

SMA Ethics Convention & Short Course in Health Law & Ethics



Prof S Y Tan.

Ethics has become the buzzword in November. Fifth November saw the successful completion of the week-long intensive course and convention on ethics organised by the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics & Professionalism (CMEP) which was well attended by more than 100 medical doctors, dentists and hospital administrators.

OPENING ADDRESS BY DMS

In his opening speech, Guest of Honour, Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Director of Medical Services, MOH, congratulated the SMA for our "very strong commitment to its CME role which relates to educating doctors on the subject of professionalism, medical ethics, health laws, and practice management." He said that this course is important and timely since medical negligence is an important side of medical practice which should not be ignored.

"On the whole, doctors are highly regarded in Singaporean society and enjoy the trust of their patients. This is something valuable which we should work hard to preserve since the alternative of a litigious environment, adversarial doctor-patient relationships and costly defensive medicine, is very undesirable." He urged the doctors to maintain their competence through effective life-long CME. There is also a need to further strengthen our clinical quality assurance systems to monitor the quality of care provision, to detect areas of deficiency early and to institute timely action and where medical errors occur, it is necessary to ensure that investigations are adequately conducted and steps taken to prevent recurrences and where appropriate, to compensate those who have suffered.

SHORT COURSE IN HEALTH LAW & ETHICS

Prof SY Tan, Professor of Medicine and Adjunct Professor of Law was the course organiser and chief course instructor. "An inspiring, efficient, effective and entertaining lecturer", and "beyond very delightful and enlightening" were but some of the many compliments about him we gathered from the evaluation forms at the end of the course. He was on his feet, lecturing for as many as five hours a day! For those who have missed the Short Course, there is a consolation. Prof Tan has begun his book on medical negligence based on the lecture notes of the course. It is scheduled to be ready by end of 2001.

ETHICS CONVENTION

The two-day Convention started with the Practice Management symposium on "How To Charge Professional Fee". Useful advice on how much to charge for medicines, consultation fees and medical reports were dispensed to the participants, many whom have just started their own practice. This was followed by a lively debate on "The solo GP is ineffective in the delivery of primary healthcare in Singapore today" and more mini debates on the next day on controversial topics such as, "Doctors in practice should be competitors not colleagues" and "Whistle Blowing on our medical colleagues is undesirable". And for the finale, SMA assembled a panel of experts to discuss real cases at the symposium on "What to do when things had gone wrong".

These events will be reported in greater detail in subsequent issue of the SMA NEWS.

SMA LECTURE

The SMA Lecture 2000 entitled, "Medicine in the Digital Era: Challenges & Opportunities" was delivered by Emeritus Prof Feng Pao Hsii. In his citation of Prof Feng, A/Prof Low Cheng Hock described Prof Feng as "a gentleman, a scholar, and above all a great physician. Those who have been so fortunate enough to be under his tutelage will testify to his care and concern for their welfare, and his quiet gentleness for his patients. Prof Feng is truly a great physician, a resourceful researcher, and an excellent teacher." The Lecture is published in the November issue of SMJ. ■

ETHICS IN 2001-2002

Beginning Jan 2001, SMA CMEP, together with Tan Tock Seng Hospital and the Law Society of Singapore, will be organising monthly sessions on medical ethics and health law from 5.30pm to 7pm on the second Thursday of every month. These series will cover the entire spectrum of bioethics and health law in a practical and clinically relevant manner for medical practitioners and other health care personnel.

Certification of attendance will be issued to doctors who complete the entire series. **MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CME CALENDAR!** For more information about the topics that will be covered, visit our website at <http://www.sma.org.sg>.



One of the 4 Mini-Debates held over the 2-day Convention.