

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.



Our 2025 Doctors-in-Training (DIT) issue is a robust one, prepared in conjunction with the SMA DIT Committee chaired by Dr Ivan Low. We have featured a range of topics, from the Hospital Clinician scheme (which I never even knew existed until I read about it), to manpower planning (roster monsters, anyone?), to the role of food and superstitions in the lives of junior doctors.

SMA has played an active part in advocating for trainees and junior doctors over the years and continues to do so through the dedicated efforts of Dr Low and his

team. More information about what the DIT Committee has been doing these few years can be found in Dr Low's Feature article.

While older readers may think, "Junior doctor issues are not relevant to me anymore", here is something to mull over: someday, these same juniors will be taking care of us. Let us continue to care for them too.

And to junior doctors reading this: we are trying. I hope you know this and appreciate it, and return the favour to your juniors in the future.

DR IVAN LOW

Guest Editor

Dr Low is a Navy medical officer and A&E senior resident. He is an SMA Council member, and has a passion for public health, community outreach and medical education. In his spare time, he can be found relaxing at the park with his loved ones, his dog, and a cup of *kopi c peng* (*siew siew dai*).



Our early years in this profession are often marked by long hours, steep learning curves, and the constant balancing of professional and personal demands. The pressures of clinical work and training – whether as a house officer, medical officer, resident or hospital clinician – are compounded by manpower constraints, evolving patient expectations and the need to adapt quickly to new systems of care. It is in these formative years as a junior doctor that support, mentorship and thoughtful organisational practices make the greatest difference.

This issue of *SMA News* is dedicated to the challenges and opportunities junior doctors face today. We begin with a guide to stepping up at work, offering practical insights on taking responsibility and developing leadership skills. Recognising that rostering is often a pain point, we also feature tips for departments on optimising medical manpower, with suggestions that balance service needs with training and well-being.

Looking outward, we explore global trends and affairs, from workforce migration to

improving health literacy among our patients, and how these impact junior doctors in Singapore. Closer to home, we highlight new career pathways such as the Hospital Clinician scheme, giving junior doctors a clearer view of the options available to them as they stand at the crossroads.

Our reflections on housemanship across generations provide a poignant reminder that while the context of practice has changed, the spirit of perseverance and camaraderie remains timeless. Finally, we shine a light on the softer but no less important aspects of culture – food traditions to be aware of on a night call, and related rituals that sustain us through the toughest hours.

We hope that this collection of articles from the SMA DIT Committee not only resonates with junior doctors but also inspires the wider profession to continue shaping a supportive, resilient and forward-looking medical community. ♦