



MEDICO-LEGAL SEMINAR ON MENTAL CAPACITY

Do you find medical report writing and legal jargons challenging? On 17 October 2015, more than 100 medical practitioners cleared their doubts by attending the Medico-Legal Seminar on Mental Capacity – Assessment & Report Writing for Doctors.

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) was passed by Parliament in 2008 and came into effect in 2010. This is an area where the practices of law and medicine are required to work together in serving the person's best interest. Generally, doctors find medico-legal work burdensome, as this is an area of educational deficit in the regular medical education, both in the undergraduate and postgraduate medical education.

Speakers with extensive amount of experience in both medical and legal areas helmed the day's topics and imparted valuable content to the participants. Topics covered included "Overview of Mental Capacity Assessment for Doctors", "Understanding the Family Court Workings" and "The Medical Reports – A Practical Exercise", conducted by A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Colin Tan and Ms Lim Hui Min, respectively.

Based on feedback from participants, the highlight of the seminar was the medical report writing exercise. Many lauded the "innovative and effective" teaching style and found the exercise "useful and informative". The segment was strategically planned to encourage participants to apply what they have learnt from the seminar. They were tasked to write a medical report after watching a video clip of the enactment of a medical consultation. Thereafter,

model answers and tips were shared during an interactive discussion. The participants were also given a step-by-step tutorial on how to fill in the medical report for MCA application. Additionally, they were provided with specific examples on the different types of mental assessment tests and how to give evidence to support medical conclusions.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion on "Mental Capacity Act, Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) Certification and Mental Capacity Assessment", chaired by Dr T Thirumoorthy. The panellists consisted of A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Colin Tan, Ms Lim Hui Min, Ms Sumytra Menon and Dr Ooi Chun How. Intriguing queries were raised for the panel, stimulating an engaging examination of issues pertaining to mental capacity. Questions raised included "How do you assess the mental capacity of a patient who is born without full mental capacity?", "Should the doctor be the one who ensures there was no coercion leading to making an LPA?" and "In what ways

PROFILE

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Legend

1. Posing for a group photo after the event

is making a will the same or different from the MCA and LPA?".

The responses from the panel covered both legal and medical considerations. As such, participants were able to understand the gravity of the issues from the perspectives of both a doctor and a lawyer. Quoting Dr T Thirumoorthy, "Medicine is filled with ambiguity and uncertainty. Hence, obtain as much information as possible to help make a decision. Weigh the facts before making your medical judgement and defend the decision with written reasons in your medical report."

The overwhelming participation rate and positive feedback are very reassuring; it affirms that the content taught is relevant and useful for medical practitioners. This is another milestone for the SMA CMEP as we continue to strive along our motto – "For Doctors, For Patients." ♦

