

The EDITOR'S MUSINGS



Tan Yia Swam

Editor

Close friends and followers of *SMA News* would be aware that I was overseas in France for the past eight months or so. After the delivery of my third child, the kids and I took off to join my husband on his Health Manpower Development Plan trip, and I had a taste of being a SAHM (stay-at-home-mum). I want to thank Tina and Tze Lee for holding the fort while I was away; I must also thank our very capable staff, Sylvia and Jo-Ann, for continuing to produce the monthly issues despite tight deadlines.

While overseas, we experienced their local healthcare – hubby as a provider, and us as patients when we brought the baby for vaccinations. We have returned with a deeper appreciation of the pros of Singapore healthcare, but also with some thoughts on aspects which we could adopt. Also, we no longer take the efficiency and convenience of our everyday living in Singapore for granted.

In Singapore, we are fortunate to have easy access to medical care, including GPs, polyclinics and even specialists. The locally imposed key performance indicator of a waiting time not exceeding two weeks for a first visit to a specialist clinic is remarkable. However, we need to take care to use this system wisely.

I have been following the news and discussions on increasing healthcare costs, insurance changes and also investigations into claims. How can we, as a society, be mature enough not to try to game the system, and overcome the mentality of “since I’m 100% covered, I might as well get everything checked while I’m here”? How can we, the medical profession, protect patients and ourselves from such abuse? Should we take back the ownership and control of costing and finances from administrators?

These are just some food for thought. We can surely do better, but only if we put in the effort to effect the changes.

At the SMA Annual Dinner last month, the SMA Honorary Membership was conferred on Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong. The SMA continues to work closely together with the Ministry and other professional bodies to improve healthcare services and we look forward to more collaborative projects and honest discussions on current issues that affect the profession.

Enjoy, and do write in to us at news@sma.org.sg if you have an opinion, a joke or an interesting hobby to share! ♦

Dr Tan is a consultant at the Breast Department of KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital. She continues to juggle the commitments of being a doctor, a wife, the *SMA News* Editor and the increased duties of a mother of three. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.