

The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



Dr Tina Tan

Editor

2020 has been a year of reckoning. It's been unprecedented in the various losses we've suffered, from the minor (not being able to go to the gym) to the profound (the death of a loved one from COVID-19 and/or its aftermath). But it was my children who reminded me that 2020 has also brought out the best in many folks. I've read heart-warming stories of children who delivered food to healthcare workers, and who helped make masks for essential workers. Likewise, this issue is about doctors who rose up to the challenges of 2020 in one way or another.

I begin with a special mention of our interview with Singapore's Director of Medical Services, A/Prof Kenneth Mak, who has become something of a mini celebrity this year, and certainly deserves recognition for the tireless work he has done as part of the national effort against COVID-19. We were going to shadow him for a day (à la "A Day in the Life of..."), but national secrets took precedence, and I suppose our pay grade wasn't high enough for those. Nonetheless, I thank A/Prof Mak for making time to speak with *SMA News*.

A group whose role is often understated are those who have served – and continue to serve – in Singapore, but aren't Singaporeans.

There are many among us who have quietly contributed, separated from their families and loved ones during these uncertain times. Among them are doctors and many other healthcare professionals. We've featured here articles by Dr Nurul Ain and Dr Daniel Khaw, both of whom are Malaysians, though there are many more from different parts of the world working here in Singapore. We know you're there, my friends; you have stepped up to help us as a nation, and we thank you for your sacrifices.

Most people who are asked to do something they don't want to do will simply say, "No, I won't", or, "Fine, I'll do it" (cue eye roll and groaning). My fellow Duke-NUS Medical School alumni, friend and entrepreneur, Dr Rena Dharmawan, is not most people. She chose to say instead, "I've got a better idea, how about we do it this way?" I am honoured to feature her and her delightful "robot" in this issue, which is helping in our fight against COVID-19.

The remarkable thing about humans is our resilience, our ability to bounce back from difficulty and our endurance. I sincerely hope this issue inspires readers and reminds us of these qualities, which will take us through the rest of 2020 and whatever else may lie ahead. ♦

Dr Tan is a consultant at the Institute of Mental Health and has a special interest in geriatric psychiatry. She is also an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. Between work and family life, she squeezes time out for her favourite pastimes – reading a good (fiction) book and writing.