

(continued from Page 5: The Show Must Go On!)

31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to discuss the possible problems and solutions for MMed(FM) and GDFM training via videoconferencing, and the go-ahead was given to A/Prof Cheong and Dr Lim that same day by President of the College, Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee for e-conferencing of the MMed(FM) Tutorial to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020. A trial was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for an MMed(FM) tutorial with the lesson beamed to tutors not involved in the session to test out the audio and visual quality using the organic microphone, camera, speaker and screens of the handphones, iPads and computers.

On 6<sup>th</sup> February, the Council approved the subscription for Zoom to be used for bigger group like the GDFM. Additional equipment was bought and delivered by the same day in preparation for a trial to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

That same night, Singapore raised the DORSCON level to Orange, due to the first case of local transmission. With immediate effect, organisers of large-scale events were advised to cancel or defer them. Yet, a GDFM workshop



GDFM PD, Dr Wong Tien Hua, inaugurating the first online GDFM workshop. From left is Dr Irwin Chung, the chairman for the session and Joel Woo, one of the Secretariat staff assisting.

was already scheduled to be held the very next day with up to 500 participants. Each workshop would only occur once every 2 years with external specialists. At such short notice and with untested solutions, the College educators

# Keep Calm and Carry On

## Overcoming challenges to post-graduate medical education in era of COVID-19 Pandemic

by Dr Wee Wei Chieh Nelson, MMed (FM) College Associate Programme Director

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on both globally and in Singapore, there have been inevitable challenges to the provision of post-graduate medical education to front line healthcare workers.

With the escalation of the DORSCON levels, an array of infection control measures ranging from restrictions on cross-institutional movement to safe social distancing have been implemented progressively. These measures have resulted in significant disruption to the way that we have trained our students. This is especially so for the MMed (FM) College Programme which has a heavy emphasis on clinical and bed-side teaching. The College always prioritises the well-



Prof Cheong Pak Yean guiding the MMed (FM) College Faculty on utilisation of technology in providing distance education to students (From left to right, Dr S Suraj Kumar, Dr Nelson Wee, Prof Cheong Pak Yean, Dr Julian Lim and Ms Patricia Cheok)

being of our staff and students, and hence has adhered strictly to all measures necessary to create a safe learning environment. Even under these trying circumstances, the College strives to explore and utilise innovative technologies and creative methodologies to ensure the continuity of quality medical education for our students.

Under the guidance of our venerable Professor Cheong Pak Yean and with the aid of Dr Julian Lim and Ms Patricia Cheok, the programme has

seamlessly transformed from traditional face-to-face classroom teaching to distance learning. Pilot teaching sessions using Zoom and iHEED platforms were explored



Dr Kenneth Tan (right) helping to ensure that the videoconference goes on smoothly

On 7th February, College staff and some Council members went to the office above A/Prof Cheong's Cheong Medical Clinic in the afternoon to set up the host broadcast. The software and hardware were set up and tested on a small scale. At 2.30pm, it was showtime. A total of 477 participants logged into the ZOOM meeting, where the College staff and tutors faced a trial by fire. We had to solve technical issues faced by students using the software for the first time – guide the lecturer and presenter on how to use the software, while optimising audio and video quality, monitoring the text chat and moderating the discussion. It was a team effort that made the first video-conferencing GDFM workshop a success.

decided the show must go on with the GDFM workshop. The lecturers, presenters and students were informed about the change in venue, and a hotline was set up for students to call if they had any difficulties.

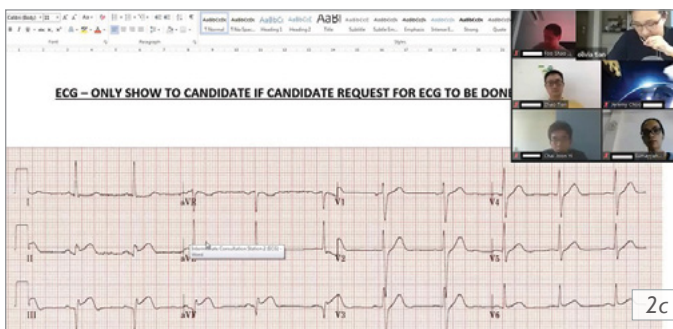
Since then, many teaching sessions were migrated to video-conferencing. MOH/CFPS webcast on PHPC activation and MMed(FM) tutorials are some notable examples. All thanks to the forward thinking and pioneering efforts of the College, there was minimal disruption to the education of our colleagues in this period of physical isolation.



