

NEW HOBBIES, NEW EXPERIENCES

Upon publication of this month's column, Christmas would be well underway in the UK. Among the many festivities, Christmas holds a special place in the UK. Giant Christmas trees are set up in the heart of city centres, colourful lights adorn every nook and cranny, and my personal favourite – the vibrant Christmas markets with stalls selling all sorts of Christmas goodies and crafts! It is hard not to be infected with the joyous spirit of Christmas this time of the year. With our hearts full of the comfort and warmth Christmas promises, allow me to share some of the highlights from the Singapore

Medical Society of the United Kingdom's (SMSUK) activities in the past months.

Back in summer, we held our highly-anticipated orientation camp for first-year medical students – Med(UK) ated'21 OCamp. This year's OCamp was centred around the theme of cells, and freshmen were split into groups named Red Blood Cells, Neurones, Dendritic Cells... you get the idea. Lasting three days and held over Zoom, participants led by their orientation group leaders (OGLs) played a myriad of games to earn points for their groups. The SMSUK committee was blown away by the teamwork and creativity

demonstrated by our first years during the games, mascot design contest and cheer creations. OCamp was a success made possible by the passion and dedication of the organising committee, positive energy and support from the OGLs, and effervescent enthusiasm of our freshmen. It was our pleasure to organise this event and we wish them all the best on their exciting journey as we warmly welcome them to our wonderful SMSUK family!

At around the same time, SMSUK also organised our three-in-one event – a combination of our Freshers, Members and Alumni Gathering (FMA), Pre-departure Talk (PDT) and Dental Dinner (DD) titled FMA-PDT-DD-21. Having three concurrent events held in a single Zoom meeting brought together many participants and speakers from various backgrounds. Through FMA-PDT-DD 21, our freshmen were able to gain valuable tips from their seniors before embarking on their journey to the UK. Through the same event, our medical and dental members were also able to hear insights and advice from clinicians practising in Singapore and the UK on issues surrounding the medical and dental landscape in both countries.

In line with year-end reflections, we invited members to share with us some of the hobbies they picked up in the UK.

Chin Sue-Kay,
Editor, SMSUK



Med(UK) ated'21 OCamp



Text by Ashwin Venkatakrishnan

Ashwin is a Year 3 medical student at the Imperial College London.

A new hobby I picked up in the UK was squash. I had played tennis as my co-curricular activity in high school and initially planned to continue playing it in university. However, my experience during my first social tennis session in London drove me to reconsider the decision. Having arrived from hot and humid Singapore just a week before, I was completely unprepared for the chilly and windy conditions that met me on the outdoor courts. I was then motivated to switch to a similar racquet sport that was played in a warm indoor environment and squash fits the bill perfectly!

I joined a couple of taster sessions held by my college club and was quickly hooked. Being able to ricochet the ball off the side walls added a whole new dimension to the game. I also saw it as a golden opportunity to remain fit, since the shorter dimensions of the court

meant that the ball came back pretty quickly and there was less time to “rest” between shots as compared to tennis.

Joining the club was also an ideal way for me to get acquainted with students from other medic groups, years and even courses. On top of forging new friendships and strengthening old ones, it also helped me enter my college family! Having skipped my “Mums & Dads” get-together for another hall event (free food, yay!), I was pleasantly surprised to meet my “Dad” for the first time at the squash court (who fortunately forgave my transgression)!

My past two years in squash have been a lot of fun, but with social activities reopening this year, I plan to try out other societies with an open mind. My entry into squash was pretty serendipitous, so who knows what new hobby I will pick up this year!



Text by Sammi Lim

Sammi is a Year 2 medical student at the University of Manchester.

Since beginning medical school, I have learnt over time the importance of maintaining both a healthy mind and body, through recharging and rejuvenation. I have since explored various ways of accomplishing that, in the form of exercising and cooking healthy meals.

The upcoming semester promises to be challenging with the sheer amount of content to be covered. To cope with that, I started going for yoga classes at my university in order to keep fit and relieve stress. I enjoy how the yoga sessions allow me to empty my mind while doing some stretches, inversions and simple exercises. I always feel really refreshed after attending these yoga classes and have made it a point to attend at least two each week. I am glad to have discovered the supportive yoga community and forged new friendships through my new hobby.

Apart from exercise, I have also been learning to cook healthily this year with the help of cookbooks. A healthy gut equates to a healthy mind! I have been on a plant-based diet for many years now and I know the importance of having a balanced diet with sufficient nutritional intake. This means that I have to be open to trying out different types of fruits, vegetables and other plant-based products. My cooking skills have definitely improved since starting university, but there is still much room for improvement. When I am cooking while listening to my music playlist, it helps me to relax and unwind from studying.

Medical school life is hectic and sometimes stressful. I am grateful for my new hobbies as they have been instrumental in helping me cope with the daily grind and adding colour to my university life. ♦

