

College of Public Health and Occupational Physicians

Newsletter Issue 11

January 2018

President's message



A/Prof Vernon Lee

Dear Fellows,

Hope you're having a good festive season. This year has been eventful for both the Academy and our College.

As part of the 60th anniversary of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, we supported AMS in organizing the 51st Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine (SMCM) from 21 to 23 July. Our 12th Singapore PHOM Conference was incorporated into the SMCM to enable cross attendance from other specialties. We also partnered with 7 colleges and chapters to organize joint conference sessions on 42 different topics. More than 400 people

attended the SMCM, of which 261 attended our PHOM Conference, making this a successful endeavor.

At this year's PHOM Conference, we also awarded Prof David Koh with the College's Lifetime Achievement Award for his work on and scholarly contributions to occupational health in Singapore and globally. Congratulations David for this achievement once again!

As a continuation of our efforts to provide opportunities for fellowship and continuing education, we have organized several events in the second half of this year. The annual Fellows' lunch at the PHOM conference saw 40 Fellows coming together. We also organized 3 events, Caring for the sick foreign worker - Law and Ethics at the crossroads; Occupational Health for Health Care Workers- sharing of HMDP experiences in London; and How to Last the Good Fight, which were well attended by Fellows, preventive medicine residents, and interested external parties.

For the coming year, we look to plan a wider variety of activities, including professional and social activities to enable Fellows to come together to exchange ideas and expand professional networks.

Thank you for your continued support of the College and the College Council, and on behalf of the Council I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely,
Vernon Lee
President (2016-2018)

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Highlights from the 12th annual Public Health and Occupational Medicine (PHOM) Conference

By Dr Clive Tan

Dr Clive Tan is the Organising Chairperson, 12th annual Public Health and Occupational Medicine (PHOM) Conference

The 12th annual Public Health and Occupational Medicine (PHOM) Conference was held from 21 to 23 July 2017, at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. This year's conference was held in conjunction the 51st Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine (SMCM), organised by the Academy of Medicine.



Dr Clive Tan, Chairman of the 12th PHOM Conference, delivering the Opening Address

Building upon a last year's highly successful 11th PHOM Conference chaired by Dr Eugene Shum, the 2017 conference chaired by Dr Clive Tan was themed "Moving Forward, Staying Ahead". The conference gathered together more than 300 experts, researchers, healthcare professionals, policy-makers and industry leaders from Singapore and the Asia-Pacific region to share insights and seek cross-disciplinary solutions for our health system's ever-dynamic challenges.

Professor Fung Hong, President of the Hong Kong College of Community Medicine, kicked off the conference with the Plenary Keynote on the topic "Rethinking Health System Leadership", highlighting the complex nature of healthcare and the concept of distributed leadership, and then sharing his thoughts on how healthcare sector leaders should be developed.



"Professor Fung Hong delivering the keynote plenary, entitled "Rethinking Health System Leadership"

This year's PHOM Conference took on a strong collaborative approach, with several breakout sessions thoughtfully designed to bring together experts from different disciplines and sectors together to address a complex problem collaboratively and holistically.



At the Opening Ceremony of the 12th PHOM Conference: [from left] RADM (Dr) Tang Kong Choong, Prof Ivy Ng, Prof Chia Kee Seng, A/Prof Vernon Lee, Prof David Koh, Guest-of-Honour, Senior Minister of State for the Ministry of Health, Dr Lam Pin Min, Dr S R E Sayampanathan, Dr Clive Tan, Professor Fung Hong, COL (Dr) Ng Yih Yng and Dr Lee Meng Har.



PHOM Conference breakout sessions

Cross-Disciplinary breakout sessions

- Ageing in the Community – led by Dr Arthur Chern, from St Andrew's Mission Hospital
- Care Integration & Population-Based Care – led by A/Prof Eugene Shum, from Singhealth
- Infectious Diseases – Environment and Food Safety, led by A/Prof Ooi Peng Lim from the Ministry of Health
- Return to Work – led by A/Prof Lim John Wah from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
- Tackling Chronic Diseases at Work, led by A/Prof Chew Ling from the HPB
- Aviation Medicine – Clinical and Physiological Issues, led by Dr Benjamin Ng
- The Future of Health Informatics, led by A/Prof Jason Yap from the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health

Other than collaboration across disciplines and sectors, the conference also featured dedicated sessions on 'value' – how healthcare providers and systems can deliver 'better outcomes at lower cost'. There was a dedicated session on Health Technology Assessment led by Dr Pwee Keng Ho, and a lunch-time symposium on 'Value-Based Healthcare' sponsored and hosted by Medtronic.

