

THE EDITOR'S MUSINGS

Personally speaking, 2015 was a good year for me. I started building up a practice, made some new friends and renewed several old friendships. My family remains in good health and most significantly, we welcomed a new baby. For the country, joy at 50 years of independence was tempered with grief at the passing of MM Lee Kuan Yew. I was saddened and alarmed by the many natural disasters and man-made tragedies worldwide — earthquakes, floods, plane crashes, wars, refugees, mass gun shootings, Ebola and acts of terrorism.

The birth of my second son has perhaps strengthened my maternal instincts to nurture and protect. There's also a strong urge to leave behind a better world for the children (and of course, raise them up well to be deserving of it!).

Following this train of thought, I am reminded of the Chinese saying “医者父母心” (doctors with parental hearts) — it means that doctors should love and care for their patients as they do their children. This would also mean appropriate chastisement when necessary and not pandering to their every whim and demand, which can only lead to a spoiled child. There is now an attitudinal trend towards referring to patients as “customers” and doctors as “healthcare providers”, which is detrimental to the doctor-patient relationship in the long run. This is a global shift that has been derided by many. Whether or not this trend can be reversed remains to be seen.

SMA's slogan, “For Doctors, For Patients”, succinctly sums up the role of this professional body. We play a delicate part in protecting and nurturing doctors, so that they can better look after their patients. The profile of our membership is changing, and *SMA News* will keep on evolving with the times to meet the expectations of our members. Some things will stay the same — we will always carry articles on professionalism, patient anecdotes, volunteerism and personal reflections. To spice things up, the “Indulge” column will be expanded to include other interesting hobbies that doctors pursue, though its mainstay will still be food and travel. So far, we have covered diving, flying and cooking. I've heard of doctors attending sommelier, barista or pole-dancing classes!

We will also have themed issues in the coming year, to be announced as the dates approach. There will be one soon on “Physician Health”, where we will cover stories on how doctors keep themselves healthy as well as cope when they or their loved ones fall ill. We would also like to revisit “Families in Medicine”, a spin-off from a Siblings in Medicine series from some years ago.

Do keep writing in and if you ever receive an invitation from my team to write, I hope you will agree to share your experience with us! Don't be shy. We wish you all good health and happiness in 2016.



Dr Tan Yia Swam is 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.

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Editor