harmonious partnership in work and life.

Dr Tan is a consultant at the Breast Department of KK Women's and Children's Hospital. She continues to juggle the commitments of being a doctor, a wife, the *SMA News* Editor and the increased duties of a mother of three. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.

While loving and looking after others, don't neglect yourself either – self-care is important, be it in the form of food, drinks, rest, meditation or exercise. One of my favourite restaurants is Pasta J, and I've invited John, the owner, to tell us more about it. I love the food and it's a great meeting place, especially if you have fur babies.

Going full circle back to death, Dr Tina Tan reviews the book *When Breath Becomes Air*. How would you face your own mortality? Would you live your life any differently if the end date is brought forward?

It is not too late for New Year resolutions. Rethink your personal life; rethink your professional life. Are you the person you want to be? Are you the doctor you want to be? Take back ownership of the doctor-patient relationship. ♦

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