The evening of 27 May 2006 (Saturday) was a memorable one for many of the 300-over guests who attended the SMA Annual Dinner at the Royal Ballroom of the Regent Hotel.

Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong graced the event as our Guest-of-Honour. For his distinguished life in public service and contributions to healthcare, Senior Minister Goh was also conferred the SMA Honorary Membership. His citation was delivered by Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts (see page 4). In addition to the Honorary Membership award, SMA also presented Senior Minister Goh with a Chinese calligraphy scroll containing the characters 上医医国, which translate literally into “A superior physician heals the nation.” Council Member Dr Chin Jing Jih expounded briefly on the calligraphy (see page 4), after which Senior Minister Goh delivered a speech (see front page).

Guests were also treated to a delightful musical interlude by Dr Chang Tou Liang (piano) and Dr Derek Lim (liuqing). This was followed by presentation of the other awards: Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ) Best Research Paper Awards, SMA Merit Awards and SMA Long Service Awards. The Association also presented for the first time, tokens of appreciation to the SMA Immediate Past President and retired Council Members for their invaluable contributions and service.

**SMJ BEST RESEARCH PAPER AWARDS 2005**
The SMJ Best Research Paper was launched
in 2003 to give due recognition to local and regional researchers for outstanding research papers published in the journal.

The preliminary round of judging was done by three SMJ Editorial Board Members:
A/Prof Chow Wan Cheng, A/Prof Ho Nai Kiong and Dr Pwee Keng Ho. The final round of judging was completed by Prof Chee Yam Cheng, Prof Lee Eng Hin and Prof Wilfred C G Peh.

First Prize – S$5,000 cash award sponsored by Pfizer Pte Ltd – went to Dr Thein Myint Myint, A/Prof Lee Bee Wah and Ms Bun Pui Yoke for their paper: Knowledge, attitude and practices of childhood injuries and their prevention by primary caregivers in Singapore.

Second Prize – S$3,000 cash award sponsored by SMA – Dr Chng Wee Joo, Ms Christina Sum and Dr Ponnudurai Kuperan for their paper: Causes of isolated prolonged activated partial thromboplastin time in an acute general hospital.

And Third Prize – S$2,000 cash award sponsored by SMA – Dr Tan Hiok Hee and A/Prof Roy KW Chan for their paper: Use of polymerase chain reaction on pooled cervical swabs to detect Chlamydia trachomatis infections in female sex workers in Singapore.

All winners also received a commemorative trophy and certificate.

SMA and SMJ would like to thank Pfizer Pte Ltd for their generous sponsorship for the First Prize.
TOKENS OF APPRECIATION

Tokens of appreciation were presented to
Dr Lee Pheng Soon, SMA Immediate Past
President, as well as retired Council Members,
Dr Tham Tat Yean (Assistant Honorary
Secretary – 2001; Honorary Secretary – 2002-
2004) and Dr Ivor Thevathasan (Council
Member – 2000-2005).

SMA MERIT AWARDS 2006

Started in 2003, the SMA Merit Awards
are presented in recognition of recipients’
significant contributions to SMA and
the medical profession, social service to
the community or commendable personal
achievements. Recipients may be SMA
Members, doctors or non-medical
professionals.

Dr Chau Chwen Hwe, Part-time Doctor
with NHGP, has contributed significantly to the
community in the form of free clinics, medical
mission and health education to poor slum
areas, both urban and rural, in the Philippines
since 1998. Dr Chau dedicates part of her time
to bringing similar medical programmes to
China, Pakistan, Indonesia and Indochina.

Mr Edwin Tong, Partner in Litigation
and Dispute Resolution at Allen & Gledhill
Advocates & Solicitors, has provided legal
advice to the Association on several occasions
and also speaks regularly at its seminars.

Dr Loo Choon Yong, SMA Honorary
unyielding stream of exams, week in and week out, to occupy one’s time?

Similarly, but in a slightly different vein, constant assessments not only murder the joy of learning for learning’s sake but also probably diminish quality of life outside medical school. Many times, we find well-meaning lecturers urging us to pursue interests outside of medicine and medical school, but for the vast majority of medical students, maintaining good grades and keeping aside time for family and friends and getting enough sleep pretty much take up the universal time quota of 24 hours in a day.

In my rather simplistic mind, then, the equation would look something like this:

Fewer exams = more time for self-study/recreation/pursuing outside interests/nothing at all = happier students + more vibrant student community = a more heterogeneous, exciting local medical community.

Sounds like a win-win situation to me.

THE END

So, in a nutshell: there are too many exams, and exams that do not seem to do their job. Do I have all the answers? Obviously not, otherwise I would be appointed Dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (or at least, should be), instead of spending weekends, public holidays and assorted weeknights on call, and performing a manual faecal evacuation.

Still, that should not in any way detract from the fact that after finishing five years of medical school, I have come away convinced that the examination system, both throughout the course and right at the end, are fundamentally flawed to the extent that they not only do not serve their purpose adequately and fairly, but also do a disservice to the development of future generations of doctors.

Something should be done, but what?

The views and opinions expressed in this article are exclusively the author’s own, and are not the views of the Editorial Board nor the SMA council.

Secretary (1980 to 1981) and Chief Executive Officer of Raffles Hospital Pte Ltd, was recognised for his significant contributions and valuable services to the SMA.

SMA LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Three doctors received the SMA Long Service Awards for their meritorious service to SMA Council and Committees for the past 10 years.

Dr Chong Yeh Woei, SMA 1st Vice President, has been serving on the SMA Council and Private Practice Committee. Dr Teo Wee Siong was recognised for his contributions to the SMA-SNA CPR Training Programme Committee. Dr Julian Theng also received the award for his outstanding service to the Sports and Games Committee.

SMA STAFF LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Two Secretariat staff received the award this year. Ms Noor Azliena Bte Samhudi, Administrative Officer, and Ms Krysania Tan, Deputy Chief Administrator and Editorial Manager of SMA News, have been with SMA for ten and five years respectively.

SMA would like to take this opportunity to thank all guests who attended the Dinner and made it a success.