

as the MCCY-MOH Conversation on Singapore Women's development.

One of the College's aims has been to present and establish the Family Medicine discipline as a specialty on its own. This is commendable and supported by MOH. Family Medicine covers a wide range of treatments and patients, requiring a breadth of knowledge and practice that can be considered equivalent to other specialists' body of organ-specific knowledge. Family Physicians are an integral part of our healthcare landscape, providing first-contact, comprehensive and continuing care for individuals and their families in the community. As we develop our Population Health Strategy, Family Physicians will play an increasingly important role.

Finally, allow me to congratulate the College on its 50th Anniversary this year. This is a very significant milestone. The College has done magnificent work over the past 50 years.

To commemorate this anniversary, a second edition of *Being Human: Stories from Family Medicine* has been published, detailing numerous anecdotes by Family Physicians. These bite-sized stories run the gamut of experiences that Family Physicians have been through, and serve as a reminder that, perhaps, the most important skills a Family Physician can have, are those to do with the human connection.

Let me conclude by, once again, expressing my heartiest congratulations to all the graduates. Thank you very much.

■ CM

Congratulations to our new 2021 Fellowship Graduands

Interviewed by Dr Chan Hian Hui Vincent, FCFP(S), Editorial Team Member (Team C)

College Mirror is delighted to congratulate the 12 successful candidates for the Family Medicine Fellowship Programme exit exams for the year 2021. This is a key milestone, and we celebrate with the successful candidates. For candidates who did not succeed, we would like to offer words of encouragement. Do not be discouraged, go ahead, and try again next year. After all, not all current Fellows passed on their first try.

For this edition, we interviewed **Dr Jeremy Koh Zhong Wei** and **Dr Wong Ann Mei**, and asked them to share their reflections on the course. Graduating top of his cohort, Jeremy is also the winner of the prestigious Dr Koh Eng Kheng Gold Medal Award, an award given to the best Fellowship candidate of each academic year.

College Mirror (CM):

Do tell readers a bit about yourself.

Dr Jeremy Koh Zhong Wei (JK):

I currently work as family physician at Hougang Polyclinic and am also involved with National Healthcare Group's family medicine residency training. Outside of daily work, I enjoy cycling to different parts of the island to explore new eateries. I actually got married last year at the height of COVID-19, so 2020 was definitely a memorable year (in more ways than one)!

CM:

Why did you pursue Family Medicine as a career?

JK:

My interest in family medicine started during medical school days, when I was posted to a general practice in a small Irish town. The general practitioner was the only source of medical care in the town and he even seemed

to know most of his patients by their first name! It was that personal, continuing and comprehensive care provided that first attracted me to family medicine. During my early days of hospital practice, I further realised the unique role of family medicine in the healthcare of Singapore, and hence decided to train as a family physician.

CM:

What made you sign up for the Fellowship Training Programme?

JK:

After the MMed(FM), I was involved in teaching both undergraduate students and postgraduate residents. This entailed writing case scenarios for discussion and creating assessments for evaluation of learning. These medical pedagogy skills were a main component of the Fellowship training programme that appealed to me. Furthermore, the fellowship training programme also provided the



Dr Jeremy Koh Zhong Wei
Graduand, Family Medicine
Fellowship Programme
Winner of the Dr Koh Eng Kheng
Gold Medal Award

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opportunity to learn and practise critical appraisal of research papers, to be able to practise evidence-based medicine. The programme also gave me the opportunity to carry out a full research project in a structured manner, which was great for a research newbie!

CM:

What was memorable about the course?

JK:

The course brought together family physicians from the different public healthcare clusters, and served as a wonderful platform for us to interact and discuss primary care issues and much more! I definitely made many great friends over the 2 years!

CM:

Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your course experience?

JK:

With COVID-19, our tutorial sessions were moved online and the reduced face-to-face interaction with my fellow course-mates did dampen the experience at first. However, as adaptable family physicians, we took to the online sessions well, and the discussions were actually enriched by using the online chat function where we could pen further thoughts in real-time without disrupting the speaker. Hence all turned out well in the end!

CM:

Does Fellowship training have any impact on your work?

JK:

I would say that Fellowship training has made me more inquisitive. Especially with regards to evidence-based medicine, I am better able to appraise the available literature for clinical problems and personalise the treatment for my patients, to attain improved clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction.

CM:

How do you envision Family Medicine in the future?

JK:

Family Medicine has been pushed to the forefront of this

pandemic, from treating those with acute respiratory symptoms, to managing COVID-19 positive cases, to following up of chronic diseases. With our diverse and varied training, we are able to apply our skills in situations we haven't come across before. Family physicians have managed very ably during this pandemic and I foresee family medicine playing a bigger role in the shaping of Singapore's healthcare landscape.

CM:

What would you say to those who are pondering whether to join the next batch of Fellowship course?

JK:

'Go for it' seems apt! I did have many doubts about the course and upon starting, thoughts of 'what did I get myself into' did run across my mind. However, as the tutorials went on, I started to enjoy the different topics and of course, the banter with my fellow course-mates. This will be a very fulfilling journey – so GO FOR IT!

CM:

Is there anyone you will like to thank, who had helped you on this journey?

