

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Honorary Secretary

Report by Dr Ng Chew Lip

Dr Ng is an ENT consultant in public service. After a day of doctoring and cajoling his two princesses at home to finish their food, his idea of relaxation is watching a drama serial with his lovely wife and occasionally throwing some paint on a canvas.



Nationwide survey on overnight duty systems published in *SMJ*

The SMA Doctors-in-Training (DIT) committee conducted a survey among residents from all three sponsoring institutions. The survey sets out to assess and analyse the residents' perceptions towards the traditional full overnight call system versus the night float system.

The survey results were recently published in the *Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ)*: <https://bit.ly/3nOT48o>.

This nationwide survey showed that a majority of residents perceived the night float system more favourable in comparison to the full overnight call system in areas such as patient safety, clinical work, training, and physician burnout. The SMA DIT committee hopes that hospital managements, educators and healthcare leaders will consider these findings when implementing on-call systems.

SMA steps in to get DxD to delist Members who wish to be removed

SMA received complaints from Members that their practice particulars have been included, without their permission, on the DoctorxDentist (DxD) website which publishes doctor directories and purports to:

- a) offer cost estimates for consultation; and/or
- b) facilitate booking of appointments to see doctors on behalf of patients.

Some Members requested DxD to remove their practice particulars as they do not wish to be associated with its website, but were met with steadfast refusal. SMA thus offered, as a free service to Members, to publish online a list of Members who do not wish to be associated with DxD, so that the public may be informed that DxD does not have their support.

At DxD's request, a virtual meeting was held on 13 November 2020 with representatives from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Singapore Medical Council (SMC), where SMA made its position clear.

On 21 November, SMA published the list of doctors who do not wish to be associated with DxD (<https://bit.ly/35TpsQP>). SMA included both Members and non-members, as a show of solidarity.

MOH sent a circular on the same day to clarify that MOH had never advised DxD to list all medical and dental practitioners on their website, as claimed by DxD. MOH also advised that all advertising must comply with the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics (Advertisement) Regulations and the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG).

On 22 November, the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism published an advisory on Advertising Standards for Doctors (<https://bit.ly/373vLdN>).

SMC issued an advisory on 25 November to advise against the use of search engine optimisation platforms that utilise patient feedback and ratings, and to advise compliance with the ECEG.

DxD has since removed the listing of all public sector doctors and private sector doctors who have not explicitly opted in for their service.

SMA wrote a letter published in the *Straits Times* Forum on 27 November (<https://bit.ly/3qrbuhj>). It reinforced our steadfast and unwavering call for DxD to remove the doctors' names from their website and the need to comply with the ECEG and MOH regulations.

For updates, please visit the SMA website (<https://www.sma.org.sg>). We encourage doctors to join and support SMA (<https://www.sma.org.sg/membership>) so that we can continue to represent you in matters affecting the profession and our patients. ♦