A key highlight of the conference was when Professor David Koh was awarded the College of Public Health and Occupational Physicians' Lifetime Achievement Award. The Award honours exceptional public health or occupational medicine leaders and visionaries who have distinguished themselves through their accomplishments and contributions to the field of public health or occupational medicine (PHOM) in Singapore, and served as role models to the PHOM community.



Prof David Koh (left) receiving the CPHOP 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award from Senior Minister of State and Guest-of-Honor, Dr Lam Pin Min (right)

"Professor David Koh is a passionate educator and dedicated mentor, and one who is fully committed to the intellectual development and success of his students. Professor Koh's warm disposition and approachable nature is evident during our short but memorable interaction with him when he hosted the preventive medicine faculty and residents during a study trip to learn about Brunei Darussalam's public health system in 2015. We thoroughly enjoyed our interactions with Professor Koh."

- Dr Zubaidah Said, Year 4 Preventive Medicine Resident, National University Health System, and Assistant Director (Communicable Diseases Division), Ministry of Health

"We have many visionary leaders within our healthcare setting in Singapore. Many of them have great vision for their institutions and centres but David stood out as having a national rather than a sectoral perspective... I know for a fact that it is not all these titles and accomplishments that gives him the greatest satisfaction. What gives him most satisfaction is to impact the next generation: in Singapore, the region and beyond..."

- an excerpt from the citation, delivered by Professor Chia Kee Seng, Dean, NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health

"Professor David Koh is a true inspiration to many Occupational and Public Health physicians, past and present. He has mentored many of us over his years of distinguished academic and administrative leadership at the National University of Singapore. His students have since gone on to helm key appointments in the ministries, public healthcare institutions and private practice. One of Professor Koh's maxims which I will always remember is to think big and never be inhibited by self-imposed boundaries. His generosity in imparting not only knowledge, but also values, contributed significantly to the growth of generations of Occupational and Public Health practitioners steeped in public service ethos and devoted to improve the health of our working populations."

- Dr Gan Wee Hoe, Director, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Unit, Singapore General Hospital

Please keep a lookout for more information on the 13th annual Public Health and Occupational Medicine Conference in our next newsletter.



Special thanks to:

The organising committee: A/Prof Chew Ling, A/Prof Angela Chow, Dr Daniel Lee, A/Prof Lim John Wah, Dr Benjamin Ng, A/Prof Ooi Peng Lim, Dr Pwee Keng Ho, and A/Prof Eugene Shum.

Session leads: Dr Arthur Chern, Dr Jeremy Lim, A/Prof Matthias Toh, Dr Wong Chiang Yin and A/Prof Jason Yap

Poster and Oral presentation judges: Dr Shanta Emmanuel, A/Prof Lim John Wah, Dr Benjamin Ng and A/Prof Adeline Seow

Emcee for the Opening Ceremony: Dr Zubaidah Said

Conference Secretariats: Ms Goh Chew Lin and Ms Karen Ng

Sponsors: Medtronic (Gold Sponsor), Philips (Silver Sponsor), Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology & Research (CIDER), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

And congratulations to the prize winners:

Best Oral Presentation (Open Category)

- “Is Corneal Arcus an Independent Predictor of Incident Cardiovascular Disease?” by Mr Mark Wong

Best Oral Presentation (Student/Resident Category)

- “The Potential Cost-effectiveness of Introducing a Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine in the UK Elderly Population” by Dr Zubaidah Said

Best Poster Presentation

- “Does Regression to Normal Glucose Regulation and Having Optimal Metabolic Control Reduce the Risks of Future Diabetes Development” by Ms Wong Lai Yin

CME Events

2 August 2017 & 24 October 2017

Two CME talks were organised in second half of the year.

