

ADDRESS BY DR LIM SHIH HUI
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At the Inaugural General Meeting of the
College of Psychiatrists, Academy of Medicine, Singapore
5th November 2014, Wednesday, Goodwood Park Hotel

**Dr Ng Beng Yeong, President, Interim Council, College of Psychiatrists of the
Academy of Medicine, Singapore,
Fellows of the College and the Academy,
Friends, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

A very good evening to all of you. I am glad to be here to witness the College of Psychiatrists' Inaugural General Meeting. Your College is now one of the 10 Colleges of the Academy.

For those of you who are senior, you probably remembered our Academy underwent a major change 10 years ago, with creation of 6 Specialty-Colleges in the year 2004. The main objective of transforming Chapters into Colleges was to help each specialty within the Academy to further develop professionally. Bigger Chapters at that time, such as the Chapter of Physicians and the Chapter of Surgeons, created 10 to 14 Chapters when they became Colleges. Many of these Chapters of the new Colleges are flourishing. In fact one of the Chapters in the College of Surgeons, the Chapter of Ophthalmologists, became the College of Ophthalmologists.

As of now, there are a total of 35 medical specialties and 5 sub-specialties under the Specialists Accreditation Board (SAB). It is very unlikely that more specialties and subspecialties will be created, unless certain subspecialties are of national importance, similar to Intensive Care Medicine, Palliative Medicine and Neonatology. Therefore, please go ahead to develop all psychiatry sub-specialties within your College. You need a critical mass to form Chapters within the College, and the magic number is 30 or more Fellows. If the number is less than 30, you can form Sections, such as Sections of Child and Adolescents Psychiatrists, Geriatric Psychiatrists, Neuro-psychiatrists, Forensic Psychiatrists, Community Psychiatrists, and others. I look forward to seeing these Sections be formed in the very near future.

On a personal note, I could be one of you sitting in the audience if 30 years ago I decided to pursue psychiatry as my career. Before the Chapter of Psychiatrists was formed in December 1986, I was posted to the old Woodbridge Hospital in 1984 as a SAF Medical Officer, and continued as a MO under the Ministry of Health. I am proud to have done 9 long months of psychiatry in Unit 3 and was privileged to work under Dr Chee Kuan Tsee. I learned a lot from him, as well as Dr Ong Thiew Chai and many senior psychiatrists, some of them have retired and some are still working as Emeritus Consultants. In fact my first paper was a case report entitled “Capgras Syndrome in a patient with Schizophreniform Psychosis and right Temporal Lobe Epilepsy”. I have very fond memories of the many good times spent in that old Woodbridge Hospital, with interesting patients, unique environments, and good colleagues like my classmates Lai Huat, Liam Kai, and many of doctors of my era.

Dr Chee asked me to consider psychiatry as my career. But since that was my first medical posting after national service, I told him that I needed to see the rest of the world before making decision on my final destiny. After I passed my Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) in 1987, it crossed my mind whether I could then switch back to Psychiatry, but an opportunity came to be a Neurology registrar at that time. Eventually I had my HMDP in Epilepsy, which is a subspecialty of Neurology in most countries but a subspecialty of Psychiatry in countries like Japan and Germany.

Actually Neurology and Psychiatry are closely interlinked, especially in the field of molecular genetics, neurochemistry, neurophysiology, neuropathology, neuropharmacology, neurobiology, etc. About a year ago, one of my new patients had all the classical symptoms of acute psychosis. Obviously I told him that he needed to see a psychiatrist, and recommended Beng Yeong. But he refused. Surprisingly he still had some insight and we started a lengthy debate in the clinic room. Eventually I lost the debate because he said “my brain is not normal. I need to see a neurologist”, and I AGREED.

Looks like Psychiatry is Hotel California to me. I have checked out but have never left.

Thank you all. Have an enjoyable Inaugural General Meeting.