

A Guy's Politically Incorrect (But Honest, Lah!) View of "Why there should be women in Medicine"

MEDICAL EDUCATION

Women are great. We need them from Day One of medical school, and not just in the profession as doctors. Female medics are essential because:

1. They take notes that all the guys use so that males can skip lectures, tutorials, laboratory and dissection classes, and still pass medical school.
2. Someone in the clinical group has to carry all the *barang-barang* needed for a full neurological examination.
3. They can go to the office of some soft-hearted male lecturer one day before the exam, cry hysterically, and the lecturer will give an important tip for the next day's exam without fail.
4. Someone has got to get the distinctions out there.
5. We need free chaperones.

JUNIOR DOCTORS

Once you graduate, the need for women doctors is even more greatly felt because someone has to:

1. Talk to relatives in more than monosyllabic grunts, which is what most males do after a long day.
2. Prove that some cosmetic firms' claims that their lipstick or hairspray lasts 24 hours are not unwarranted. Seeing a fellow HO / MO with bright crimson lipstick at four in the morning, hair in place, dressed in on-call *baju*, stiletto heels clicking in the corridors of an old hospital like Alexandra Hospital can be an eerie encounter.
3. Conscientiously take social history like: "Does the lift in your HDB flat stop on the floor you stay in?" I know at least two women doctors who regularly attempt to take social and family history from psychotic patients.
4. *Jaga* the ward when you, as the male HO / MO, have been tasked to perform that all-important task during a call – buy supper for the stay-in on-call team.

DEFENCE

Who do you think is going to run our hospitals when we men get called up for NS / reservist duties if war breaks out? Foreign talent?

UNWANTED JOBS

Someone out there has got to do the "unglamorous" jobs – histopathologists, microbiologists, virologists (until SARS), health educators, and so on, while the men make the real money like performing plastic surgery on women. Last I heard, there are now two female doctors in forensic medicine. I guess they must have drop-dead looks.

LOOKS AND BRAINS

Some women in medicine are one reason why people believe beauty and brains can go together. For example, the current President of the Association of Women Doctors has an intellect that can pound a man's brains to mush. If not, her looks will. This lady can single-handedly start an epistaxis epidemic in the Alumni *Agong's* room.

GREAT MOTHERS

Women doctors make great mothers! I know of a consultant physician-mother (MBBS, MRCP, MMed (Int Med), FAMS, W.I.F.E of FRCS, and so on) who prepared for her first confinement by reading "Handbook on Neonatal ICU Care". Talk about being prepared.

SELF-DISCOVERY

But before they become mothers, they need to be educated and a medical education is great for self-discovery. In the days when there was cadaveric dissection by medical students (circa 800 BC when Brad Pitt was Achilles), a certain group of three male and three female students was given a female cadaver to dissect. Arriving at the region of the female genitalia, a certain argument broke out between the sexes. The females (who were dissecting their kind) thought that a certain structure was the clitoris. The males thought otherwise. After some heated debate and a reference to the anatomy atlas, the male members of the dissection table were proven right. I am happy to note that despite this traumatic incident, at least one female from this group is now happily married with kids, and none of them has joined a celibate religious order.

LEGIBLE CASENOTES

We need women doctors because once every few days, it's nice, if not critical, to have doctors' entries in case sheets that are readable.

RISK MANAGEMENT OF SMART WOMEN

Let's face it. We need to put these wonderfully smart women to some gainful use. If not, they may be dangerous to the average Singaporeans minding their own business. If they don't become doctors, they may become high-powered lawyers, administrative officers, or worse, health news journalists.

GOOD ANYTIME

It's a great job for a woman regardless of one's marital and social status:

1. If you are single
Medicine is great for single women sensitive to today's pressures to get married. With the title "Dr", no one knows if one is married or not.
2. If you are pregnant
An OT *baju* or ICU scrub can hide your gravid uterus until at least seven months' gestation, if not full-term.
3. If you are married
One of the best jobs for females with families to look after is the locum's super-flexible working hours. Good income with great hours. What more can one ask for?
4. If you are an unmarried mother after a torrid affair... Combining (1), (2) and (3), and there you have it, life goes on.

SMA NEWS EDITORIAL BOARD

Finally, we need woman doctors in the *SMA News* Editorial Board to prevent such Male Chauvinist Pig articles from being printed. ■
(Written in 29 minutes.)