



We have heard exhortations from the Director of Medical Services, Associate Professor Benjamin Ong, who highlighted the importance of primary care in his speech at the opening of the Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference (APMEC) in January 2017. Transformation of primary care, with the long term goal of “One Singaporean, One Family Doctor” encapsulates the “key role of family doctors as a trusted health partner of every Singaporean.” He further added that with the increasing complexity of healthcare in primary care, “the professional upskilling of primary and community-based physicians through post-graduate Family Medicine training will no long be optional.”³

What does that mean for us in Family Medicine? Is the Cinderella of our healthcare system about to take more of a centre stage? Will more resources be placed in the hands of the practitioners in primary care?

Will family medicine finally be recognised as a medical speciality in its own right?

There is hope yet, as Minister of State for Health, Mr Chee Hong Tat said in his speech at the SMC Physicians' Pledge

in September this year, “There remains an important need for different groups of specialists in our healthcare system, including larger numbers of doctors specialising in areas such as family medicine, internal medicine, geriatrics and palliative care.”⁴ Or as MP for Tanjong Pagar GRC Dr Chia Shi-Lu said, “Greater recognition for family medicine-such as accrediting it as a speciality - is also welcome, to help to shed the impression that GPs and family physicians are but “cough and cold doctors”.⁵

Let us make that our goal for 2018.

1. <http://bostonreview.net/barbara-starfield-the-primary-solution-doctors>
2. https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/speeches_d/2017/speech-by-minister-for-health--mr-gan-kim-yong--at-the-moh-commi.html
3. https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/speeches_d/2017/speech-by-a-prof-benjamin-ong--director-of-medical-services--min.html
4. https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/speeches_d/2017/speech-by-mr-chee-hong-tat--senior-minister-of-state-for-health-2.html
5. <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/big-read-specialists-or-gps-training-review-get-mix-right-just-what-doctor-ordered>

■ CM

Academic Writing Group LKC

by Dr Ng Chee Lian Lawrence, FCFP(S)

Research is an area which brings much fear to the family physician in clinical practice. For most of us, we have hardly any experience nor formal training in it during our undergraduate and clinical careers.

In early part of 2016, the LKC School of Medicine, under Prof Helen Smith, Dept of Family Medicine, started a monthly Saturday afternoon meeting group in a highly interactive, peer-support, small group format and the participants' objectives determines the course content.

It aims to help develop participants' scientific writing skills that will enable them to write clearly and meaningfully for a wide range of audiences and publish their research. Participants came from National Healthcare Group (NHG) and College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS).

At each meeting, we update on members writing endeavours, short presentation & an activity (e.g. questions, analysis of examples etc.)

Titles included From research to publication: Writing for publication; Getting published; The art & mastery of scientific writing.

Learning Objectives were:

- Understand the scientific writing process
- Reflect on what constitutes a research question and how it can be addressed in a scientific paper
- Organise and compose a manuscript in line with the IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) and scientific journal requirements
- Understand the conventions of scientific writing
- Reflect on the ethics, authorship and conflict of interest in research

- Understand the peer-review process, including why manuscripts get accepted or rejected
- Learn how to reply to reviewers' comments
- Develop strategies for peer-reviewing papers

Course syllabus included:

1. What scientific writing looks like: scientific writing process
2. How to shape your writing: types of research, publications & journals
3. How to get published: developing a publication strategy
4. What to keep in mind: ethics, data management, authorship rules & conflicts of interest
5. How to write: style, drafts, peer-review & plagiarism
6. How to submit: letter to the editor, referencing, tables & figures
7. How to improve: peer-review, addressing comments & dealing with rejection
8. How to review: being a peer reviewer

The group of us included doctors from the NHG Polyclinics and members of the College, particularly those doing research for the Fellowship exams.

We enjoyed the more gradual and relaxed pace of teaching by Prof Helen and Prof Lorraine Tudor. Learning research was more fun and less painful this way. Through this article, we hope more of us can see the value of research and learn how to write masterfully for publication through participating in such courses. There is never quite a perfect moment to do it, except to embark on it first and perfecting it along the way!

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