

**ADDRESS BY DR SRE SAYAMPANATHAN, MASTER OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE  
INDUCTION COMITIA OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE  
SATURDAY, 18 JANUARY 2020  
CARLTON HOTEL, SINGAPORE**

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Our Guest-of-Honour, Mr George Yeo, Former Cabinet Minister, Singapore  
Professor Dr Rosmawati Mohamed, Master of the Academy of Medicine Malaysia  
Professor Gilberto KK Leung, Vice-President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine  
Council Members  
Fellow Academicians  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to all of you.

1. On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome you to this year's Induction Comitia and the 24th Gordon Arthur Ransome Oration. I would especially like to thank our friends from the Academy of Medicine Malaysia and the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine for having travelled the extra mile to join us on this special occasion.
2. The Singapore-Malaysia and Malaysia-Singapore Congresses of Medicine and Joint Council meetings had been the main occasions when our two Academies met annually. The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine has joined us at these annual events since 2004, and the continuation of these Joint Congresses remain a testament to the strong bonds that we share, affirming our commitment towards maintaining the highest standards of professional and ethical practice in the region. It was regrettable the Tripartite Congress in Hong Kong could not take place as intended; hence I would like to thank you for having accommodated to our change of plans and gracing us with your presence here instead.

**A. FAMS, SRS and FAMS (International)**

3. This afternoon, we bear witness to the induction of 85 new Fellows into the Academy. To our new Fellow Academicians, my heartiest congratulations and welcome on board. You

are now a part of us, helping the Academy to preserve and advance our medical profession. You will also be taking your pledge later, that as a Fellow of the Academy, you will conduct your practice of medicine in accordance with the highest standards and ideals.

4. Today's induction will also witness the conferment of our first FAMS (International) inductee. As part of the Academy's efforts to support bilateral relations between the Singapore and Bruneian governments, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2014 between the Bruneian Government and the Academy. This helped establish pathways for medical and dental specialists in Brunei Darussalam, who have completed Basic Specialty Training in Brunei Darussalam, to undergo Advanced Specialist Training in Singapore.
5. There are currently six Bruneian doctors training in Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, Renal Medicine, Endocrinology and Paediatric Endocrinology. The first AST candidate under this cooperative arrangement started training in September 2016 and the Academy is extremely delighted to share that he has successfully completed his training last August and he is being conferred this afternoon. I trust that the skills that he and his fellow AST trainees picked up during their time here will continue to serve them well, long after they have returned home.
6. 'Congratulations' is also due to our 20 Staff Registrar Scheme Diploma graduates. Your role in our public healthcare system is very important and your presence will strengthen our aim to provide comprehensive and holistic care to our patients. The Academy is very happy that you have fulfilled the stringent requirements to obtaining the SRS Diploma, and the Academy wishes you all the best in your career advancement.

## **B. The Academy of Medicine, Singapore**

7. The Academy of Medicine, Singapore was formed in 1957 with 34 members. At 63-years, the Academy's history is a long one for a relatively young country like Singapore. We have since grown from strength to strength, and now have more than 3,800 members housed

under 13 Colleges and four Chapters. Since inception, our working relationship with the Ministry of Health has always been a close one with the Academy playing an integral role in the Ministry's key initiatives and programmes, all of which you, as Fellow Academicians, can look forward to taking an active part in.

### **C. MOH Workgroup**

8. The Academy was, for example, part of the 12-member MOH Workgroup that had been set up to address concerns from the profession about the taking of informed consent and the disciplinary processes of the Singapore Medical Council. Together with representatives from the College of Family Physicians Singapore and the Singapore Medical Association, several recommendations were made after numerous consultations with the profession.
9. Work is currently in progress for the implementation of these recommendations, including the proposed revisions to the SMC's Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines on informed consent. The joint development of appropriate speciality-specific guidelines to deal with standard commonplace treatments and procedures in each speciality is also underway. These are but some of the ways in which the Academy has played an integral role in the formulation, enhancement and support of new initiatives, and will continue to do so for the betterment of our profession.

### **D. AMS Provision of Professional Opinions**

10. The Academy also works closely with our sister organisations for the benefit of our doctors. The SMC-AMS-CFPS General and Expert Opinion Framework that was implemented in January 2019, gave the SMC Complaints Committee the option to request, from the Academy, an opinion or report by expert(s) in the relevant field. This, coupled with the MOH Workgroup's recommendation for a tribunal-appointed expert to reduce acrimony in proceedings for SMC's disciplinary process, will foreseeably aid the Complaints Committee in its investigations thus enhancing the SMC's CC and DT processes. The positive effects of the initiative have already been observed as the time

taken for the SMC to appoint an expert has been significantly reduced, with notable improvements to the quality of expert reports.

11. It might be interesting to note at this point that several other authorities and regulatory bodies are also in discussion with the Academy for the provision of expert opinions and professional advice. The Academy and our Fellow Academicians can therefore expect to play an increasingly larger role in the setting and upholding of standards of medical practice, professionalism and ethics. I would like to encourage more doctors to attend the Medical Expert Witness Training Course as the knowledge and skills on writing medical expert reports imparted during the course will undoubtedly prove to be an invaluable asset in the foreseeable future.

#### **E. Hospital Medicine Diploma Programme**

12. One of the problems currently plaguing the profession is that of the brain drain of middle-level clinicians. This shrinking of medical manpower within the profession is further exacerbated by the opening of new hospitals. The Academy, together with the Ministry, has developed a two-part 'Hospital Medicine Diploma Programme for the development of Hospital Medicine Clinicians'. This programme aims to not only strengthen the services provided by middle-level doctors, but to also have competent clinicians look after in-patients with multiple co-morbidities and complex medical problems. This opens up a brand-new avenue of career advancement for middle-level clinicians in alignment with the Academy's mission of encouraging life-long learning.

#### **F. 24th Gordon Arthur Ransome Oration**

13. The Academy strives to perpetuate our founding Master's legacy of service to our patients and dedication to teaching, research and statesmanship in the field of medicine and healthcare of the community. Professor Gordon Arthur Ransome continues to be honoured during the years when we play host to the Joint Congress, through the delivery of the Gordon Arthur Ransome Oration. Now it is 24th year, it is a great privilege to have with us Mr George Yeo, Former Cabinet Minister, to deliver this year's Oration. The topic

of 'Human Solidarity in a Fragmenting World' is one that is befitting of the trying times that we are in, and I am sure that there will be many pertinent lessons for us to learn from Mr Yeo's vast experience even as he shares his stories with us today.

## **G. Conclusion**

14. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for being here with us. This afternoon would not be complete without your presence so thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us on this very special occasion.

I wish you all a very enjoyable afternoon.