

President's Column

SEPTEMBER 2021

by Adj Assoc Prof Tan Tze Lee, President, 28th Council, College of Family Physicians Singapore

The College held its 50th Annual General Meeting on 31 July 2021. It was a virtual meeting to comply with the Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) measures. Over 50 members were in attendance, and there was a timely start to the meeting. 2021 is an election year, and for this election the candidates were returned unopposed. We are grateful for the mandate to advocate for the Primary Care and Family Medicine community, and will continue to work hard for you in the forthcoming term. We would like to thank our two Council members who are retiring, Dr Lim Ang Tee and Dr Agnes Koong. Dr Lim represented the College in the Sports Safety Workgroup under Sport Singapore, and Dr Koong was our representative in the Asthma ACG workgroup under ACE, MOH. Their services have been exemplary, and we are indeed grateful for their good counsel, as well as all the help they have rendered to advance the mission of the College. We welcome 2 new members to our 28th Council, Dr Hu Pei Lin and Dr Grace Chiang. We are very glad that they have volunteered to join us, and look forward to their contributions for the coming term.

The College, under its previous name of College of General Practitioners Singapore, was inaugurated 50 years ago on 30 June 1971. In 2021, we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the College. In the early days of Singapore's modern history, a group of determined general practitioners had a vision to advance the practice of Family Medicine. Formal training in Family Medicine (FM) leading to the membership of the College of General Practitioners Singapore (MCGP) diplomate examination was started the following year, and in 1974, the Diploma was recognised by the Singapore Medical Council as an additional qualification.

Over the past 50 years, the College developed postgraduate programmes to address the need of our family doctors. Our mission is to ensure that Family Physicians in Singapore are well trained, so as to be empowered to provide good medical care for their patients in the context of the person, the family and the community that they live in.

Our trained family doctors can now be found serving in various settings, in primary care, in community hospitals and even in general hospitals. Many are in leadership positions in our healthcare system, and all have played crucial roles in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, providing surveillance, early detection and timely treatment.

To commemorate our 50th anniversary, we worked closely with SingPost on a series of stamps that showcase the achievements and contributions of our family doctors in

Singapore. This series of 6 stamps depict our family doctors in various settings, be it in acute medical, chronic disease management, health promotion, community hospital care, pandemic response and medical education and research. We are indeed proud of the achievements of our family doctors over the past 50 years, and as a fraternity, the College looks forward to making even greater contributions to our healthcare services. We have sent a set of these commemorative stamps, together with a custom wireless charger, to all our members as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations! Do enjoy them!

In December this year, the College has also plans for an event to celebrate our 50th anniversary. We are very pleased to announce that our Guest of Honour is Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong. It is indeed a great honour for the College, and we are very grateful for his support. It is our heartfelt hope that the pandemic situation will improve such that we will be able to hold the celebration as a physical event. Do watch this space!

Early this year, we learned of the death of a Myanmar migrant domestic worker (MDW), who died as a result of maid abuse. We were all very shaken by this news; shortly after, on 24th February 2021, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) announced that they would be reviewing how doctors report these medical examinations. On 6th August 2021, we received a circular that laid out the changes that will take effect from 29th August 2021. These changes include recording the height, weight and body mass index (BMI) of the MDW and checking for signs of suspicious or unexplained injury. Employers will no longer be allowed to be present during the examination, and these examinations must now be conducted in clinics. All results must also now be submitted to MOM, as opposed to only positive results. There have been many queries posed to the College about these new changes, and we are following up on them with an advisory which will be sent very soon to all members.

Even as I write, we are in the midst of another period of "Heightened Alert". The prolonged stresses and strains have taken their toll on our fellow professionals. A paper published in July 2021 by researchers from the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) found higher rates of anxiety, depression and "burnout" in primary care doctors than pre-COVID.⁽¹⁾ High levels of risks of "burnout" were also found in a study by National University Health System amongst their staff. Several stressors were identified: the physical and mental stress of wearing personal protective equipment

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for prolonged periods of time, the changes in operating guidelines for private clinics, increased workload.⁽²⁾ In an opinion piece by Dr Tina Tan in the SMA News, she wrote that we should rest well and make a conscientious effort to unwind, be aware of our own needs and talk to someone about it.⁽³⁾ "If you are not coping well, seek professional help. Each institution in Singapore has peer support, and there are free psychological services for healthcare workers we can access." The psychological effects of this prolonged pandemic has far reaching implications especially in the aspects of mental health. Burnout and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can affect all of us, and self-care and mutual care are of paramount importance. Let us support each other, and if necessary, seek help as we continue to battle the scourge of COVID-19.

1. Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of Singaporean GPs: a cross-sectional study: Alvin Lum, Yen-Li Goh, Kai Sheng Wong, Junie Seah, Gina Teo, Jun Qiang Ng, Edimansyah Abdin, Margaret Mary Hendricks, Josephine Tham, Wang Nan, Daniel Fung, BJGP Open 20 Jul 2021.
2. Burnout and Associated Factors Among Health Care Workers in Singapore During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Tan, Benjamin Y.Q. et al. Journal of the American Medical Directors Association, Volume 21, Issue 12, 1751-1758.e5
3. <https://www.sma.org.sg/news/year/2020/month/May/psychological-fallout--doctors-in-the-covid-19-pandemic> accessed 09/08/2021

CM

Interview with Dr Gyles Morrison

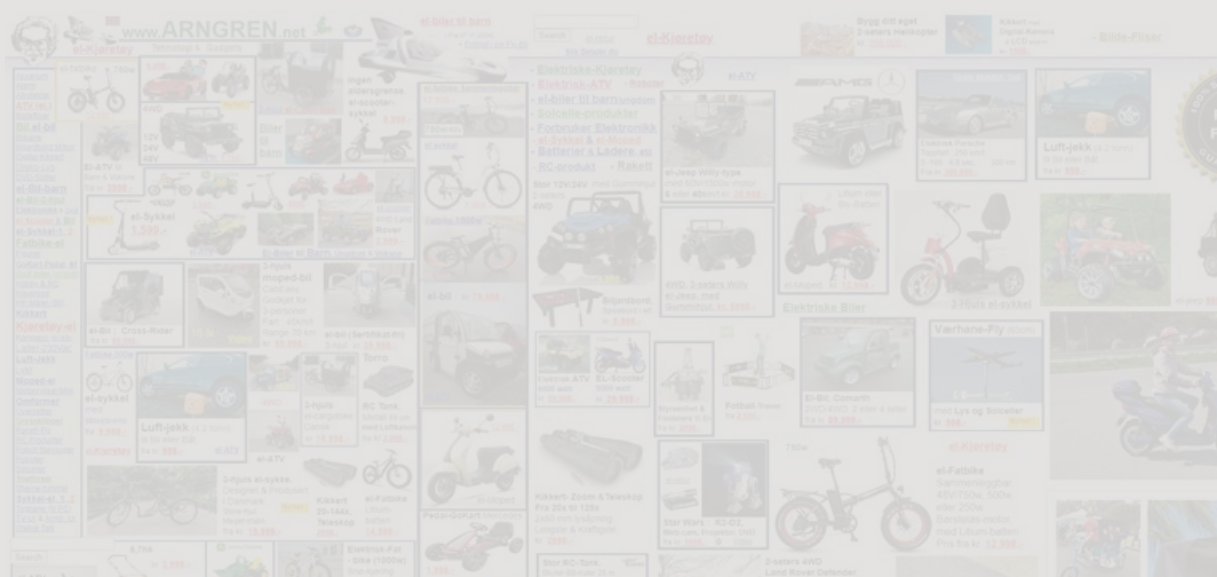
Interviewed by Dr Tan Li Wen Terence, Editorial Team Member (Team A)

Dr Gyles Morrison has been a Clinical UX Specialist since 2014, after working as a doctor for 3 years. His role involves applying best practice UX, medical knowledge and experiences, and problem-solving skills to improve the design of healthcare technology and services. He specialises in healthcare behavioural science and digital therapeutics which are digital tools that prevent, manage and treat disease. He is also the founder of the Clinical UX Association, the world's leading authority on UX in healthcare.

User experience (UX) is how a user experiences and interacts with a product, system or service.

This includes user's perception of ease of use, efficacy and desirability.

Example of bad UX:



You can't tell what this website is about at first glance. Chaotic and hard to navigate.