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2017: the Year for NHG Occupational Therapists



From left: Ms Lee Lee Sian, receiving the SkillsFuture Fellowships Award from former President Dr Tony Tan, with Education Minister (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung on the right.

Occupational Therapists from across the National Healthcare Group (NHG) were honoured at various award ceremonies for their outstanding contributions towards education and professional development in 2017.

Sharing, Mentoring and Developing

Alongside 26 other individuals from various industries, Ms Lee Lee Sian, Senior Occupational Therapist and Clinical Educator Lead from Institute of Mental Health (IMH), received the inaugural SkillsFuture Fellowships Award from Singapore's former president Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam on 2 August 2017.

The award recognises Singaporeans who exhibited skills mastery, mentorship qualities and the professional development of others in their respective

fields. Each fellowship recipient receives a monetary award of S\$10,000 to support their lifelong journey to further develop their skills and knowledge.

"It definitely spurred me on to continue honing my skills," said an elated Ms Lee. "This recognition affirmed my expertise and mentorship efforts."

Inspiring Others

On 27 May 2017, Mr Tang Wei Kiat, from IMH, and Ms Tegan Plunkett, from Tan Tock Seng Hospital Rehabilitation Centre, received the award of Inspiring Clinical Supervisor at the 2017 Singapore Association of Occupational Therapists Annual General Meeting.

The recognition was based on student nominations, where Occupational Therapy students were asked to provide specific examples explaining how the nominees demonstrated the following



Ms Tegan Plunkett



From left: Mr Tan Wei Kiat (in purple) with his nominator Ms Zann Yeo

characteristics: excellent role modelling; excellent teaching skills; passion and commitment towards teaching and imparting knowledge in a clinical setting; and fostering a conducive learning environment and forming a trusting and supportive relationship with students.

Mr Tang's nominee described him as a supervisor who is cognisant of his students' learning style. "Wei Kiat allowed me to make mistakes during sessions and gave me opportunities to try out first before he intervenes and gives his feedback after the session," said his nominee. "For the first few weeks, he gave me time to prepare myself and to set up the gym before each session to calm myself down before seeing the client."

And Ms Plunkett's nominee described her as a supervisor who would constantly challenge her students and help them develop their deeper thinking and clinical reasoning skills. "Whenever I asked a question, she would often ask me back 'what do you think'", said her nominee. "And from my answer provided, she will put out other questions to help me frame my thoughts before guiding me to finding out the answer eventually."

Anchoring our Practice

BY DR FAITH CHIA



Dr Faith Chia

Over Christmas, I met up with a friend who has been living in Shanghai for the last 15 years. It naturally came up that Singapore had changed so much in the last decade that he barely recognised places that used to be familiar to him, and that his anchor then became people and “soft” things like memories of experiences that he had had. Somehow the conversation then turned to changes and discoveries we used to think belonged to the realm of sci-fi; gravitational waves and advancements in artificial intelligence, and he then asked me how has medicine, and how we teach it, changed, and how it may change in the future.

This set me pondering (and feeling slightly guilty that I hadn’t updated some of my teaching slides for the last couple of years). In some ways, we are ahead of the curve with simulation, gamification and the use of technology and e-learning. However, in many other ways, we are doing things in the same way we have

always done, even though the healthcare climate, our patients, the organisation of healthcare, technology and the world we live in has changed so much.

We are fortunate to work in an institution with future-oriented leaders who have already put forward the equation for “Professionals for Tomorrow’s Healthcare”(PTH), where PTH describes a set of attributes encompassing domains of competencies required across the spectrum of health professions including core capabilities of the profession, cross cutting capabilities, future-oriented thinking and leadership skills all bounded by ethos.

I just wanted to reiterate a few areas that I think we should continue to consider in the future of medical education. And because things work nicely in trios, especially alliterative trios, here are my top three:

1. Thinking

We cannot teach nor expect a learner to remember all the facts there are in medicine. The reality is that the cognitive burden is far too great, and Google is far too easy. We need to teach our healthcare professionals how to think critically, how to think about thinking, and how to groom adaptive expertise.

We also need to teach them to think about themselves. Burnout is a looming problem. Regardless of what our opinions on the millennial generation are, it is real. Our learners need to know how to take care of themselves before they take care of others; self-care, mindfulness and reflective practice will be important components of our curriculum.

2. Teams

Through my 5 years in medical school, I did not go through a single teaching session that involved

Dr Faith Chia is a Senior Consultant in the Department of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology. She is actively involved in undergraduate and post-graduate training, has won several teaching awards and is currently the Programme Director for the NHG Internal Medicine Residency Programme. She is a converted burnout sceptic and is currently working on a project on this topic with some talented residents.

other family groups aside from the medical students, much less any test that tested us as a team. I am so glad that this is not the case now, and that Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, NTU, in particular has incorporated inter-professional team training in their curriculum. However, we can still do more in terms of understanding roles, transforming roles and ensuring that teaming is a competency that we want to nurture.

Which brings me to our last T.

3. Technology

Technology will likely be part of our future teams. We need to teach our learners how to augment their capabilities with technology (beyond Googling and using WebMD to generate differential lists while complaining about slow network and sticky keyboards), and in specialties where automated systems are more prevalent, how to interact with these systems rather than view them as threats to our skills and profession.

