

Embracing

TECHNOLOGY in Healthcare

The National Medico-Legal Seminar 2019

Text by A/Prof Lai Siang Hui

For the seventh year running, the Medico-Legal Society of Singapore (MLSS) and SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP) have put together an informative and timely seminar. Telemedicine, disruptive technology and cybersecurity were the key themes of this year's seminar titled "Telehealth, Telemedicine and Delivering Healthcare through the Electronic Media". Held on 5 and 6 October 2019 at Furama Riverfront Singapore, the seminar was attended by a total of 152 participants including allied health professionals, clinical and non-clinical healthcare professionals, hospital administrators and legal professionals.

Following SMA President Dr Lee Yik Voon's opening address, Dr Jonathan Schaffer, managing director of Cleveland Clinic, delivered the plenary lecture. He shared the processes and efforts needed to establish a digital health programme at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, which had evolved from an enterprise for second-opinion consultations to a complex and interconnected healthcare delivery system over two decades. His major take-home point was to embrace technology and use it to enhance and facilitate healthcare. This theme was further developed on Day 2 when Dr Schaffer shared how connectivity and accessibility were key advantages in promoting the institution to a leading academic medical centre.

Four speakers, Dr Vas Metupalle, co-founder, MyDoc; Dr Shravan Verma, founder, Speedoc; Dr Kevin Kok, chief operating officer, Doctor Anywhere; and Dr Loh Yong Joo, consultant, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, then described how technology and innovation have facilitated telemedicine and helped to bring healthcare to the community in Singapore. During the subsequent panel discussion, chaired by SMA Council Member Dr Wong Tien Hua, there was much discussion and sharing on the advantages and limitations of telemedicine and doctor-patient encounters in the less-than-familiar setting.

A/Prof Raymond Chua, group director, Health Regulation Group, Ministry of Health (MOH), then provided clarifications from the regulatory perspective and confirmed the close working relationship between the service providers and the MOH. We all eagerly await the guidance for telemedicine. Finally, Mr Edmund Kronenburg, managing partner, Braddell Brothers LLP, highlighted some of the potential pitfalls posed by remote tele-consultations that could present ethical, professional and even legal challenges.

The highlight of Day 2 was cybersecurity. A/Prof Loo Chian Min, group chief medical informatics officer, SingHealth, provided the audience

with important learning points from the recent SingHealth cybersecurity breach. The seminar then focused on how to educate medical and healthcare colleagues on the best practices of cybersecurity. A panel discussion chaired by me, as president of MLSS, sought insights from panellists A/Prof Low Cheng Ooi, chief medical informatics officer, MOH; Ms Mak Wei Munn, partner, Allen & Gledhill LLP; and A/Prof Tan Hak Koon, designated institutional official, SingHealth Residency and senior consultant, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Singapore General Hospital.

We would like to thank all speakers and participants for joining us at the seminar, and also Finaxar Pte Ltd, Marsh-JLT Specialty, SGI Med Pte Ltd and SP-Joshua Wong-Inspire, for their sponsorship. ♦

Legend

1. Speakers and panellists pose for a photo after their Industry Perspective segment

A/Prof Lai is committed to the training and education of future generations of doctors, and continues to realise his vision to establish a no-blame, no-shame environment for learning.

