

Sharing Session with the New Housemen

By Dr Alfred Kow, Organising Chairman, 11th SMA House Officers Seminar

The 11th SMA House Officers Seminar was held on 23 April 2005 in Lecture Theatre 28 at the National University of Singapore. It was well attended with a total of 162 participants.

The seminar started with Dr Lee Pheng Soon, President of SMA, welcoming the new doctors into the medical fraternity. He also shared his experience when he was a House Officer (HO).

After Dr Alfred Kow, Chairman of the Organising Committee, laid out the programme of the day, Dr Valerie Tay started the show running by speaking about "Morning Ward Rounds" and the essential role of the HO in the daily ward round. She stressed that a good HO should be efficient and able to multi-task so that work can be done easily.

Dr Veronique Tan then shared her tips for doing "changes" fast. A term most familiar to doctors, changes are carried out in the management of the patient, many of which are the duties of a HO. After this, Dr Soh Teck Hwee demonstrated how to clerk a new case. He emphasised the importance of being able to tell whether a new patient needed immediate attention or could be attended to later – especially during a busy night duty.

Dr Lawrence Ng, Medical Advisor from the Medical Protection Society, also shared a few tips about medical indemnity with the audience.

The crowd then dispersed for a tea break. The programme resumed with Dr John Chiam, SMA Council Member, speaking



An outgoing HO shares his experience with the new doctors.

on "What Makes a Good House Officer". He stressed that HOs should ask for help whenever they felt inadequate or unsure. This is to avoid compromising the patient's care and to help HOs to learn.

Dr Lester Leong ended the series of talks with his armour of weapons for the "Night Duty". He showed the audience the equipments and preparation that could be done to smoothen the process of night calls, such as extra blood tubes, IV cannula, and even muesli bars for an emergency solution to hunger.

The audience was then split up into smaller groups according to their first HO posting, so that volunteers from the outgoing batch of HOs could join these groups to share their experience and tips with the new HOs.

The seminar ended at about 6pm, after which participants and helpers were given goodie bags containing useful items sponsored by various pharmaceutical companies. ■



About the author:

Dr Alfred Kow is currently a Medical Officer with the General Surgery Department at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.