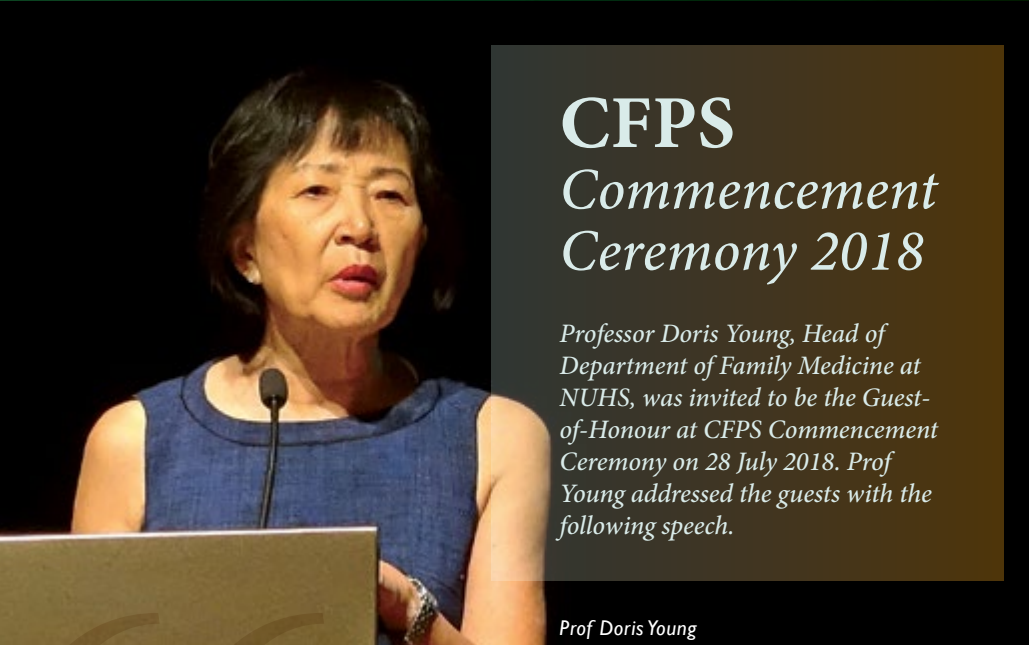




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CFPS Commencement Ceremony 2018

Professor Doris Young, Head of Department of Family Medicine at NUHS, was invited to be the Guest-of-Honour at CFPS Commencement Ceremony on 28 July 2018. Prof Young addressed the guests with the following speech.

Prof Doris Young

IN THIS ISSUE:



COLLEGE WELCOMES WONCA PRESIDENT

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Thank you, Dr Tan Tze Lee for your kind invitation to speak at the Commencement Ceremony today.

Good afternoon, colleagues and friends and a special welcome to all the residents, doctors who have decided to enter the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) training programme. I am Doris Young, Professor and Head of the newly established Department of Family Medicine at NUHS (which is only 5 months old). Hopefully, together with Professor Helen Smith from LKC Medicine, the College of Family Physicians Singapore and all of you sharing the journey to raise academic Family Medicine in Singapore to another level.

So to the FM trainees who commence today, you all came from different backgrounds, some straight from

internship, some from other branches of medical practice – no matter, you have all decided to enter FM training. Majority of you have enrolled in the Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine (GDFM) (247), others in Masters of Medicine (20) and the rest in the Fellowship programme (19). I gathered that the College FM training programme is a modular programme with GDFM at the basic

Regardless of your journey to get here - whether it is by choice or by chance - you have all made the right move, saw the light and entered FM training.

level and then building up to a more advanced Masters and finally to a senior consultant level with the Fellowship programme. I guess most of you just wanted to gain some skills in FM and then perhaps move on to do the Masters later and then the Fellowship to gain more research skills. Regardless of your journey to get here – whether it is by choice or by chance – you have all made the right move, saw the light and entered FM training.

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(continued from Cover Page: CFPS Commencement Ceremony 2018)

The medical workforce needs more and better trained GPs/FPs. I was in London just a few weeks ago and one of the plenary speakers, Professor Val Wass presented a report commissioned by Medical Schools Council and Health Education England in the UK entitled 'By Choice, Not by Chance'. The report highlighted some of the reasons for the decline in medical students in UK choosing General Practice and contained some excellent recommendations to overcome the decline. In addition to the usual workload demands, negativism about general practice, one key reason still holds true to this day everywhere amongst the medical profession and the community – the low status of general practice and general practitioners. It is indeed hard to understand why this perception holds so strongly considering worldwide as a workforce, General Practitioners and Family Doctors form the largest group of doctors. We ought to have so much 'bargaining power' and yet there remains a sense of professional low self-esteem as in some countries, Family Medicine/General Practice is still not recognised as a medical specialty in its own right with poorer remuneration and status. I think time has come for us to stand up and be proud of our roles and contributions.

WONCA Award Excellence in Health Care- Attributes of a 5-Star Primary Health Care Doctor

- A care provider- with skills to deliver preventive, acute, continuing, whole person care, family care, build trusting relationships
- A decision maker-chooses technologies ethically and cost effectively to enhance care
- An effective communicator-to promote healthy life style and improve care to the population
- A community leader- understands the community health needs and initiate actions in consultation and on behalf of the community
- A team member- works with individuals and organisations within the health care system to meet patient and community's needs

I think if we were challenged as being JUST a General Practitioner implying that we are not specialising in any particular branch of medicine and thus 'not so good', then the organ or systems specialists ought to be known as 'partialists' as pointed out to me by some other colleagues. Well, we don't really want a debate or set up a war of words but rather raise the status of FM and our roles by delivering quality care to the community.

