



COLLEGE OF

*Radiologists,  
Singapore*



*A Brief History of the College of Radiologists,  
From Chapter To College*

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## ABSTRACT

Radiology has always been an enigma to the medical world. One of the younger medical specialties in the world, radiology has been in existence for just slightly more than a hundred years. Although relatively young, radiology has progressed so far since Dr Wilhelm Roentgen's discovery of X-ray in 1895. In order to fully realise the width and depth of the College of Radiologists, we must indulge ourselves in its progress and unravel its mystery and enigma. This article seeks to chronicle the development of the Chapter of Radiologists, from its wilderness nascent years to the present College comprising the three separate Chapters, of Diagnostic Radiology, Radiation Oncology and Nuclear Medicine.

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## FORMATION OF THE CHAPTER OF RADIOLOGISTS

The formation of a Chapter of Radiologists was actually mooted back in the early 1970s. The matter was discussed during the Annual General Meeting of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS) in 1973 and formed in the year 1974 (Table 1).

### *1974 - 1980: The First for Almost Everything*

Once formed, the Chapter wasted no time in organising activities. A series of lectures was given to share knowledge as well as to update each other on progress in the various areas of radiology. It was also in 1974 that the Chapter had its first Visiting Academician in the person of Prof R E Steiner.

Another initiative was to start a Journal Club, held fortnightly at the School of Radiography. However, this was short-lived, becoming defunct in 1976.

In 1977, Dr Chow Khuen Wai, who was the first Chairman of the Chapter, stepped down and was replaced by Dr Chia Kim Boon. Coincidentally, 1977 was the year when the formality of inviting the President of Singapore to be the Patron of AMS began, with Dr Benjamin Sheares becoming the first Patron.

Dr Chow Khuen Wai was nominated, and subsequently elected to the AMS council, making him the first Radiologist in the AMS council.

In 1979, the Chapter of Radiologists was honoured to be a co-organiser of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Oceanian Congress of Radiology with the Singapore Radiological Society (SRS). The Congress was held from 28<sup>th</sup> October 1979 to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1979 at the Shangri-La Hotel. The organising committee was a 13-man strong committee chaired by Dr Boey Hong Khim. This event was the first major regional radiological meeting that was held by the Chapter. It was surely this Congress that exposed the Chapter to the radiological world. In turn, the successful staging of this meeting led to international recognition for the Chapter.

Table 1. The First Chapter Committee for the Chapter of Radiologists back in 1974

Chairman	Dr Chow Khuen Wai
Vice Chairman	Dr Tan Ban Cheng
Honorary Secretary	Dr Lenny Tan
Committee Members	Dr Boey Hong Khim
	Dr Chia Kim Boon
	Dr Oon Chong Lin

### *1981 - 1990: Further Developments*

At AMS council level, Dr Chow Khuen Wai continued to serve, rising to Assistant Master. In 1981, Dr Lenny Tan was elected into council as Censor. Dr Chia Kim Boon stepped down as Chairman of the Chapter and Dr Tan Ban Cheng succeeded him.

Dr Chow Khuen Wai assumed the mantle of Master in 1982, becoming the first and only Master from Radiology, to date. Dr Lenny Tan became the chairman of the Chapter in the same year, replacing Dr Tan Ban Cheng.

It was also in 1982 that the first nuclear medicine physician, Dr Felix Sundram, was elected to the Chapter committee, a year after the Nuclear Medicine Department was established.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) lectures were conducted more frequently through the period from 1982 to 1986. 1987 proved to be a particularly busy year for the Chapter, with numerous visiting radiologists delivering lectures in Singapore. In addition, the Chapter organised another international congress, the "Advanced Course in Diagnostic Imaging". The course attracted international participants from 17 countries, proving that the Chapter had gained international recognition. The Chapter also organised a symposium, on behalf of AMS, to mark the opening of the College of Medicine Building.

After several years, Dr Lenny Tan stepped down as Chairman in 1988 and Dr Boey Hong Khim took over the mantle.

1990 was another significant year for the Chapter. It was in that year that the first Singapore Radiological Society Annual Scientific Meeting (SRS ASM) was organised along with the Chapter. Under the name of 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Radiological Annual Scientific Meeting of Singapore, it was held from 14 to 15 January and attracted radiologists from the region. The Advanced Course for Diagnostic Imaging II followed after the ASM. The 3-day course, which was held on 16 to 18 January, drew a sizeable attendance of 200 participants.