The Law and Ethics talk was held on 2 August 2017 in Ng Teng Fong Hospital. The topic of CME was “Caring for the sick foreign worker - Law and Ethics at the crossroads”, presented by Adjunct Associate Professor Dr Lee See Muah, Senior Consultant in Occupational Medicine, who is also the Chair of Bioethics Committee, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital.



The second CME talk was on Occupational Medicine, held on 24 Oct 2017 at NKF Centre. Dr Lim John Wah and Dr Brian See were presenters for this event. The topic of this CME talk was “Occupational Health for Healthcare Workers - Sharing of HMDP Experiences in London”.



“Spotlight on Residency” - The “Seamless” “Resident”

By Dr Dennis Chia

Dr Dennis Chia is currently working in AIC to develop and implement new eldercare services such as Integrated Home and Day Care (IHDC) and Care Close to Home(C2H), Pharmaceutical Care Services (PCS), etc. Dennis aims to change the intermediate and long term care sector to prepare for the aging population in Singapore.

My year as a houseman affirmed my desire to become a public health physician - I wanted to be involved in decisions at the systems level for better health outcomes. It was a privilege that I was accepted into one of the last few batches of the Public Health Seamless Programme, which was subsequently merged into the Preventive Medicine Residency Training Programme.

Under the Seamless Programme, most of the training sessions, tutorials and talks were done on an ad hoc basis and it was arranged based on what the trainees felt was needed for our own learning. Otherwise, most of our personal development was dependent on the one-on-one sessions with our training supervisors or our direct reporting officers for that posting. I recalled that I had little interaction with the entire faculty because not many of the trainees were able to attend the ad hoc training sessions.

Eventually, the two programmes merged and I was able to join in the Thursday training sessions with the other trainees and residents. The Residency Programme was certainly much more structured compared to the Seamless Programme. The training sessions had a lot more depth and covered topics that were necessary for us to eventually become full-fledged Public Health Physicians. I appreciated the fact that the faculty used a wide range of teaching

methods for the sessions, listened to and responded to the feedback that we gave on the training programme. With this, the training programme gradually gained traction. By getting the residents together for the Thursday session, I had a lot more interaction with the residents and the faculty which had allowed me to build my network, which is an important part of a career in public health. The preparations for the final exit exams also help to crystallise my training and learnings to prepare myself for the next journey.

Really grateful to the faculty and my peers for shaping me to what I am today. Completing the exams just marks the beginning of another chapter in my life to work towards a better tomorrow for our healthcare.



“Spotlight on Residency”

By Dr Lim See Ming

Dr Lim See Ming is currently working at NUH Occupational Health Clinic as associate consultant, See Ming aims to improve the workplace safety and health within NUH and beyond.



Exit is just the beginning of another journey.

I reflected back on my training journey to becoming a newly minted Preventive Medicine (Occupational Medicine) specialist, and was fortunate to have had the opportunity to switch from the old training scheme of Basic Specialty Training (Occupational Medicine) to the new Preventive

Medicine Residency Programme as a Senior Resident.

The Preventive Medicine Residency Programme gave me a chance to appreciate and reflect on the broad national perspectives of the healthcare system and policy via various postings, which allowed me to take a system-based approach when tackling any public or

occupational health issues. Communication is an essential skill that I had learnt under the Programme. Good communication is not only important in providing good patient care and improving patient satisfaction in healthcare settings, but is also crucial in leading, and in influencing various stakeholders to work towards a common goal of improving the health of the public.

Lastly, the Programme had inculcated in me an attitude of constant enquiry. In the ever-changing healthcare landscape, a Preventive Medicine specialist has to constantly reflect and learn about the evolving healthcare needs of the population in order to improve its health and well-being.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my training journey and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my supervisors, colleagues, friends and family for their support throughout this journey. Although it was tough with various challenges along the way, I finally completed the Programme and I am now looking forward to my next

“What’s Happening”

Developing Occupational And Environmental Medicine In SGH And Beyond

By Dr Gan Wee Hoe

Dr Gan Wee Hoe is the Director, Occupational and Environmental Medicine Unit, Singapore General Hospital.

