

Epilogue

This book is a collection of pictorial observations of the illness experience by medical students, and of reflective prose of the same by veteran family physicians. The first edition was well received by the medical fraternity who could identify with the accounts therein. Some patients were also able to relate to the stories. One patient asked for additional copies of the book. When probed, she revealed that she wanted to use the vignette in *Still Family* about same-sex marriage to break the news of her daughter's upcoming nuptial celebrations.

The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent global disruption have increased our awareness of our common experience. In a way, the affliction of the “heart” in the Zika outbreak of 2016 shared in *The Plague of Epidemics* was an ominous herald of the pandemic that currently besets us. The material in the book provides a useful substrate for enriching the experience of doctors and students.

This book serves an additional mission, which is to train family physicians to venture beyond the framework of evidence-based medicine into the realm of narrative-based medicine. Narrative-based medicine, with a focus on the experiences of the various illness participants, helps us to see health and disease in the context of the wider human condition. We hope *Being Human* is a small step in this direction.

Cheong Pak Yean & Ong Chooi Peng
October 2021

About the Drawings

The drawings in this book were produced by successive cohorts of medical students from 2012 to 2017. This was done in a workshop to round up the patient encounter experiences, which was conducted by A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean towards the end of their Family Medicine posting in the third year at Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore.

These drawings represent the perceptions of beginning practitioners, looking at healthcare custom and interactions with youthful eyes.

For each drawing, the year the drawings were produced and the clinical group reference are indicated. For some drawings, we are able to identify the group or the year, but not both, and for some, we deeply regret that we are able to identify neither.

Chapter 1

1.1 2017 CG15*; 1.2 CG29; 1.3 2017 CG40; 1.4; 1.5 2013 CG2; 1.6 2013 CG15; 1.7 2012 CG4; 1.8; 1.9 CG2

Chapter 2

2.1 2014 CG37; 2.2 2017 CG18; 2.3 2013 CG13; 2.4 2013 CG25; 2.5 2014 CG41; 2.6 CG16; 2.7 CG28; 2.8; 2.9 2013 CG01; 2.10; 2.11 2013 CG10; 2.12; 2.13 2012 CG1; 2.14 2012 CG15; 2.15 2016; 2.16 2012 CG3

Chapter 3

3.1; 3.2 2012; 3.3 2013 CG5; 3.4 2013 CG11; 3.5 2013 CG06; 3.6 CG5; 3.7 2017 CG43; 3.8 2012 CG7; 3.9 2012 CG38; 3.10; 3.11 CG24; 3.12; 3.13; 3.14 2012 CG14; 3.15 CG42; 3.16 2012 CG39; 3.17 2012 CG12; 3.18 2014

Chapter 4

4.1 2013 CG19; 4.2 2014; 4.3 2013 CG12; 4.4 2012 CG37; 4.5 2012 CG36; 4.6 2012; 4.7 2013 CG1; 4.8 2013 CG18; 4.9 2013 CG29; 4.10 CG34; 4.11 2013 CG23; 4.12 CG7; 4.13 2014; 4.14 2012 CG34

Chapter 5

5.1; 5.2 2013 CG28; 5.3 2017; 5.4; 5.5 2013 CG38b; 5.6 2017 CG1; 5.7 2018 CG13; 5.8; 5.9; 5.10 2012 CG33; 5.11 2017 CG38; 5.12; 5.13 CG13; 5.14 2018 Phoong ZY

*1.1 2017 CG15 means that the drawing in Chapter 1.1 was drawn in 2017 by Clinical Group 15.

About the Editors and Contributors

The following doctors have dipped deeply into their troves and shared liberally. As the focus of this book is on the human experience, details of post-graduate qualifications and institutional affiliations have been omitted. The year of graduation is included to provide a context to the reflections shared. The numbers refer to the chapters contributed by the individual doctors. Unless otherwise stated, they are all family physicians. The information was accurate at time of printing the first edition in 2019.

Editors

Cheong Pak Yean (MBBS 1974) is a family and internal medicine physician who is also a psychotherapist in private practice. He teaches undergraduates and has an interest in medical humanism and communication, and is a past president of the College and the Singapore Medical Association. (1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.6, 2.15, 3.6, 4.1, 5.8, 5.11, 5.14)

Ong Chooi Peng (MBBS 1988) practises in a polyclinic and also in a community hospital. She counts it her blessing to have been part of Family Medicine in Singapore through a time of formation and growth. (1.4, 2.6, 4.1, 5.2, 5.6)

Contributors

Ang Lai Lai (MBBS 1984) practises in a polyclinic and is part of the clinical faculty for undergraduate and postgraduate Family Medicine training with NUS. She is also accredited as a medical mediator. (3.13, 3.14, 3.15)

Angela Tan Qiuli (MBBS 2007) works with geriatric and palliative patients in the community. She is certified in sexual medicine and is also an intimacy coach in private practice. She teaches medical students and has a special interest in human dynamics. (3.7, 3.8, 3.9)