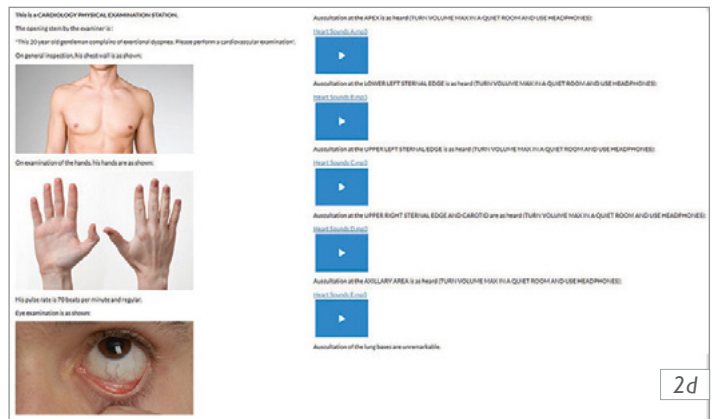
2a



2b



2c



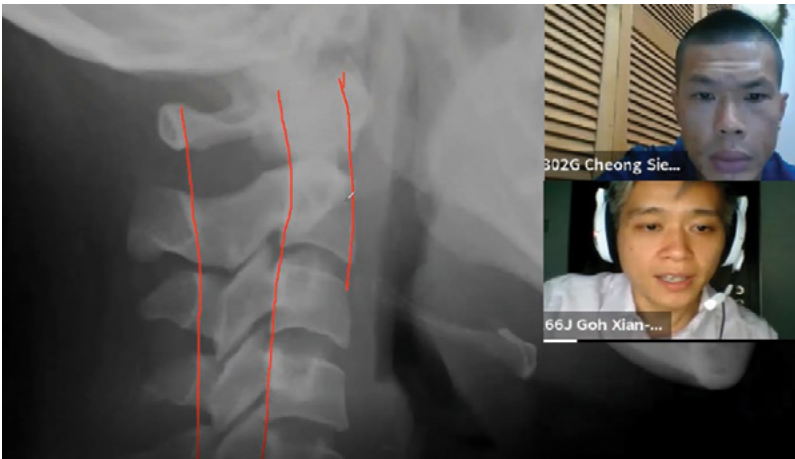
2d

Pictures 2a to 2d (clockwise from top left): Use of both iHEED and Zoom platform to deliver distance learning with spanning interactive consultation to physical examination skills.

(continued on Page 9)



(continued from Page 7: Keep Calm and Carry On)



Core faculty member Dr James Cheong Siew Meng collaborating with Radiologist Consultant Dr Charles Goh Xian-yang to deliver a 3-part series of radiology tutorials on Zoom platform to both College trainees and institutional residents.



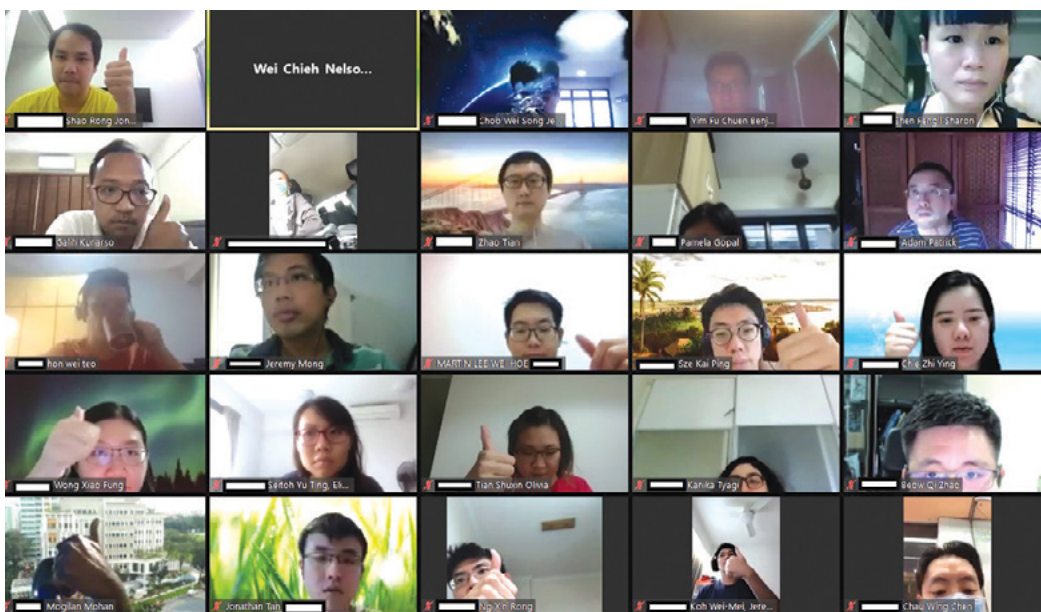
Adjunct Associate Professor Martin Chio delivering a live-streamed interactive distance learning session on Approach to Management of Dermatologic Conditions.

and implemented. Both education materials and quizzes were made available online for self-learning and practice. Teaching of consultative skills were migrated from the traditional clinic-settings to live streaming via video-conferencing platforms. Physical examination skills were taught using a repository of digital auscultation resources as well as simulated scenarios.

The programme has also continued the time-honoured tradition of working with eminent specialist colleagues to deliver specialty training for our students. Adjunct Associate Professor Martin Chio (National Skin Centre) started the ball rolling with a live-streamed interactive session on the Approach to Management of Dermatologic Conditions. Dr Charles Goh Xian-yang (Consultant Radiologist, Singapore

General Hospital), in collaboration with our core faculty member, Dr James Cheong Siew Meng, launched a 3-part series on interpretation of radiological images for both College students and institutional residents.

If anything, the disruption brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic has only strengthened the resolve of the College to overcome all challenges that have been placed before us. To quote Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's now famous address to the United Kingdom on the COVID-19: "We will meet again." Till the time when our staff and students are able to meet physically again, the programme core motto (borrowing another famous British war time ethos) will be: "Keep calm and carry on."



College MMed (FM) Programme students on Zoom platform.