

The 12 Wishes of Junior Doctors for Christmas

1. *Ensure post-calls and help reduce the number of road traffic accidents.*
2. *Reward hard work, not flamboyant showmanship.*
3. *Treat us more as human beings than slaves or sacrificial lambs.*
4. *Nurses trained in venepuncture should help us perform the procedure, rather than wait for us to do it, resulting in delayed treatment.*
5. *More pay, less work.*
6. *Three-monthly instead of six-monthly rotations for family med trainees, to ensure more well-rounded training (and less boredom and frustration).*
7. *Protocols that allow doctors to make complaints against rude, unreasonable and / or violent patients, preferably with a compulsory doubling or tripling of charges.*
8. *Special Culture Shock Reduction orientation programmes for foreign-trained Singaporeans returning to the local healthcare system.*
9. *Open up more AST slots if BSTs increase, instead of letting the former stagnate.*
10. *Stop overbooking the SOCs, which compromises patient care, lengthens waiting time, and generates hot tempers all around.*
11. *More uniform grading criteria – trainees should not be automatically guaranteed higher scores when non-trainees are clearly more deserving.*
12. *Last but not least, an Administration that values its doctors and does not let public demands dictate its policies, that is able to see beyond the superficiality of Waiting Times and take into the account the much more important factor of Good Patient Care as an indicator of quality.*

Editorial note:

This déjà vu Christmas wish list could have been written 20 years ago with some of the same festering issues. An interesting trend is that lifestyle and quality of life issues feature highly on choosing medical subspecialties more than ever before in both the United States and Singapore. More pay, less work? We would all love this! But have you seen the call pay we used to get as MOs in the 1990s? It would not have been enough to buy a partridge in a pear tree for on-call supper!