

THE EDITOR'S MUSINGS



You must have heard *ad nauseum* by now the complaint: “the holidays are too close together!” (I’m sorry but I just had to say it once again.) The sound of “Jingle Bells” playing in malls was quickly replaced by that of “Auld Lang Syne” (which lasted two days) before quickly turning into “Dong Dong Qiang”. The weirdest version I have heard so far in the shopping mall is a soundtrack of Lunar New Year songs performed with handbells – a strange blend of Christmas and the Lunar New Year.

In our multicultural Singapore, I believe we celebrate and respect the festivities of all the races and religions. Some common themes of such major festivals include family, goodwill and thanksgiving.

This February issue highlights humanitarian efforts undertaken by our colleagues. I think the pieces here should be made compulsory reading for all medical students, jaded doctors, as well as doctors and patients who complain too much. After reading through them, it was difficult not to cry for the pain and suffering that people in some parts of the world are experiencing, especially victims of war, famine and/or natural disasters. I am full of admiration for the colleagues and staff who have served or are serving in these areas. I am also thankful for the peace and prosperity in our country, and for my own job stability. One small New Year’s resolution: I must not complain the next time some administrative problem arises in my clinic!

Our Feature article is an interview with Dr Vivien Lim, an endocrinologist who has been heavily involved in humanitarian work beyond the call of duty. She is the peer coordinator of Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF]) in Singapore. Dr Lim Chin Siah also shares his experience serving with MSF, in the Kunduz Trauma Centre in northeast Afghanistan from 2013 to 2014.

Dr Natarajan Rajaraman replies to Dr Alex Wong’s piece on the dilemma of medical leave that was published in the August 2016 issue of *SMA News*, with a well-written and referenced article on how such a situation might have arisen from local laws and regulations. Dr Joanna Chan and Dr Dennis Chia draw on their experience in treating foreign workers and provide some practical tips on how one can best help this underprivileged group of patients.

Dr Lawrence Soh writes on his decades of experience in contributing to charity and humanitarian work: from providing money, supplies and time, to personally venturing out there.

Enjoy reading this with a cup of joe, as we end on a light-hearted note with Dr Daniel Fung’s piece on his lifelong fascination with my second favourite beverage (after alcohol!).

I wish you good health, good wealth and much happiness in this year of the Fire Rooster. ♦

Dr Tan Yia Swam 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 mother, a wife and the increased duties of *SMA News* Editor. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.

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