



Breaths are Air and More

THE NUS MEDICINE AND LITERATURE SOCIETY

Text by Ching Ann Hui, Francine Wang and Loh Li Ann | Photos by NUS Med&Lit

The humanities and clinical science are two sides of the same coin. Without either, our care for patients would be incomplete.

National University of Singapore (NUS) Med&Lit, or NUS Medicine and Literature Society in full, is a student interest group founded in 2016 to introduce the medical humanities to students. Here at NUS Med&Lit, we recognise the difficulty in comprehending each patient's illness as our own, and aim to tap on literature as a conduit through which we may understand human experiences in the medical field.

Thus far, NUS Med&Lit has reached out to medical students through various sessions, including:

- Discussion on Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* with Dr Derek Heng from National University Hospital (NUH) Department of Emergency Medicine
- Lecture on Medicine in Literature, Art and Music by Prof Kua Ee Heok from NUH Department of Psychiatry
- Dialogue with A/Prof Philip lau on his book *The Long Ride from Singapore*, a serious reflection on breast cancer masquerading as a humorous travel memoir



- *Movies and Psychiatry* with Changi General Hospital's Department of Psychiatry
- Outing to watch *Grandmother Tongue*, a play by W!LD RICE on the generation gap and how language isolates yet connects
- Discussion with A/Prof Susan Ang from NUS Department of Literature on the depiction of disease in poetry
- Open mic showcase of poetry and prose by our own NUS Med&Lit members

We believe our activities serve as a reminder of the importance of providing patient-centric care beyond an axiom and that empathy ought to go beyond a buzzword.

While NUS Med&Lit is still young, the support we have received has been beyond our expectations. This, perhaps, is a showing of the untapped desire for the humanities in medicine, a gap that cannot be bridged by the wholly scientific. While compassion is emphasised by its showing, we should aim instead for its being. ♦

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Legend

1. Prof Kua Ee Heok discusses the importance of humanities in medicine
2. Students discuss *Man's Search for Meaning*

Left to right: Loh Li Ann, Ching Ann Hui, and Francine Wang are year 3 students at NUS Medicine.



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