

It's just a few weeks since the start of 2020, and very soon after that the Lunar New Year.

by Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee, President, 27th Council, College of Family Physicians Singapore

And what a new year this had been! We had ruminations of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in early January. What a 2020 this has been.

The world has gone into crisis mode, what with worldwide shortages of masks and hand sanitizers, even our "troops" on the ground are having challenges getting their personal protective equipment. Lines outside pharmacies waiting for masks....

Thankfully we have the gift of hindsight. SARS in 2003 and H1N1 in 2009 taught us many valuable lessons. MOH engaged with our primary care doctors and established pandemic preparedness clinics. We have the reassurance that MOH will support us when the need arises.

Primary care physicians, both public and private, are the bedrock of our healthcare system. As the foot soldiers of our healthcare system, we make the difference by being there for our people, for our community, for our nation.

We were not prepared for SARS. It was a totally new phenomenon that took all of us by surprise. When 2009 came along, we were better prepared. Many of us had signed up to be pandemic prepared, and we had the reassurance that the Ministry of Health would be supporting us.

Fast forward to 2020, and we now have COVID-19. The world is in lockdown mode, and many airlines have canceled their flights to China. Many countries have barred entry or

even transit for visitors who had been in mainland China in the previous 14 days. The United States of America temporarily banned entry for all foreign nationals who had travelled to China in the previous 2 weeks. US nationals who returned from Hubei Province were placed into mandatory 14-day quarantines. Australia and Israel soon followed suit with similar restrictions. In Singapore, these measures kicked in at 2359 hours on 1st February 2020.

Those of us on the ground have been doing the best we can. As the situation evolves we have had to manage the best we can. Thankfully MOH has been reaching out to the College and SMA; together, we helped to distribute masks to our colleagues over the New Year weekend. That brought much relief to many of our beleaguered brethren. These masks were made available to us by MOH, and for this we are grateful. For our GPs and FPs serving in the frontlines, we need resupply, and having this will give us the confidence to carry on the good fight.

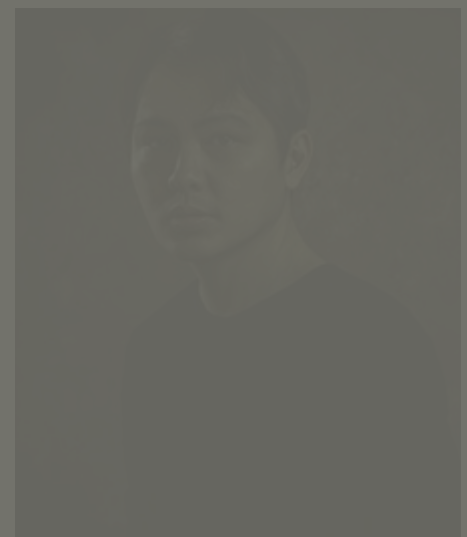
The situation on the ground is constantly evolving. We have been informed that we have a small cluster of locally transmitted cases related to overseas visitors. Admirably, our leadership has demonstrated immense candor and transparency, and this has tremendously to mitigate against the propagation of myths and mistruths. We may well have to ride through this for extended period of time. Together, in close partnership, we must help each other through this challenging time, and keep our morale high. And in this way we can show the world that we are a force to be reckoned with and can prevail against all odds.

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Travel Photography Interview with Dr Robin Yong

Interviewed by Dr Tan Li Wen Terence,
Editorial Board Member

Robin Yong is a multi-award winning Travel and Commercial Photographer, trained by famous American photographer Jim Zuckerman, the world famous Venetian Masks Florine Houee and Danielle Massart, and legendary Hollywood photographer Greg Gorman. He enjoys traveling to exotic destinations to befriend and photograph the locals. He is best known for his work on the Omo Valley tribes in Ethiopia, the Venetian Masked models in Venice, the Bokator boxers of Cambodia and the Maikos of Kyoto. He calls these works his Travel Portraits, his Art of Travel Medicine. For most of his works, he does not use flash, reflectors or artificial lighting, depending solely on natural lighting alone. The photos are often dramatic, colourful and extremely beautiful. For Robin, every photo must look like a movie poster...



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