In the uncertain future, one thing (I hope) will not change. Just like how my friend finds his anchors in people and memories, the thing that should never change in the practice of medicine is the human presence. The ability to behave with integrity, be compassionate, empathetic, or simply there when our patients need us. This last skill, perhaps the least teachable and measurable of them all, should be the one that we should spend the most resources on. As Aristotle said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."



Dr Faith Chia (third from left) with the NHG Internal Medicine Residency team at the 2017 Art Jamming Session.

A Community of Teachers

"You should consider this a very special occasion, it's a mark of recognition of your contribution by your peers as well as the students," said Associate Professor Alan Ng, Clinical Educator Lead (Medical), Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), to the physicians and educators from Institute of Mental Health, National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, National Skin Centre and Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) who attended the National Healthcare Group (NHG) – National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUSMed) Dean's Appreciation held on 4 December, 2017.

Co-organised by TTSH Pre-Professional Education Office and NUSMed, the annual award ceremony honours clinical teachers and educators, and departments who dedicated their time and effort to educate, teach and mentor NUSMed undergraduates.

Concurring with A/Prof Ng, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan, Dean of NUSMed, added in his address that it was also a celebration of both institutions' partnership to deliver its shared mission in teaching the next generation of clinicians.

"We teach to pass on what has been so generously given to us in our time by our mentors," said A/Prof Yeoh. "[It's] a way of serving all the future people that will come after us, that we will never meet... we can only see the patients we see in the clinic today, but in passing on our skills, our values, and our knowledge, I think the next generation of doctors will then serve many more generations of patients we can never see ourselves."

A/Prof Yeoh stressed that even though individual educators are recognised for their commitment and dedication, it is the cumulative efforts of the teaching community that impacts the medical students' educational journey.

He went on to laud the TTSH Department of Anaesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Medicine, for receiving the Clinical Training Excellence Award (CTEA) for the fourth consecutive year. CTEAs are awarded to medical departments that achieve posting and teaching scores of 3.8 (out of 4) and 4.5 (out of 5) and above, respectively for two consecutive years.

Three other medical departments in TTSH: Emergency Medicine, Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) and Psychological Medicine, which received the Clinical Training Merit Award, will qualify for CTEA if they maintain or exceed their current posting and teaching effectiveness scores in 2018.

A/Prof Yeoh shared that as an institution, TTSH performed well in its posting and teaching effectiveness scores, achieving 3.7 (out of 4) and 4.4 (out of 5) respectively; which was in line with the



TTSH Department of Anaesthesia, Intensive Care and Pain Medicine, receiving the Clinical Training Excellence Award (CTEA) for the fourth consecutive year.



Some 50-strong crowd attended the 2017 NUS Dean's Appreciation

national average. And based on the student feedback received, the students indicated that they were overall satisfied with the quality of medical education received, with 89 per cent rating TTSH as 'excellent' or 'good'.

Having a Ball of a Time

BY DRs MAH YUN YUAN AND SABRINA LAU



The NHG IM Residency team (in blue), with the other IM Residency teams from NUHS and SHS.

It was a quiet Friday evening as we made our way after work to Stadio Futsal, not knowing what to expect, but up for some good fun and games, as well as the opportunity to make some new friends.

This was the Internal Medicine (IM) Inter-Sponsoring Institutions (SI) Games, the first sports collaboration among National Healthcare Group (NHG), National University Health System (NUHS) and Singapore Health System (SHS) IM residency programmes. Futsal for the lads, and Captain's Ball for the ladies — to warm up the bodies and spirits! There was anticipation, excitement, and a fair amount of competition amongst the participants. With food and drinks to complete the scene, we were all set.

Our NHG ladies team started the ball rolling playing against SHS; and the men's teams played next. The NUHS team arrived in time to play the next match, and thus the three SIs sparred against each other for the night. The players put in their best, holding nothing back — some even sustained minor injuries along the way — true dedication on display.

We had the opportunity to have a mixed gender team against NUHS as they only had four ladies — hence two lads would supplement the team as captain and defender. Our NHG lads showed excellent sportsmanship to join in and lend their strength to our ladies team, with special mention going to Drs Keefe Tan and Ng Wee Khoon as star players! Dr Faith Chia

(NHG IM Programme Director) and her two sweet daughters also gave our NHG team morale a huge boost.

In the end, our men's team came in second and our ladies tied with SHS for the gold trophy. But the real reward of the night was the quality time spent with colleagues and friends, over sports and games, playing as a team, cheering for one another.

Dr Mah Yun Yuan is a first-year Resident in the NHG Internal Medicine Residency Programme. She graduated from Monash University in 2014. Dr Mah has been actively involved in sports since primary school, with badminton, volleyball and captain's ball all under her belt.

Dr Sabrina Lau is a Senior Resident in the National Healthcare Group (NHG) Geriatric Medicine Residency Programme, and also one of the NHG Internal Medicine (IM) Chief Residents. As head of the Resident Affairs Team, she leads collaborative efforts among IM residents within NHG as well as with the other sponsoring institutions and also organises education workshops for the residents.