### *1991 - 2000: The Consolidation Years; Exit Certification*

Dr Lenny Tan stepped down from AMS council, as mandated, having served 4 consecutive terms. In 1991, Dr Khor Tong Hong became the Chairman for the Chapter. Dr Khor Tong Hong was from Radiotherapy, the unwritten agreement being to rotate the Chairmanship between Diagnostic Radiology and Radiotherapy.

After Dr Khor Tong Hong, Dr Tan Kim Ping took on the Chairmanship for the Chapter, in 1993. During his term, the guidelines for ultrasound were created. This was the first in the series of guidelines produced by the Chapter.

Specialist Exit Certification Boards were instituted in 1993 to oversee advanced specialist training, including certification of fully trained specialists. The guidelines for Exit Certification had been studied by the relevant Chapters as early as 1987, culminating in the formation of the Boards, whose members were appointed on the advice of the Academy. Each of the three Radiological specialities had its own Board.

When Dr Tan Kim Ping stepped down, Dr Felix Sundram became the Chairman of the Chapter making him the first Nuclear Medicine physician in this office. After his stint as Chairman, Dr Felix Sundram moved on to serve in a greater role by becoming a Censor in the AMS council. Dr Sundram also served a number of terms as Editor and Chairman of the *Annals, Academy of Medicine*. His chairmanship in the Chapter was succeeded by Dr Ng Fook Cheong.

In 1998, when Dr Ng Fook Cheong stepped down, Dr Felix Sundram was again elected to be Chairman of the Chapter. This was the first time that a Chairman who had stepped down, was subsequently re-elected to the same position. The second time round was when Dr Tan Kim Ping became the first President for the College of Radiologists, Singapore.

At the turn of the millennium, Dr Edward Yang Tuck Loong from Radiotherapy took over from Dr Felix Sundram.

### 2001 - Present: Turbulent Years and Birth of a College

Dr Tan Bien Soo replaced Dr Yang Tuck Loong as Chairman in 2001. The election was unprecedented, as there was a strong challenge mounted by Dr Wilfred Peh. The election ended with both candidates getting an equal share of the votes. The deadlock was resolved with Dr Tan Bien Soo being returned as Chairman and Dr Wilfred Peh as Vice Chairman.



Fig. 1. Dr Khoo Fun Yong

The Chapter grew under the leadership of Dr Tan Bien Soo; membership increased and CME was pursued vigorously. It was also during Dr Tan Bien Soo's Chairmanship in 2003-2004 that the F Y Khoo Lecture was set up. This lectureship was in honour of Dr Khoo Fun Yong (Fig. 1), for his numerous achievements and the influence he had on Radiology in Singapore. He was the first Asian Head of a radiological department in Singapore. His most notable achievement was the establishment of the School of Radiography in October 1963, when he was the Head of Radiology at Singapore General Hospital. He also wrote a number of historical accounts on Radiology in Singapore from the pre-War years to the early 70s. Despite retiring from service in 1967, he continued to teach radiology to medical students and radiology trainees. The FY Khoo Lecture would be delivered annually, during the

SRS Annual Scientific Meetings. Dr Chow Khuen Wai was given the honour of presenting the first F Y Khoo Lecture (Table 2 and Fig. 2).

Table 2. The F Y Khoo Memorial Lecturership

Year 2004	Dr Chow Khuen Wai	Reflections of a Septuagenarian – Radiology: Past, Present and Future
Year 2005	Dr Khor Tong Hong	Brachytherapy – One Man's Meat, A Personal Journey in Radiation Oncology
Year 2006	Prof Adrian Dixon	Education, Professionalism, Outsourcing and the Future of Radiology



Fig. 2. From left to right: Dr Tan Kim Ping, President, College of Radiologists; Prof Adrian Dixon, the 3<sup>rd</sup> FY Khoo Memorial Lecturer; Dr David Stringer.