(continued on the next page)

(continued from Page 3: CFPS Commencement Ceremony 2018)

This slide reminded us that all doctors, in particular, family physicians ought to practise quality care, applying ethical principles, show compassion and respect to patients, develop good listening skills, updating and maintaining our breath of knowledge, and if you do this well, you are on a journey to a fulfilling career in Family Medicine. We have seen many TV shows with good GP role models and in nearly all of them they listened, showed compassion and cared for their patients and their families.

So are these qualities of a well-trained family physician aspired to by Dr Wong Heck Sing ... the second President of the CFPS who in his delivery of the first Sreenivasan Oration in 1978 some 40 years ago envisioned?

He stated:

1. "The decline (of general practice) is due to fewer and fewer graduates venturing into a territory that is uncharted, untaught and unsung in the academic world"
2. "...The future general practitioner or family physician Needs a broad education and should not concentrate on the physical and biological sciences to the exclusion of the humanities and the arts....and this understanding (of people) will heighten his sensitivity to the feelings of his fellow men..."
3. The answer (to prohibitive healthcare costs) ... is in preventive medicine and no one in the medical profession is as well placed as the general practitioner to do the job provided he is well trained."
4. "In no other field of practice is it more necessary for the practitioner to continue his learning process throughout his professional career."

So some 40 years later, how does what Dr Wong declared what a good Family doctor should do compare to what WONCA stated as the qualities of a 5-star Primary Care doctor? Are we nearly there?

WONCA's attributes of a 5-Star Primary Health Care Doctor comprise of:

- A care provider - with skills to deliver preventive, acute, continuing, whole person care, family care, build trusting relationships
- A decision maker - chooses technologies ethically and cost effectively to enhance care
- An effective communicator- to promote healthy life style and improve care to the population
- A community leader - understands the community health needs and initiate actions in consultation and on behalf of the community
- A team member - works with individuals and organisations within the health care system to meet patient and community's needs

I think Singapore is now finally heeding Dr Wong's plea to strengthen Family Medicine workforce, to deliver the types of care he envisaged when he headed CFPS some 40 years ago. Well, at least I think it is getting close when one looks at this recent slide shown by the Ministry of Health, declaring the three Beyonds: from hospital to the community, health care to health and from quality to value. This strategy is absolutely vital as Singapore is facing a rise in its ageing population, chronic diseases resulting in unsustainable rising health care costs. The National strategy is to promote healthy living, strengthen early detection and follow up, enhance disease management and prevent complications. Family doctors can take up the challenge to screen, prevent and promote health as its core business. The Commonwealth fund study in the USA have demonstrated convincingly that a country with a strong primary health care system such as New Zealand, UK, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands etc., spent about 9% of the country's GDP on health care thus enjoyed the best health outcomes in addition to access, and equity for their communities.

However, to meet the challenges of becoming a 5-star doctor, we cannot underestimate the demands put on the GPs who face an increasing high patient load/demand. Not only do they have to run a well-managed practice, we at the Universities asked them to teach students, residents, trainees and help us with research. Of course for some GPs, they also play a vital part in advancing the profession such as College work. What about our families? Children, siblings, parents and partners also need to be cared for. Have we got any time left for ourselves in personal growth development and have a life?



Therefore in order to last the distance, so to speak, we need to strike a balance like this acrobatic lady (who reminds me of myself) and some of you who often wear multiple hats, the demand put on our lives is like spinning the plates, keep everything going – our children, parents, career – and can't afford to let one plate drop. The burden on top of our heads is often the issue that caused us the most stress and headache, e.g. the unhappy child, illness, unhappy relationships, etc.

Thus, in order to survive, we all need to learn to relax and find some outlet in life and of course, being such self-driven individuals with many of us having some OCD traits, even when we try to relax we want to pursue relaxing activities relentlessly, to be the fastest, the best! So don't forget in your life journeys, to stop and smell the roses and for these cows to eat some roses.



To conclude, a reminder to all the GPs here to say to people when they ask you what do you do for a living, you say I am a doctor, then if they ask you what sort of a doctor, you reply with confidence as in this billboard displayed in the Perth airport in Australia, "I am a GP (NOT JUST a GP) and your specialist in life'.

Thank you for your attention.

■ CM

CFPS Thanks Our Immediate Past Programme Directors

by Dr Chan Hian Hui, Vincent, FCFP(S), Council Member, Team C Editor

The College of Family Physicians Singapore, thanked 3 of our immediate past Programme Directors during our Commencement Ceremony 2018 on 28 July 2018, with tokens of appreciation given out by College President, Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee. They are:



Dr Kwong Kum Hoong

Dr Kwong served as GDFM Programme Director from 2009 till 2018. While in this role, more than 500 doctors were trained.

Dr Eng Soo Kiang

Dr Eng served as GDFM Associate Programme Director from 2016 to 2018.

Dr Julian Lim

Dr Lim served as Master of Medicine (Family Medicine) College Programme, Programme Director from 2007 to 2018. Under his watch, some 96 doctors were trained.

As 3 Programme Directors step down, so is College pleased to welcome:

- 1) **Dr Wong Tien Hua**, as the incoming GDFM Programme Director
- 2) **Dr Lawrence Ng**, as the incoming GDFM Associate Programme Director
- 3) **Dr Suraj Kumar**, as the new Programme Director for the MMed (Family Medicine) College Programme. College also congratulates Dr Suraj on his new appointment to the Singapore Medical Council by Minister of Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong.

■ CM