Ann Toh (MBBS 2010) is a Family Medicine resident who enjoys the privilege of caring for patients in the context of their real lives from cradle to grave, and feels that she is currently passionately pursuing the heart of medicine. (3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 5.9, 5.10)

Chang Tou Liang (MBBS 1990) is in private practice. He is a husband, father, piano fancier, cat collector, and is also sometimes remembered as the most prolific music reviewer of *The Straits Times* ever. (2.16)

Chong Phui-Nah (MBBS 1991) is a family physician, clinician administrator, and clinical teacher. She is based in the polyclinics and is interested in primary care transformation, behavioural economics, and healthcare innovation. (2.4)

Choong Shoon Thai (MBBS 1997) works in a polyclinic and also runs a weekly Dungeons & Dragons game. (2.10)

D Gowri (MBBS 1992) is a family physician with additional duties in care integration. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to others, having deep conversations, learning, and occasionally having some time alone. (3.17)

Darren Seah (MBBS 2001) is a family physician with an interest in cardiovascular medicine and endocrinology. He is also the programme director of a Family Medicine residency. (1.2)

Goh Lee Gan (MBBS 1971) is a past president of the College, the Singapore Medical Association, as well as the Asia Pacific chapter of the World Association of Family Doctors. He started the academic Family Medicine programme in NUS in 1987 and also the Master of Medicine training programmes. He considers himself the midwife of Family Medicine in Singapore although many of us think of him as the father! (2.6, 5.12, 5.13)

Goh Wei Leong (MBBS 1985) is in private practice. He co-founded a charity to serve migrant workers in 2006 and was named the Singaporean of the Year in 2017 by *The Straits Times*. (2.11, 2.12)

Grace Chiang (MBBS 2012) is a family physician with a background in public health, who is currently practising in a community hospital. Her research and clinical interests include population health, ageing in place, and frailty. (4.2, 4.3)

Grace Lum (MBBS 2013) works with home-bound patients and ambulatory patients in a community hospital. She is also a wife and mum to a toddler and a handsome brown dog. (4.4, 4.5)

Irwin Chung (MBBS 1999) practises in a polyclinic. He is interested in professional education, end-of-life care, and clinical practice improvement. (1.1)

Jean-Jasmin Lee (MBBS 2000) is a family physician with accreditation in sexual medicine. She has a special interest in paediatric and women's health. (3.7, 3.12)

Julian Lim (MBBS 1988) is in private practice. He actively teaches in the College graduate diploma and fellowship programmes and is the long-suffering and longest-serving past director of the College Master of Medicine programme. (1.9)

Lee Kheng Hock (MBBS 1987) was a general practitioner for ten years before he set up the first Family Medicine department in a hospital in Singapore. He currently works in a community hospital and is involved in undergraduate teaching, care integration, community-based medical education, and health services research. He is a past president of the College and the current Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians chair at the Academy of Medicine. (2.5)

Lee Pheng Soon (MBBS 1982) is a family physician in private practice who is also a pharmaceutical physician employed by the industry. He is a past president of the Singapore Medical Association and comes from a long family tradition of GPs spanning four generations. (5.5)

Lee Yik Voon (MBBS 1987) practises in MacPherson and is a member of the National General Practitioner Advisory council. He is a pet lover, proud owner of a dog, and regular feeder of the neighbourhood cats. He plays online war games and feels that playing Pokemon Go is a good form of exercise. He is the current president of the Singapore Medical Association. (5.4)

Lily Aw (MBBS 1980) is the clinical lead for a Primary Care Network. For the past thirty years, she has driven across town from home to her clinic to attend to her patients. In the past year, however, her journey has included a stop to play with her grand-daughter who has totally and

irrevocably captured her heart! (2.13, 2.14)
Lim Chee Kong (MBBS 1996) is a senior consultant family physician in a polyclinic. (2.3)

Lim Fong Seng (MBBS 1990) is the past head of the Division of Family Medicine at NUS. He enjoys reading, watching movies, and soccer, and is an avid fan of the biggest British football club in the world. (2.1)

Linus Chua (MBBS 2008) is practising in a community hospital, with a special interest in dementia care. He is involved in community and humanitarian projects locally and overseas. (1.6)

Loh Cheng (MBBS 2001) is in public service and in the past has been involved in rehabilitation and elderly care training in Yunnan, China. (2.11, 2.12)

Low Lian Leng (MBBS 2006) is a family physician in a tertiary hospital. He is passionate about population health, ageing, and integrating health and social care. (4.6)

Family Medicine runs in Luke Low's (MBBS 2005) family blood, seeing that it has infected both him and his brother. It has given him a passion for his patients and inspired him to contribute to his fraternity. (4.7, 4.8)

Marie Stella P. Cruz (MBBS 1989) provides care to patients in nursing homes. She is interested in care for the older adult, the institutionalised patient, and the home-bound patient, as well as end-of-life care. She also teaches undergraduates and post-graduates and is involved in assessment. (4.9, 4.10, 4.11)

Matthew Ng (MBBS 1988) is a family physician in a tertiary hospital who also

teaches undergraduates. He is a past editor of the Singapore Family Physician and continues to be the long-serving chief examiner of the GDFM examination. (3.18)

