

SMA NEWS



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THE HUMAN SIDE OF MEDICINE



**Lee Kuan Yew
1923 - 2015**

The Human Side

By Dr Tan Yia Swam, Editor

TIME FLIES. It's a cliché, I know, but I continue to be amazed by how fast the days have passed – we were just getting ready for Christmas, then we had to take down the tree. Next was the countdown to 2015, followed by Valentine's Day, and then the Year of the Horse crossed into that of the Goat just like that. Maybe it's me getting older, maybe it's the fact that we see the sick and dying in our line of work – but I have never been more aware than ever to SLOW DOWN and appreciate life and those dearest to me.

In this issue, we focus on the human aspect of medicine. When it comes to the crunch, we are all humans. Not counting the minor ailments that I consulted polyclinic doctors for, I have been a patient five times. It is distinctly disconcerting to be on “the other side”. Long ago, I decided that when I became a patient, I would jolly well be a model one and not interfere with medical treatment. It helps that we have had a great team of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who inspire nothing but trust, and I entrusted myself and my family into their hands.

Dr Audrey Looi tells a deeply personal story on how she set up a charity, iC2 PrepHouse, to help children (and their families) with significant eye conditions that cause impaired vision. Dr Ivan Lin writes about his travails with a major illness, and the life lessons he has learnt. I thank both of them for sharing their journeys and heartaches – you are not alone. I hope that other fellow doctor-patients will one day feel ready to reveal your own story as patients. It is a unique struggle we face – that when “bad things” happen, there's just no way to sugarcoat it. Side effects, abnormal scans, risks, prognoses: we know. It's only by reaching out to each other as fellow humans in suffering, that the pain gets easier to bear.

Of course, we don't just connect in times of grief and tragedy – there are many happier occasions when we come together to celebrate as well. Prof Foo Keong Tatt reflects on his great experience as a mentee, and then as a mentor to others. Dr Tu Tian Ming describes life after welcoming the newest addition to his family. We also report our first-ever session to meet writers and contributors, in my term as Editor. The event was also a good occasion to present Dr Alvin Lum with the grand prize for winning the inaugural Life in Pixels photo competition. I'm pleased to announce that we have a great line-up of themes this year to celebrate SG50, with prizes sponsored by Canon.

I anticipate a fruitful year ahead; our News team will carry on with sourcing for, and presenting articles of interest to our members. I look forward to your continuous support. ■



Dr Tan Yia Swam is now an associate consultant at the Breast Department of KK Women's and Children's Hospital. She continues to juggle the commitments of being a doctor, a mother, a wife, and the increased duties of SMA News Editor. She also tries to keep time aside for herself and friends, both old and new.

55th SMA Annual General Meeting

Date: 12 April 2015, Sunday

Time: 2 pm - 4 pm

Venue: Arthur Lim Auditorium*, Level 2, Alumni Medical Centre, 2 College Road, Singapore 169850

***Lunch will be served at the auditorium from 1 pm.**

To confirm your attendance, please send your response to SMA via fax: 6224 7827 or email: sma@sma.org.sg. You can also register online at <https://www.sma.org.sg/aggm>. To assist us with catering arrangements, do indicate if you will be coming for lunch as well. For more information, please contact the SMA Secretariat at 6223 1264.