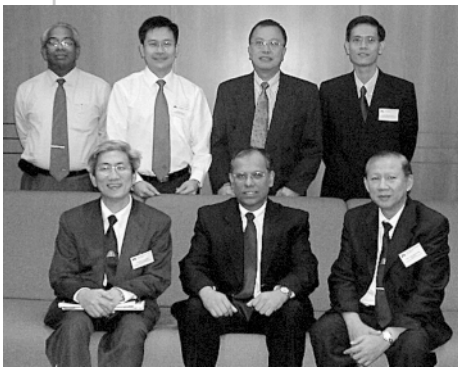


## Report on SMA 33<sup>rd</sup> National Medical Convention, 27 & 28 April 2002

The theme for this year's Convention was "Effective Health Screening – What You Must Know". As with previous years, the Convention consisted of a bilingual Public Forum and a Medical Symposium for healthcare professionals. The event, which was held on 27 and 28 April at the Suntec Convention Centre, attracted over 400 members of the public and doctors.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Dr Balaji Sadasivan, Minister of State for Health and Environment, delivered the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony. He highlighted that screening must be a continual process and not a "once off" project, and advised the public



*The Guest of Honour and Members of the SMA Council and the Convention Organizing Committee (from L-R, front): A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Balaji Sadasivan, Prof Low Cheng Hock; (from L-R, back): Dr Ivor Thevathasan, Dr Yue Wai Mun, Dr Toh Choon Lai (Organizing Chairman), Dr Tham Tat Yean (Organizing Co-Chairman).*



*The Q&A panel for the Mandarin Forum (from L-R): Dr Quan Wai Leong, Dr Tan Kok Leong, Dr Philip Yap Lin Kiat.*



*A participant having her bone density measured by a staff from Merck Sharp & Dome (MSD) during the free health screening exercise.*

to discuss with their doctors which screening tests are appropriate for them. He stressed the need for an economic balance between the cost of screening, diagnosing and treating patients, and the estimated expenditure on medical care if the disease was not diagnosed early through screening. He also urged doctors to be mindful of these guidelines when advising their patients on health screening.

Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Director of Medical Services, was the Guest of Honour at the Medical Symposium. He accentuated that screening must be in the context of a wider disease control framework for major non-communicable conditions. Recognizing the heightened public interest in recent years on the value of screening, which had led to a greater demand for health screening services, he advised doctors to be clear of the anticipated benefits versus the potential ill-effects of screening. He commented that the national screening programmes of MOH were a result of rigorous review of evidence by expert committees. He confirmed that a clinical practice guideline on health screening is in preparation.

### PUBLIC FORUM

A free health screening package was arranged for the first 100 public participants, and included a bone density measurement sponsored by Merck Sharp Dome (MSD), and blood sugar and cholesterol tests sponsored by the Singapore Anti-Tuberculosis Association (SATA). Allied healthcare professionals were present to help with the interpretation of their results. Those with abnormal results were advised to consult their family doctors. Following that was a series of health talks conducted in English and Mandarin, which provided information to the public participants on what effective general and cancer screening were about.

The speakers for the English forum were Dr Lee Chung Horn, Dr Christopher Lien, Dr Denis Cheong, Dr Ng Foo Cheong, Dr Mona Tan, and Dr Tay Eng Hseon. The session was chaired by A/Prof Goh Lee Gan.

The Mandarin speakers included Dr Quan Wai Leong, Dr Philip Yap, Prof Seow Cheon, Dr Chia Sing Joo, Dr Tan Yah Yuen, and Dr Koh Chung Fai. The session was chaired by Dr Tan Kok Leong.

### MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM

On the following day was a symposium for the medical and para-medical professionals. The majority of attendees were family physicians. A key message was highlighted – it is important for the healthcare profession not to be swept away by commercialisation and market demand for screening packages, but to anchor on screening modalities that have been shown to be effective from clinical evidences. The second part of the programme was focused on the effectiveness of screening for colorectal, prostate, breast and cervical cancers. The speakers were A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, Dr Noor Hafizah, Prof Adrian Leong, Dr Christopher Cheng, Dr Wee Siew Bock, and Dr Ho Tew Hong. The session was chaired by A/Prof Goh Lee Gan.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This year's Convention had been most successful. We would like to record our sincere thanks and gratitude to all our speakers for their time; the Convention Organising Committee members and the SMA Secretariat staff for their hard work; the National Healthcare Group (NHG) for its generous sponsorship; the exhibitors and advertisers for their generous contributions; and our distinguished guests and audience for their participation, without which this Convention could not possibly have been realized.

DR TOH CHOON LAI

Organizing Chairman

Convention Organizing Committee ■

### Editor's Note:

*The presentation slides of all the speakers are available at <http://www.sma.org.sg/whatsnew/convention2002/index.html>*

*Copies of the convention magazines which contain the synopses of all the talks are still available. If you wish to obtain a copy, please contact Ms Ng Wee Fong from SMA at Tel: 6223 1264 or Email: weefong@sma.org.sg*