JK:

I had great support throughout the fellowship course, without which I may not have had such a good experience. I would like to thank all the fellowship supervisors who took us for our tutorials, especially my group supervisors, Dr Vincent Chan and Dr Lester Leong, who zoomed with us till midnight! Special thanks also to the Clinical Research Unit at National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, Dr Lee Eng Sing, Dr Sim Sai Zhen and Mr Jeremy Lew who guided me through my maiden research project. I would also like to thank the tutors from NHGP who took us for practice sessions and my clinic head Dr Kong Jing Wen, for all the support given. Finally, I would like to thank all my fellow course mates for the support and friendship throughout. And last (certainly not the least), my wife! She was the one who encouraged me to sign up for the course and continually supported me throughout this journey. Thank you all!

College Mirror (CM):

Do introduce to readers a bit about yourself.

Dr Wong Ann Mei (WAM):

I am an Associate Consultant at Sengkang Community Hospital and a hands-on mother to two active young boys. Each day, I challenge myself to be a better clinician and obtain optimal outcomes for my patients, while also making quality time for my children. My favourite way to spend a quiet moment is a movie on Netflix, or a good book with a cup of tea.

CM:

Why did you pursue Family Medicine as a career?

WAM:

Fresh out from medical school, I was rather intimidated by the vast knowledge base which was expected from a Family Medicine Practitioner. As I matured in the practice of medicine, I was drawn to Family Medicine by the individualised yet holistic and comprehensive care that I can offer to my patients. The complexity of the specialty

makes honing the skills to navigate the practice an art. The broad scope also allows me to find a niche which fits my practice style.

CM:

What made you sign up for the Fellowship Training Programme?

WAM:

In my practice setting in Sengkang Community Hospital, I treat complex patients who are admitted for subacute and rehabilitation care. By further developing my skills as a family physician, I can opportunistically screen them for geriatric syndromes, optimally manage their chronic conditions and seamlessly transit them back into the community on discharge.

CM:

What was memorable about the course?

WAM:

The most memorable moment in my fellowship course was when I finally completed my logbook for submission. As I look at the final product in front of me, memories of the past 2 years flooded my mind and touched me deeply as it encompassed the joy, camaraderie, tears and sweat of the entire process. Each and every component in the logbook was a precious learning process and represented a part of my life which had accompanied me through my fellowship journey. Faces of family, friends, colleagues and mentors who have extended their kindness and support to me poignantly inspired me to continue my journey in Family Medicine with a life-long imprinting for continued education for my peers and myself in order to maintain excellent and safe patient care.

CM:

Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your course experience?

WAM:

Having the Clinical Formative Assessment held via Zoom for the first time in the history of Fellowship trainees was a curveball, given that we had been practicing for the Clinical Formative Assessment at various clinical sites for months. But as COVID-19 has pushed everyone to find a new way of doing things, it was important for me to set my mindset right and embrace change as a way of life!

Another significant change was the cancellation of the APEBM, which is often viewed as the rite of passage for Fellowship. Bummed as I was, I am grateful to the seniors who stepped up and guided us in the field of journal critique.

CM:

Does Fellowship training have any impact on your work?

WAM:

I definitely became a more rounded clinician as I learnt to conduct a research study, appraise a research article and enhanced my knowledge in medical ethics and law. These skills enabled me to perform at a higher level as I endeavour to teach my juniors and work towards achieving better outcomes for my patients from a system-based perspective.

CM:

How do you envision Family Medicine in the future?

WAM:

Family Medicine is the core and foundation of the medical field. I believe it is the gateway to specialist care and encompasses a whole spectrum of all fields in medicine. The Ministry's vision puts it succinctly: "One Singaporean, One Family Doctor".

CM:

What would you say to those who are pondering whether to join the next batch of Fellowship course?

WAM:

Ponder no longer! The journey may be tough but you will uncover the well of strength and perseverance that is within you. The friendship built and knowledge gained along the way is also invaluable.

CM:

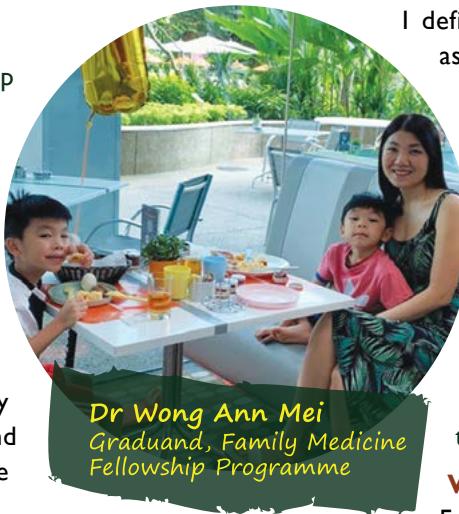
Is there anyone you will like to thank, who had helped you on this journey?

WAM:

I will be forever indebted to my bosses and colleagues at Sengkang Community Hospital who encouraged me and guided me throughout. I would especially like to thank Dr Luke Low and Dr Xu Bangyu, whose patience and kindness enabled me to not only survive but thrive and complete the fellowship journey.

I also know that my success would not have been possible without the practical help and emotional support from my family and friends. It truly takes a village and I am so thankful for mine.

■ CM



*Dr Wong Ann Mei
Graduand, Family Medicine
Fellowship Programme*