On 1 Sep 2017, the new Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Unit was formally established at the Singapore General Hospital. This is a significant milestone because from one Occupational Medicine specialist before, we have grown overnight to become a clinical Unit comprising three entities.

OEM Unit, along with all other medical specialty departments in SGH, comes under the Division of Medicine. We are constituted by three entities, namely Occupational and Environmental Medicine; Preventive Medicine; and the SGH Staff Clinic. Our mission is to take a leading role in the **occupational and preventive health** of our staff and the regional population, optimise their **therapeutic outcome of occupational fitness**, and contribute towards organisational policies and programs for **Total Workplace Safety and Health**.

Naming of organisations sometimes reflects ancestry, but more often encapsulates their mission and aspirations. By naming our new establishment the Occupational and Environmental Medicine Unit, we are firmly recognising that both Occupational Medicine and Environmental Medicine are inextricably linked. To holistically manage the occupational health issues of patients, we must also consider the health aspects of their interactions with the environment.

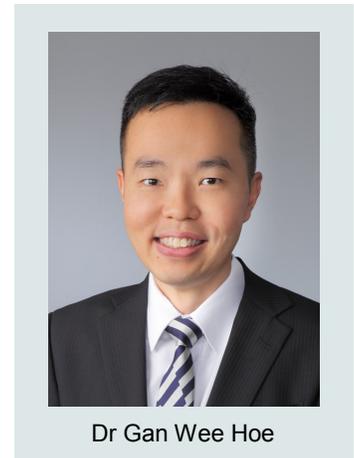
The World Health Organisation defines environmental health as “addressing all the physical, chemical and biological factors external to a person, and all the related factors impacting behaviours. It encompasses the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect health. It is targeted towards preventing disease and creating health-supportive environments”. As most of our patients spend a significant part of their waking hours at the workplace, the workplace environment and conditions immediately become important factors that can affect the health of the individual. By the corollary, the physical, mental and psychosocial wellbeing of the individual can also affect his or her ability to work and the job performance. To the best of knowledge, this is the first clinical unit in Singapore which formally inducts the concept of Environmental Medicine in our practice.

OEM Unit is an important addition to the SGH family. We now have a clinical Unit that is able to dedicate focus on the occupational, environmental and preventive health of our staff and the regional population. We strive to develop and grow our capabilities in clinical services, education and research. In some domains, we will be the lead within SGH. In many areas, we will be supporting and contributing our expertise alongside other stakeholders, both within and outside of SGH. A multi-disciplinary approach in Occupational,

Environmental and Preventive Medicine is important. Themes and issues are often cross-cutting, so no single stakeholder can claim monopoly to the wide-ranging scope that is integral to the nature of this field. This truism applies to medical and health interventions across the prevention-treatment - rehabilitation continuum, whether they are targeted at the individual, organisational or national level.

From a personal perspective, it is also my aspiration to play a useful and meaningful role in contributing towards the advancement of the specialty of Occupational Medicine in Singapore. Occupational Medicine must find renewed relevance in present day Singapore and many parts of the developed world. The traditional occupational diseases of asbestosis and silicosis, which used to be synonymous with Occupational Medicine, are much less relevant for us today in our city-state. Instead, new and emerging areas of occupational and environmental health are in the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections, the health impact of new technology such as nanoparticles, innovative approaches to workplace accident prevention, the use of big data to perform predictive analytics in view of the changing workforce demographics, just to name a few. We can therefore appreciate that the future for Occupational Medicine in a developed country like Singapore remains highly relevant and necessary, as long as we as a fraternity remain nimble, and are prepared to expand our horizon and re-orientate our focus.

The formation of the OEM Unit in SGH is just the preface of a new chapter for SGH. It provides the structure to allow us to start and grow relevant clinical services, and contribute significantly towards the achievement of workplace health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and the regional population. In so doing, we also hope to spur the academic and research development of this specialty not only for SGH, but importantly at the national level. This is core and essential for us, as a fraternity, to achieve the leadership role in Occupational and Preventive Medicine in the region.



