

# The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



*Dr Tina Tan*

Editor

Mirror, mirror on the wall... social media is full of memes about how 2020 has been and I really do wonder how the rest of the year is going to pan out. Dengue rages on in Singapore, and images of the horrific blast in Beirut are still fresh in my mind. The pandemic, though, continues to be the greatest disruptor of all. But as someone told me recently, change makes for growth. And if anything, this great disruption has been a time of growth in quite a few aspects of life.

The pandemic has been an opportunity for those who are adept at “thinking out of the box” to showcase their ideas and help push innovations forward. At the heart of such innovations is the prevailing theme of ensuring we all thrive and adapt to a post-COVID world, and simultaneously helping our patients to do so. Do read A/Prof Chew Min Hoe’s article on recent developments in the surgical world, as well as Dr Jipson Quah’s article on tele-services during this time of COVID-19. Look out also for Dr Alex Wong’s article on the tireless efforts of our GPs during this difficult time, and the third in our series of articles written by seniors who have gone through SARS offering advice to our juniors who have just

entered the medical profession. I heartily welcome Dr Lim Ing Haan’s first contribution as a member of our Editorial Board in this series.

At the risk of sounding like a technophobe – I am inherently suspicious of new things, and I’m certain this sentiment is shared among a segment of readers who aren’t so eager to embrace change, for various (good and valid) reasons. It is without a doubt that telemedicine and other related platforms have flourished during the pandemic, albeit out of urgent necessity, and there are those among us who are concerned with the way things are heading. There are practical issues such as the reliability of technology, its limitations, and security and privacy concerns. And to top it off, the medico-legal environment has to play a constant game of catch-up on the ethics of telemedicine. But tele-services will continue to play an important role for medical practitioners in a post-COVID world. Without telemedicine as an aid to our existing clinical practice, we would be even more restricted in a world already full of safe distancing restrictions. Like it or not, telemedicine does open up a whole world of possibilities, and

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our profession should adapt it to the benefit of our patients, while being aware of its pitfalls. In that same breath, technology has enabled medical education, continuous learning, conferences and meetings to continue unhindered, and this is something to appreciate and make full use of.

The new normal is here to stay, though it has been a painful and difficult experience due to safe distancing measures and their financial impact. Like many, I predict that things aren’t going back to the “old ways” for a long time. Let us adapt to these changes and focus on the positives that have come about as a result. ♦