



Embracing INTERNATIONALISATION

“Could you please call the translator?”

There are times (especially in the middle of a busy clinic) when being a regional medical hub has its disadvantages. The effect of foreign patients on the Singapore healthcare system has previously been the subject of debate, but one cannot deny that it is an opportunity to help and heal a wider population of patients beyond our shores. The pursuit of healthcare excellence has made Singapore a regional centre for medical excellence, and despite its rising healthcare costs, Singapore is still one of the destinations of choice for healthcare tourism in the region. Dr Loo Choon Yong, executive chairman and co-founder of Raffles Medical Group, among his myriad of achievements, has done more than most to internationalise Singapore healthcare and it is our privilege to publish his thoughts and words shared at the SMA Lecture 2017.

“Can you say ‘open reduction internal fixation’ in Bengali/ Arabic/Burmese?”

Most foreign patients are not in our consultation rooms or wards by choice. It is often a life-changing moment for a migrant worker when he or she sustains an injury or contracts an illness while in Singapore. It is our duty as physicians to be kind to these patients who help to build our country and care for our families, and to ensure that they receive the best possible medical care. Sometimes, this involves safeguarding their rights and dealing with the ethical issues and challenges that they may face. In this issue, we describe three case studies that raise some considerations such as standard of care, the role of employers in the decision-making process and medical repatriation. We also feature an event report on the Annual National Medicolegal Seminar 2017.

Just like how overseas fellowships and courses allow us to broaden our



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Jonathan Tan
Guest Editor

horizons, the chance to experience a foreign healthcare system from a patient's point of view is also an opportunity to see the strengths and shortcomings of Singapore's healthcare system. Drs Tan Yia Swam and Wong Tien Hua describe their experiences in France and Canada, respectively, while Dr Chong Yeh Woei describes his experience closer to home. Finally, Dr Mark Wong, a consultant colorectal surgeon, writes about his South African safari adventure.

The Christmas holidays are a time of good cheer and a chance to reunite with old friends. We at the SMA hope to continue to showcase events that are close to our Members' hearts. With that, we wish our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! ♦