

such system where their patients' readings can be made known to them and taken action upon. There may also be a need to step out of clinic walls to form community care teams, working alongside nurses and allied health colleagues to deliver primary, continuing and palliative care.

The College can play a critical role in this transformation by constantly sensing, and developing the continuing education needs of our family doctors. This needs to be coordinated with the other academic bodies such as the universities, sponsoring institutions for residency programs so that we develop a robust continuing education to train a pipeline of future ready family doctors.

Academia will also strengthen family medicine. At the inaugural Asian Pacific Academic Primary Care Group meeting in June 2018 in Hong Kong, Singapore contributed

6 scholars. The scholars have embarked or are embarking on PhD studies, showing Singapore FM's commitment to academia. With strong academics and clinically important research in family medicine, I believe the future of family medicine should be bright.

Finally, Unity is strength. Sometimes, to optimize the system, you require sub-optimization of other parts. We need to unite as a healthcare system and allow the flow of resources from tertiary to community care to happen. There has also been lack of consensus on what is family medicine in Singapore. Within the local family medicine scene, I feel we have to look beyond our practice boundaries and embrace "One Discipline, Many Settings" to flourish. In the end, it is the sum of all these parts that will flourish and define FM, FM that is driven by the health needs of our Singaporeans.

■ CM

Interview with an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)

Interviewed by Dr Yuen Sok Wei Julia, Editorial Board Member

With the ageing population and increasing number of patients with complex bio- psycho- social needs, a multidisciplinary team approach can help achieve an effective individualized care plan for the patient. Ms Ang Kim Wai, an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) from Tampines Polyclinic, has been an important member of the multidisciplinary team. She works closely with polyclinic doctors, participates actively during multidisciplinary team meetings and provides care for patients with both acute and chronic conditions.

College Mirror (CM):

Could you tell us a bit more about yourself for a start?

Ms Ang Kim Wai (AKW):

I first started my nursing at KKH after graduating from School of Nursing in 1985. I left KKH after 4 years, and joined a private O&G clinic followed by a stint as an industrial nurse. Life is a continuous learning journey. After more than 10 years in the private sector, I felt stagnant and lacking in knowledge as there was limited continuing professional education provided and new experiences. This is when I decided to join the public sector to broaden my horizon with more learning opportunities.

I joined SHP in 2004. Obtaining my Degree in Nursing, Advanced Diploma in Community Health and Master in Nursing during my years in SHP were major milestones and a huge leap in the amount of knowledge that I have gained. I have been an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) at Tampines

Polyclinic since November 2013. I recently completed the National Collaborative Prescribing Programme in June 2018 which allows me to prescribe medicine for patients without requiring a doctor's countersignature.

CM:

What motivated you to be an APN in Medicine?

AKW:

As an APN in Medicine, my role is mostly about delivering care. I play a role in patients' treatment and how their medical care is designed. This is incredibly satisfying as I like interacting with patients. I am able to see patients for 2 to 3 visits with longer consultation time. The continuity of care builds up rapport which helps patients with lifestyle changes, adherence and self-care which is critical in chronic disease management. Patients will see the value of APN service when their control improves. That is the biggest achievement which motivates me. It gives me a sense of satisfaction.

CM:

Could you share with us what your daily work encompasses?

(continued on the next page)



Ms Ang Kim Wai

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AKW:

APNs hold dual portfolio, ie. medical and nursing roles. Clinically, APNs in the polyclinic see patients with chronic conditions such as Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, Hypothyroid and Asthma. We evaluate patients' responses to medication changes, conduct physical examination, order and interpret blood test results and provide patient education. We also initiate treatment for patients with suboptimal control for chronic diseases in collaboration and consultation with the medical team. The patients will be referred to doctors if they fall outside the APN's scope of practice.

We also participate in multidisciplinary discussion targeted at improving clinical outcomes of patients with complex chronic conditions, alongside with doctors and other healthcare professionals.

Nursing roles include clinic improvement projects, research, patient education, developing nurses' skills in managing chronic conditions through in-house education programs and committee involvement.

CM:

Congratulations on passing the Collaborative Prescribing Programme! Could you share with us your learning experience?

AKW:

I was very grateful to be selected as the first batch to go for the training. The programme was conducted over 3 months. It was very challenging especially the OSCE but an enriching experience. I had lots of support from the medical team. For example, a senior doctor was assigned to guide me during the 3 months. My course mates were also very helpful. We shared knowledge and experiences, and encouraged one another throughout the course.

CM:

What words of encouragement / advice would you like to give to other aspiring APNs?

AKW:

Nurses now have many career paths to choose from, such as clinical, management, research and education. APNs are in great demand due to the needs for expert nursing care at advanced level of practice because of aging population and changing health care needs. APNs are the pinnacle of the clinical track. Nurses who enjoy direct patient care and challenges should consider becoming an APN. The advice I can give is to never stop learning. To be most effective and greatest resource for each patient is to keep your knowledge fresh. The rapport and relationship with patients are very heart-warming. It is a rewarding career.

■ CM

FAMILY PRACTICE SKILLS COURSE

Update in Asthma Management

The College of Family Physicians Singapore would like to thank the Expert Panel for their contribution to the Family Practice Skills Course #75 on "Update in Asthma Management", held on 22 September 2018.

Expert Panel:

Dr See Kay Choong
A/Prof Koh Siyue Mariko
Dr Quah Lishan Jessica
Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee

Chairperson:

Dr Aysha Reema Muhusin

Nutrition as Medicine; Addressing Sarcopenia and Diabetes

The College of Family Physicians Singapore would like to thank the Expert Panel for their contribution to the Family Practice Skills Course #76 on "Nutrition as Medicine; Addressing Sarcopenia and Diabetes", held on 06 October 2018.

Expert Panel:

Dr Tan Hwee Huan
Dr Samuel Chew
Ms Debbie Thong

Chairperson:

A/Prof Goh Lee Gan