

CARING PHYSICIANS OF THE WORLD LEADERSHIP COURSE 2016

From 2 to 6 May 2016, 31 doctors from over 19 countries converged at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville campus, Florida, for the World Medical Association's (WMA) Caring Physicians of the World Leadership Course. This year marked the first time WMA has partnered Mayo Clinic to deliver this course.

The Caring Physicians of the World Initiative was conceived to restore enthusiasm and optimism in medicine; at a time when many physicians around the world are having serious concerns about the future of medicine: how it is practised, delivered and regulated with increasing pressures that threaten to erode the values many physicians hold dear. Through this course, the WMA hopes to develop advocacy and leadership skills of physicians around the world so that we may advocate for our profession and patients.

Over the span of five days, participants gained practical skills and knowledge on leadership, communications and social media. The course opened with a team-building session, where each team was asked to pick and prioritise the important equipment to survive a subarctic air crash. Each member possessed different strengths and weaknesses, and the leaders have to understand the rational and relational processes that would drive the team's dynamics, and coach the team

towards achieving positive outcomes. It was especially interesting to see how members who have minimal outdoor experience could challenge many strongly held assumptions. One question was, "How did we even know if the compass would work in the subarctic conditions near the North Pole?" The answer is that it would not!

Another case study required us to decide whether to proceed in a high-stakes racing competition using a vehicle with a dubious history of catastrophic engine failures. With the limited reliability data, many teams chose to push ahead despite warning signs that the engine may fail with disastrous consequences. We were shocked when revealed that the reliability data was extracted from the space shuttle *Challenger* incident where the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) had decided to proceed with the ill-fated flight. Making the same dangerous assumptions made me realise how important it was for the leader to keep an open mind and to embrace the diversity and differences within the team.

A personal highlight for me was the social media session by the Mayo Clinic Social Media Network. This covered the relevance and role of social media in patient advocacy and education, and elaborated on how these tools could be used to broaden and deepen working relations between the hospitals, medical professionals



PROFILE

TEXT BY

DR LIM KHENG CHOON

Dr Lim Kheng Choon is currently the Assistant Honorary Secretary of SMA and a chief resident with SingHealth Diagnostic Radiology. He hopes to apply the skills and knowledge from the course to advocate for patients as well as the profession.

Legend

1. Participants at the WMA Caring Physicians of the World Leadership Course, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville.

and patients. Tutors were on hand to help participants develop their social network presence on both Twitter and Facebook, offering practical tips on how to manage these accounts as a professional. They also addressed concerns such as: "What to do if a patient asks to 'friend' you on Facebook?" and "What are the potential pitfalls and challenges if you were to 'friend' a subordinate at work?" We were also given an insight on how Mayo Clinic successfully deploys social media strategies and tactics in patient education, professional engagement and marketing. Don't just take my word for it; go visit their website and Facebook page to see for yourself!

It was an intense but immensely useful course. On top of the lessons and skills we learned, we had the rare opportunity to network with like-minded doctors who are committed to advocating for our profession and our patients. Most importantly, we made many great friends. ◆

