

The Editors' Musings

DR TINA TAN

Editor

Dr Tan's secret identity is that of a self-published author with four fantasy books, a children's book, and most recently, a vampire book. Conversely, she tells her readers that her secret identity is that she is a doctor. In truth, she has no idea how she juggles all of this, including her family life. Perhaps she has a clone somewhere who does all her "extra stuff", including managing the beast that is social media. If you want to find out what she is up to, check out @lindalingwrites on Instagram.



Once upon a time, a girl devoured books to cope with stress. She, as George RR Martin said, "lived a thousand lives through fiction". She tried her hand at writing but did not get anywhere, because she wanted to focus on her career. Then she became a psychiatrist and realised that being a reader and writer helped her understand her patients better. She had already lived a thousand lives, which let her see through her patients' eyes even more clearly. She picked up writing once again and found that her life experiences made her a better writer. By the time you read this, she will have published her sixth fiction book as a form of creative self-expression, in the hopes of touching someone else's life beyond the clinical confines of her consult room.

That girl is me.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that art can help doctors be more empathetic and less likely to experience burnout.^{1,2,3,4,5} Also, according to Oscar Wilde, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, as you can tell by my blatant partial use of the famous opening line from the classic, *Pride and Prejudice*.

This issue is not meant to celebrate those who have achieved great things with their art (though we certainly laud those who have), but to celebrate those who use their art in their day-to-day practice, whether to cope with stress, to relieve a patient's suffering, or to simply connect better with another soul. Therefore, it is my sincerest hope that anyone who reads this issue will recognise that art is just as crucial to medicine as medicine is itself.

Finally, I would like to welcome Dr Yap Qi Rou to our Editorial Board. Dr Yap is a

medical officer and can therefore provide on-the-ground perspectives and insights on issues relating to junior doctors. Welcome, Dr Yap.

References

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3. Engel T, Gowda D, Sandhu JS, Banerjee S. Art Interventions to Mitigate Burnout in Health Care Professionals: A Systematic Review. *Perm J* 2023; 27(2):184-94.
4. Glatter R. Can Art Heal Our Healers? *Forbes* [Internet]. 17 March 2019. Available at: <https://bit.ly/49IMLBI>.
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Dr Tan's published books

DR LIM ING HAAN

Guest Editor

Dr Lim is the first female interventional cardiologist in Singapore. She is an early adopter of new technology and is a key opinion leader in international cardiology conferences. She shares a clinic with her twin, Dr Lim Ing Ruen, an ENT surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Hospital. Both believe in the power of food, travel, laughter and loyalty in forming strong family bonding.



This issue features doctors involved in the arts and highlights the complex interaction between medicine and art.

The art of the practice of medicine refers to how doctors interact with patients and their relatives. It is a complex interplay between the art of diagnosis, of communicating and of dispensing care. Diagnosis and treatment can be taught, but patients' responses vary, and the effective doctor is one who can establish a unique connection with the patient. Looking through the lens of art can influence the humanities of the practice of medicine. In this issue, we witness how parallel interests in theatre, illustration and calligraphy have sown the path for some of our colleagues. They have each cultivated their personal interests in different art forms, and become more introspective, empathetic and attentive in the practice of medicine.

I would also think of art as medicine. Art offers an outlet for the expression of emotions and engaging the disparate parts

of our consciousness. The "Faculty of Medicine Shield Theatre" is an annual performance by the medical students, giving them a platform for artistic expression. Many of our colleagues are great dancers, talented musicians and prolific writers. Their creativity allows them to be recognised, discerned and heard beyond the field of medicine. Their works give them a narrative to pave the way for humane doctoring.

Not many know that Dr Wong Tien Hua volunteers on the National Arts Council (Singapore). In this issue, Dr Wong shares with readers his experience in promoting art. Far fewer are aware that our Editor, Dr Tina Tan, is a published author of a series of fantasy books. To all the fans of the world of fantasy, do visit Dr Tan's social media page! Happy reading to all, especially those who collect art, create art and enjoy art. Finally, I wish everyone a Happy Chinese New Year of the Dragon! ♦

Welcome On Board

Dr Yap Qi Rou is a medical officer rotating through the public healthcare sector. She is a medical alumnus of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, creating art and travelling.

Greetings to the readers of *SMA News* and fellow healthcare professionals, and thank you to the SMA Editorial Board for so warmly welcoming me onto the team.

With the shift in Singapore's healthcare towards preventative care and more initiatives to get the younger crowd to take charge of their health at an earlier age, I look forward to exploring the changing healthcare landscape with everyone. May everyone have a good year ahead and I hope to touch on topics that everyone can relate to! ♦