Ng Lee Beng (MBBS 1980) finds her energies and passions shared between patient care, training the next generation of family physicians, advocating advance care planning, grandparenting, and community gardening. She is mindful of the need to use her days well for that which will be of the most lasting value. (1.3)

Ruth Lim (MBBS 1995) practises in a polyclinic and has several appointments in education including being the Clinical Assistant Dean at Duke-NUS Medical School. She also chairs of the Family Medicine Examination Committee. (3.2, 3.3)

Suraj Kumar (MBBS 1984) is in private practice and is also the honorary secretary of the College of Family Physicians. He succeeded Julian and is the current director of the College Master of Medicine programme. (2.8)

Tan Boon Yeow (MBBS 1992) practises in a community hospital and has a particular interest in geriatric care, and he is actively involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. His greatest joy is spending time with family and friends and with God, and he strives to find time to do it all. (4.4, 4.5)

Tan See Leng (MBBS 1988) spent some time in general practice following a stint in the public sector. Although he is now a full-time administrator, he remains deeply interested in the primary care delivery ecosystem. (5.2)

Tan Su-Ming (MBBS 1990) has been a general practitioner in solo practice in the heartlands for twenty-three years. She believes that if we knew everyone's back story, we would be kind to everyone. (2.7, 3.1, 3.16)

Tan Tze Lee (MBBS 1987) is the president of the College of Family Physicians, Singapore. He is a principal in his private practice where he has taught successive cohorts of medical students. He is also the president of the COPD Association of Singapore. (5.8)

Tan Yew Seng (MBBS 1990) is qualified in family medicine, palliative medicine, psychotherapy, and chaplaincy. He practises privately and also volunteers with the Indonesian Children's Hospice and the Nomads Clinic in Nepal. (4.12, 4.13, 4.14, 4.15)

Tay Wei Yi (MBBS 2006) practises in a tertiary hospital and also actively teaches postgraduates. She is passionate about nurturing future generations in the breadth of Family Medicine. (4.6)

T. Thirumoorthy (MBBS 1972) is the Group Chief Medical Officer with a private healthcare group who also teaches at Duke-NUS Medical School. He is a dermatologist and the founder director of the SMA Centre of Ethics and Professionalism. (3.10, 3.11, 5.6, 5.7)

Tung Yew Cheong (MBBS 1996) practises in a polyclinic and is also involved in overseeing quality and safety matters. (2.9)

Vincent Chan (MBBS 2004) practises in the heartlands. He loves the people aspect of his job, and hopes he is serving the community well as a general practitioner. (2.2)

Wong Chiang Yin (MBBS 1994) is a public health specialist who was previously chief operating officer of two major public hospitals. He is a former president of the Singapore Medical Association and is part of the current elected council of the SMA and the Academy of Medicine. (5.3)

Wong Tien Hua (MBBS 1993) is in private practice and is a past president of the Singapore Medical Association. His interests are in primary care, medical ethics, and patient-doctor communication. (5.1, 5.4)



Kirpal Singh (BA Hons 1973) is a writer and academic who enjoys provocations and good friendships.

Further Reading

Chapter

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Last Words



" This is our private fight so you stop butting in ! "



" Your husband needs complete rest. I want YOU to take these tablets
three times a day. "

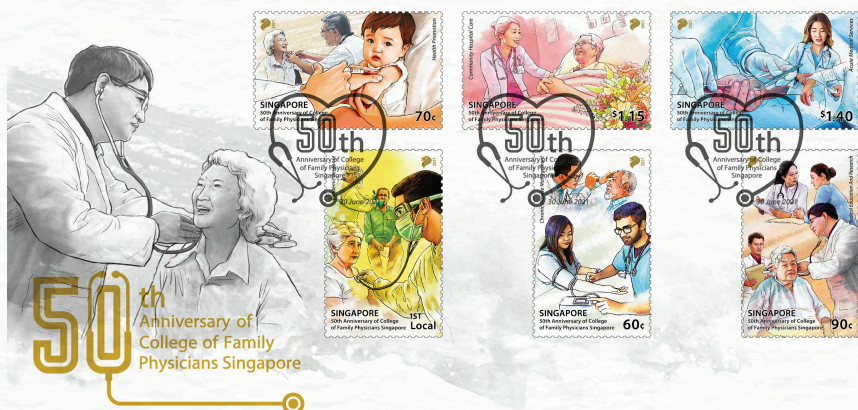
Dr. Koh Eng Kheng (MBBS 1955) was a founding member of the College of Family Physicians Singapore who served as President from 1989 to 1991. He was also a keen observer and witty artist and many of us can totally relate to his two cartoons here. We thank his son Dr. Kevin Koh (MBBS 1981) for sharing them.

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Being Human: Stories from Family Medicine combines the observations of medical practice by young medical students with the reflections of seasoned practitioners. The result is a work that spans the breadth of Family Medicine and gives the reader an honest glimpse into the heart of the family doctor.

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