

# THE ANNUAL NATIONAL MEDICOLEGAL SEMINAR 2016



The fourth Annual National MedicoLegal Seminar 2016, a collaborative effort between the SMA, SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (CMEP) and Medico-Legal Society of Singapore (MLSS), was successfully held from 22 to 23 October 2016. The seminar held at Raffles City Convention Centre, Fairmont Singapore, attracted a turnout of 128 and 95 participants on Days 1 and 2, respectively, which consisted of doctors, dentists, lawyers, and allied health and legal professionals.

The theme for the first day was **Medical Dispute Resolution – Searching for New Paradigms**. In the opening address, Dr T Thirumorthy, Immediate Past Executive Director, SMA CMEP, alluded to the complexity of medical disputes and the wide spectrum of stakeholders, each with their own interest in mind. The Keynote Plenary Lecture entitled “Medical disputes, Patient safety and Doctor-Patient relationship” was delivered by Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam, Professor, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore. Prof Kumar discussed the costly and adversarial nature of medical litigation and made a clear case for alternative non-adversarial dispute resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms can contribute to improving patient safety by encouraging more candid and comprehensive reporting of risks. He emphasised that medical disputes and patient safety have to be viewed through a new lens – one of patient autonomy.

The first day's seminar explored various aspects of dispute resolution such as the medical assessors, medical mediation and alternative methods in medical dispute resolution. Eminent speakers took

the opportunity to throw clarity on both concepts and practice, based on their knowledge and experience. Speakers for the day were Justice Judith Prakash, Dr Yu Chun Sing, Dr Peter Loke, Mr Yong Eng Wah, Mr Edmund J Kronenburg, Mr Philip Fong and Mr Prem Raj Prabakaran. The panel discussion chairpersons were Mr Jeffrey Chan Wah Teck, SC; Dr Joseph Sheares; and Dr T Thirumorthy.

The theme for Day 2 was **Human Biomedical Research Act – From Policy to Practice and Regulation**. The Parliament passed the Human Biomedical Research Act on 18 August 2015 and it has come to effect in stages since 1 July 2016. Participants were informed of the three categories of medical research in the Act, namely Restricted Research (Licensing/ Approval); Prohibited Research (Absolute) and Human Biomedical Research (Self-Regulation). The first two speakers further highlighted the three key entities of the self-regulatory framework, namely The Research Institution; The Researcher; and the Institutional Review Board. During the panel discussion, the audience were given ample opportunities to discuss the challenges in interpreting and conforming to the various provisions of the Act.

The distinguished speakers were Mr Charles Lim Aeng Cheng, Mr Kelvin Tan, A/Prof William Hwang and Prof Kon Oi Lian, and the panel discussion involved A/Prof Lai Siang Hui and Dr Jacky Lee.

Throughout the course of two days, the seminar received a multitude of positive feedback and participants remarked: “Please continue this seminar as I attend

it every year” and “Good seminar with a range of comprehensive topics. Sessions are very interesting with well-mixed areas on assessors, arbitration and hot-tubbing.”

The SMA CMEP and MLSS would like to thank all participants and speakers at the Annual National MedicoLegal Seminar 2016 for making it an exceptionally successful educational event that brought both medical and legal professionals to a common platform for discussion on important medico-legal topics. ◆



## PROFILE

### TEXT BY

**JASMINE SOO**

*Executive, Event & Committee Support*

### Legend

1. Dr T Thirumorthy presenting the token of appreciation to Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam
2. L to R: Dr T Thirumorthy, Dr Peter Loke, Mr Jeffrey Chan Wah Teck, Mr Nicholas Cheong and Mr Edmund J Kronenburg