

# The Editors' Musings

## DR TINA TAN

Editor

Dr Tan is a psychiatrist in private practice and an alumnus of Duke-NUS Medical School. She treats mental health conditions in all age groups but has a special interest in caring for the elderly. With a love for the written word, she makes time for reading, writing and self-publishing on top of caring for her patients and loved ones.



The April issue of *SMA News* focused on longevity. This issue, we carry on with a similar theme, focusing on the dismally inevitable fact that our friendly and helpful reproductive hormones will abandon us as we age.

Perimenopause and menopause are covered enough in mainstream media, social media and medical school, such that Dr Stella Sugianto's article should read like a refresher to most. It is Dr Koh Soon Hock's article on andropause that I wish to highlight, where he emphasises the importance of reducing the stigma for men to seek help.

GPs and wives, take note.

Yes, the topics are depressing. Imagine my reaction when I read Dr Sugianto's statement that, "Around 80% of women experience

hot flushes during menopause, with 25% reporting severe and debilitating symptoms. The median duration of these symptoms is seven years."

*Seven years.* What am I supposed to do with that delightful nugget of information?

The silver lining is... I can do a lot. It is not all doom and gloom, because as both Dr Sugianto and Dr Koh point out in their respective articles, the key is awareness, appropriate treatments tailored for the individual and lifestyle changes. I am doing my part. I have started training with weights. Working out is hard work, as I often whine to my husband, but if it comes with a better quality of life, I will do it.

What about you?

## DR CHIE ZHI YING

Deputy Editor

Dr Chie is a family physician working in the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics and is a Fellow of the College of Family Physicians Singapore. She also holds a Master of Public Health from the National University of Singapore and is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health. She enjoys freelance writing and has written for Chinese dailies *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Shin Min Daily News* and health magazine *Health No. 1*.



As a family physician seeing patients with a myriad of health issues, I see patients with their fair share of queries regarding women's and men's health. For female patients, irregular menstrual cycles is one of the most overt symptoms showing that they are transitioning to menopause. Some are frustrated by the ever-unpredictable menstrual cycles and the fact that they have to grapple with the multitude of common menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes, insomnia, body aches and mood swings.

For male patients, the symptoms are more subtle; they might complain about reduced energy levels and would question whether they were undergoing andropause. Some would also request for a testosterone level test to be done as part of their health screening.

In all cases, remaining empathetic, supportive and non-judgemental is crucial

to allowing patients to feel comfortable sharing their health woes, which aids physicians in diagnosing and managing their conditions properly.

In this issue, we are delighted to have Dr Stella Sugianto, an O&G consultant from KK Women's and Children's Hospital, share with us about perimenopause and menopause, and the lifestyle recommendations and treatment for them. We are also privileged to have Dr Koh Soon Hock, a urology consultant at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, shed light on andropause and its management.

On a lighter note, it is heartwarming to read reflections from Dr Tan Chin Yee, a current house officer, on how the lessons he learnt from his National Service days can be applied to tackling housemanship. We also have Dr Yap Qi Rou share with us her interesting trip to Finland and Norway to chase the aurora. ♦