Table 3. The First College Council of the College of Radiologists in 2005

President	Dr Tan Kim Ping
Vice President	Dr John Hoe
Honorary Secretary	Dr Gregory Kaw
Treasurer	A/Prof Thomas Chee
Council Members	A/Prof Wang Shih-Chang
	Dr Tan Bien Soo
	Dr Vijay Kumar Sethi
Chapter Chairman	Dr Samuel Ng (Diagnostic Radiologists)
	Dr Chua Eu Tiong (Radiation Oncologists)
	Dr Anthony Goh (Nuclear Medicine Physicians)



*Fig. 3. 2005-2006 Council*  
*Standing (left to right) : Dr Anthony Goh (Chairman, Chapter of Nuclear Medicine Physicians), Dr Tan Bien Soo (Council Member), Dr Samuel Ng (Chairman, Chapter of Diagnostic Radiologists), Dr Chua Eu Tiong (Chairman, Chapter of Radiation Oncologists), Dr Vijay Kumar Sethi (Council Member)*  
*Seated (Left to Right) : Dr Gregory Kaw (Honorary Secretary), Dr John Hoe (Vice-President), Dr Tan Kim Ping (President), Dr Thomas Chee (Honorary Treasurer)*  
*Absent : Dr Wang Shih-Chang (Council Member)*

In 2004, some Chapters within the Academy, including the Chapter of Radiologists, proceeded to elevate their status to that of Colleges. On 17 August 2004, the College of Radiologists, Singapore (CRS) was officially incorporated (Table 3, Figs. 3 and 4). Through this change, the College gained greater autonomy in running its affairs. Dr Tan Kim Ping was elected as the first President of the College of Radiologists, Singapore. Three Chapters were formed within the College to further the interest of each of the 3 specialties in Radiology, namely, Diagnostic Radiology, Therapeutic Radiology (subsequently renamed Radiation Oncology) and Nuclear Medicine.

Sadly, it was also in 2004 that Dr F Y Khoo passed on. As a mark of respect, the Lecture was re-named the F Y Khoo Memorial Lecture. The Lectureship was offered to Dr Tan Ban Cheng, who had to decline on health grounds. The lecture was passed to Dr Khor Tong Hong, as the next most senior Radiation Oncologist. Though he has passed away, the legacy of Dr F Y Khoo remains.

To further develop the CRS and the radiological community, Dr Tan Kim Ping called for a strategic retreat. It was held in 2005, on National Day. The Retreat proved to be a success with many radiologists sacrificing their holiday to turn up for this planning meeting. Roadmaps were drawn up with Fellows taking the responsibility to go through them. The Advanced Specialist Training (AST) CME lecture series for Diagnostic Radiology was also started around this time to ensure that AST trainees obtain a well rounded experience during their training plus an opportunity to do an oral presentation.

Around September 2005, the issue of outsourcing Radiology to India was suddenly raised and published in the newspapers. Dr Tan Kim Ping called for an Extraordinary General Meeting to seek the opinion of the Diagnostic Radiologists.

2006 proved to be a busy year for CRS. The first Careers in Radiology Forum was organised to attract housemen and medical officers to join the ranks of Radiology. To further research in Radiology, several research symposia were organised.

## CONCLUSION

The College of Radiologists, Singapore has come a long way since the formation of the Chapter of Radiologists in 1974. Although the membership has grown from 14 to 125, there remains the challenge of persuading every eligible Radiologist to become a member of the College, and to convince members of the relevance of their Chapters in advancing the progress of their specialities.

Through the past 30 odd years, the Chapter has played a pivotal role in developing professional standards in Radiology in Singapore. The College, with its component Chapters, is now poised for another phase of growth, with its attendant challenges, in the coming years.

## COAT OF ARMS

**Motto:** Semper Radium Progredient – Always let Radiology Advance

The Armorial Bearings of the College are:

**Arms:** Argent, a five-headed Hydra proper gules sergeant, wings inverted and addorsed, armed and langued Azure, on a chief wavy Sable, two Flashes of Lightning in saltire Azure, surmounted by an open Book edge Or bound gules, all proper.

**Crest:** On a Helm with a Wreath of gules and Argent a Sea-Lion erect guardant proper Or, grasping in its dexter forepaw a Rod Entwined by a Serpent, The Staff of Aesculapius, proper Or.



Fig. 4. Coat of Arms

### Explanation:

The Red and White colours of the shield, crest and mantling are derived from the Colours of the flag of Singapore. The Hydra, which represents conquest of a very powerful enemy, indicates a determination to overcome any challenge or adversity.

Two bolts of Lightning, which represent electricity, forcefulness and speed, are crossed in the shape of the letter X to refer to X-rays, i.e. Radiology in particular. The Book symbolizes the never-ending quest for knowledge, alluding to the contribution of Radiological knowledge in expeditiously alleviating and treating sickness, which is symbolized by the black colour of the chief.

The Sea lion holding the staff of the Aesculapius indicates the medical profession in Singapore. The Sea lion and the wavy chief referring to the close association of Singapore with the sea.

Artwork by: Dr Low Chen Hoong, College of Radiologists, Singapore

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