

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.



Did you know that there is a musical group called Meditunes? Or that Gleneagles Hospital was home to the Singing Doctor's Society? Neither did I.

This month's offerings feature two of our musically talented colleagues, Dr Ellie Choi and Dr Bertha Woon, who each share about their skills beyond medicine and how they nurture their artistic sides. Dr Choi's write-up, in particular, contains tongue-in-cheek advice for doctors attempting to nurture the same talents in their children and themselves.

We have also included a variety of other topics – from a childhood reflection by Dr Tan Su-Ming to heartfelt commemorations of two medical giants who, for various reasons, have left a profound impact during their illustrious careers. Then, there are also the thorny subjects of medical certificates in telemedicine and durian parties (I absolutely intend the pun).

Enjoy.

DR LIM ING RUEN

Guest Editor

Dr Lim is an otorhinolaryngologist and rhinologist with fellowship training from the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn). She runs a private practice in Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre. Other than being on the Operating Room Committee and the Proton Therapy Tumor Board, she is also into art appreciation.



July marks the start of the second half of the year when most people have returned from a relaxing mid-year holiday. In tune with this light-hearted period, this issue features doctors who are multitasked in both the rigorous field of medicine and the ritualistic field of performance arts.

The performing arts are a powerful form of communication. They are dynamic art forms ranging from theatre to dance to comedy to music. Artists weave a dramatic narrative with their voices, bodies or instruments. One might think that dramatic communication and the practice of medicine are two polarising ideas. However, that is far from being the truth. Medicine is both a delicate art and a hard science. The accomplished physician hones the art of showmanship with a practised tone, body language and active listening skills. Effective communication is the cornerstone of compliance and successful delivery of treatment.

Performing artists are also sensitive listeners. History abounds with famous

musician-doctors. Dr Rene Laennec (1781–1826), French physician and flautist, was the inventor of the stethoscope and the father of clinical auscultation. Dr Leopold Auenbrugger, Austrian physician and composer, discovered in 1754 that percussion of the chest could reveal hidden fluids or tumours. Dr Theodor Billroth (1829–1894), German surgeon and musician, is widely regarded as the father of modern abdominal surgery (famous for pioneering the Billroth I and II gastrectomy procedures) and was a close confidante of composer Johannes Brahms, who dedicated his two *Opus 51* string quartets to Billroth. Tao Hongjing (456–536), courtesy name Tongming, was a Chinese alchemist, astronomer, calligrapher, military general, musician, physician and pharmacologist during the Northern and Southern dynasties period. A good listener makes a good doctor. A sensitive listener makes an exceptional doctor.

With this issue, we celebrate our talented, musically inclined physicians among us. ♦