

# Marriage and CME *By Dr Lawrence Ng*

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**W**hat? Another drug talk on Saturday night?" my wife huffed as I prepared to leave before the sun set. She was getting annoyed with the fewer hours that I have been spending at home.

First, I started working longer hours to make up for the fewer patients I have been seeing since the economy dipped last year. Then, I have also been studying for my postgraduate exam again. "When will all these extra tasks and duties ever end?" she wondered.

Twelve years ago, when we got married, I told her no more exams after the final MBBS. Then I told her that the nights would be free once I leave the

hospital. Years later, I told her I would cut the clinic hours once I have established my clientele in private practice. It seems to her that I am a chronic breaker of promises. "The CME...when will it ever end?" she muttered to herself, wondering how much longer she had to put up with this absent husband/father. The strain on the marriage is seething.

The life of a medico in Singapore is getting more stressful with the imposition of compulsory CME. It is not an innocuous piece of legislation, yet the impact on marriage and family is seldom a consideration for Colleges, Academies and Councils since these are

headed by those who have only one consideration – to make learning a lifelong process. It is sad but real that due to the nature of our work, most practitioners are short of time for dedicated learning. Sigh, but this is the price to pay for entering a profession, which embodies knowledge that is always evolving and has been increasing rapidly, especially in recent years.

However, in the implementation of policies involving mandatory out-of-office-hours activities, let us not forget that life itself is short and needs to be lived with family, friends and faith, rather than just with the medical fraternity and the profession. ■

## About the Author:

*Dr Lawrence Ng (MBBS, 1987) is a family physician whose love for medicine is exceeded only by his love for karaoke. When not attending CME talks, he can be found croaking away in the Medical Alumni Association karaoke lounge. He is a former Council member of the College of Family Physicians Singapore.*