

# The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



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Editor

The first case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was diagnosed in Singapore on 23 January 2020 and we have seen multiple changes in every aspect of our lives over the past few weeks. All doctors would have faced changes in our practices; for example, being deployed to screen suspect cases, being restricted to a single institution and managing resources carefully (especially the supply of masks!) Families, particularly those with more than one healthcare worker, are mindful of cross-contamination in cases where the healthcare workers work in different institutions. Fellow parents worry about infection control measures put in place at schools and childcare centres. Fellow caregivers worry about protecting those under their care, especially the elderly. Everyone had a vague worry about groceries and toilet paper supplies. I see that our collective biggest enemy is **misinformation**.

Those of you who are on social media would be aware of the myriad of posts, videos and articles being shared without discrimination. I urge all doctors to put on your

critical thinking hat and evaluate what's being said, and to refer to the authorities (academic, clinical and political leaderships) for reliable information. Every one of us is a leader in our own right – to our clinic staff, juniors, extended families and neighbours.

Doctors in private practice have a different kind of problem. It's true what my seniors had warned me about before I ventured into private practice. The business aspects are challenging. The Lunar New Year period, together with COVID-19, generally decreased the number of patients.

Financial planning is an essential life skill that was never taught in school. "Adulting" is hard and we all have to learn along the way – filing personal taxes, obtaining rebates, budgeting, figuring out why there are so many kinds of insurances, and planning for retirement. It's way beyond coins in a coin bank, and there's no longer a smiley squirrel mascot! This issue of *SMA News* hopes to shed some light on the financial aspects in life and medical business.

Dr Tan is learning new skills and stretching new boundaries in her private practice. Meanwhile, she still juggles the commitments of being a doctor, a wife, the *SMA News* Editor, the Vice-President of the SMA and a mother of three. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.

Dr Kenneth Lyen's article comes at a good time. Among all the publicity about COVID-19, are you aware of the resurgence of dengue fever in Singapore? Or the critical levels of blood stored in the blood bank?

My take-home message is that as doctors, let's remember to put patients at the heart of everything we do. Let's not get swept up or distracted by social media, but remember to focus our time and attention to good patient care.

For doctors, for patients. ♦