



Medical Expert Witness Training 2017

Text by Jasmine Soo, Executive, Event and Committee Support

The Medical Expert Witness Training held its third consecutive run this year over a span of three Saturdays: 24 June at the Academia and 15 July and 29 July at the State Courts. This training is a joint collaboration between the medical and legal professions, namely SMA; Academy of Medicine, Singapore; Singapore Academy of Law; the Law Society of Singapore; and State Courts of Singapore.

This year's training had 53 participants and they were from various healthcare specialties, such as general medicine, emergency medicine, forensic pathology and orthopaedic surgery, among others. The faculty comprised a team of judges, lawyers and medical trainers.

The Medical Expert Witness Training provides medical practitioners with the opportunity to experience role play sessions in actual courtrooms. This enables them to acquire the knowledge and skills in writing medical reports, be aware of pitfalls when giving oral evidence in court as an expert witness, and to acquire practical skills by being directly observed and coached in providing oral evidence in court.

Day 1 of the training commenced with an opening address by Justice Choo Han

Teck and the training session covered the following topics: In General – Medical Expert, Instructions and Writing an Expert Report; Preparing for Court and Professional Issues; Testifying in Court – What to Expect and Courtroom Skills; Common Pitfalls in Writing Expert Reports; and Drafting an Expert Report.

Participants were provided with case scenarios and were tasked to write and submit reports based on their assigned role as either the plaintiff or defendant expert. The reports were then reviewed and marked by the faculty and returned to the participants.

Days 2 and 3 focused more on the role playing sessions. Day 2 started off with General session – Reviewing the Assignment and Common Errors Made, conducted by Ms Kuah Boon Theng and Mr Edmund Kronenburg, followed by the first role play session. Day 3 began with the second role play session, followed by the debrief conducted by Ms Kuah Boon Theng and Mr Edmund Kronenburg. The closing address and presentation ceremony was then hosted by District Judge Tan Boon Heng, and finally, the Address was delivered by Master, Dr S R E Sayampanathan.

The training garnered positive feedback from the participants, which included – “The marking of the paper exercise were detailed and enlightening. Appreciate the multiple reviews and effort in making it very realistic. This course will help to improve my practice.” and “Time on the stand was quite an experience. District Judge Constance Tay and Dr Joseph Sheares gave a lot of useful feedback, and Mr Siraj Omarl and Mr Leong Kah Wah were great. Thank you to all judges, trainers and organisers.”

We would like to thank all district judges, lawyers, medical trainers and participants for taking time off to conduct and participate in the training, and for making it a fruitful and enriching experience for everyone present. This training would not have been possible without the assistance, teamwork and dedication from all faculty members and the five collaborating professional bodies. ♦

Legend

1. From left to right: Mr Gregory Vijayendran, Dr T Thirumoorthy, Dr S R E Sayampanathan, Ms Wong Peck, Justice Choo Han Teck, Ms Kuah Boon Theng, Dr Wong Tien Hua and Dr Joseph Sheares

2. Ms Kuah Boon Theng presenting the token of appreciation to Mr Siraj Omarl