Occupational And Environmental Medicine In An Acute Hospital – A Resident’s Perspective

By Dr Seng Yi Feng Melvin

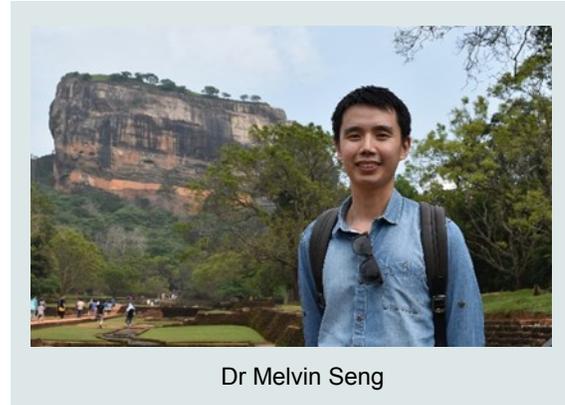
Dr Melvin Seng is the Chief Resident of the NUHS National Preventive Medicine Residency since July 2017, and currently doing his Senior Residency at the Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) Unit in Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

The SGH OEM Unit provides clinical services in prevention, diagnosis and management of occupational and work-related medical conditions, with the aim to return patients to productive work and lives. We also play a role in health promotion and protection, to improve the health and wellbeing of the working population.

As part of a tertiary healthcare institution, the OEM Unit benefits from ready access to excellent healthcare resources. These include collaborations with other healthcare providers (clinical specialists, allied health therapists etc.) which are important for a multidisciplinary approach in the management of patients with complex medical problems. The OEM Unit provides integrated clinical services alongside other specialties, to coordinate the medical care for our patients. Hence, clear communication is imperative between the various healthcare teams, and it is important for residents to have a strong clinical foundation.

There are many hazards in a healthcare institution which can contribute to work-related injuries and illnesses (e.g. sharps injuries and musculoskeletal disorders). We conduct workplace assessments for occupational hazard exposures within and beyond SGH. The learning experiences from workplace visits are valuable for Occupational Medicine Residents to understand the work processes, conduct risk assessments and provide practical recommendations to improve the occupational health of workers.

The OEM Unit in SGH was formed on 1 Sep 2017, and I witnessed the transition and widening scope of our Unit, where there are growing opportunities for the expansion of OEM services and research. We are also involved in the review of hospital policies and implementing programmes to improve the occupational health of our staff. It is essential for OEM to be incorporated as part of the organizational policy decision and implementation, and it is gratifying



Dr Melvin Seng

to be able to contribute our expertise in this team effort. The OEM Unit also participates in the management of communicable disease exposure and outbreaks, where we provide clinical input, and are responsible for the screening and management of exposed staff. Urgency is critical, and we experience first-hand the importance of seamless teamwork among various departments in the healthcare organization. Furthermore, we are working on projects for the management of non-communicable diseases to improve health outcomes, and conducting research for evidence based and informed practice for our staff.

The OEM Unit provides Residents with many opportunities for learning, and we have benefited under the guidance of our OM specialists: Dr Gan Wee Hoe, Dr Fong Yuke Tien, Dr Ho Sweet Far and Prof David Koh. I believe future Residents posted to this training site will also be able to gain exposure and further hone their skills in Clinical Occupational and Environmental Medicine, to become capable Preventive Medicine specialists.

Fellows' Lunch

21 July 2017

The College organized a Fellows' Lunch during the first day of the 51st Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine and 12th Singapore Public Health and Occupational Medicine Conference 2017 at the Paradiso Room, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. 40 Fellows gathered together to socialize, network, and catch up with friends.



Year End Get-Together & CME

23 November 2017

Fellows and Residents attended the Year End Get-Together held on the 23 November 2017 at Spuds and Aprons, The Faber Peak. We were honoured to have Ms Kuik Shiao-Yin to speak on "How to last the good fight". She shared her learning journey in setting up The Thought Collective and from her experiences, what we have learnt about how to build social trust, emotional resilience and sustainability. More than 35 people attended and gathered together to socialize, network, and catch up with friends.



Lunar New Year Lo Hei & CME

23 February 2018

The College Lunar New Year Lo Hei & CME will be held on 23 February 2018. More details will be provided at a later time.



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