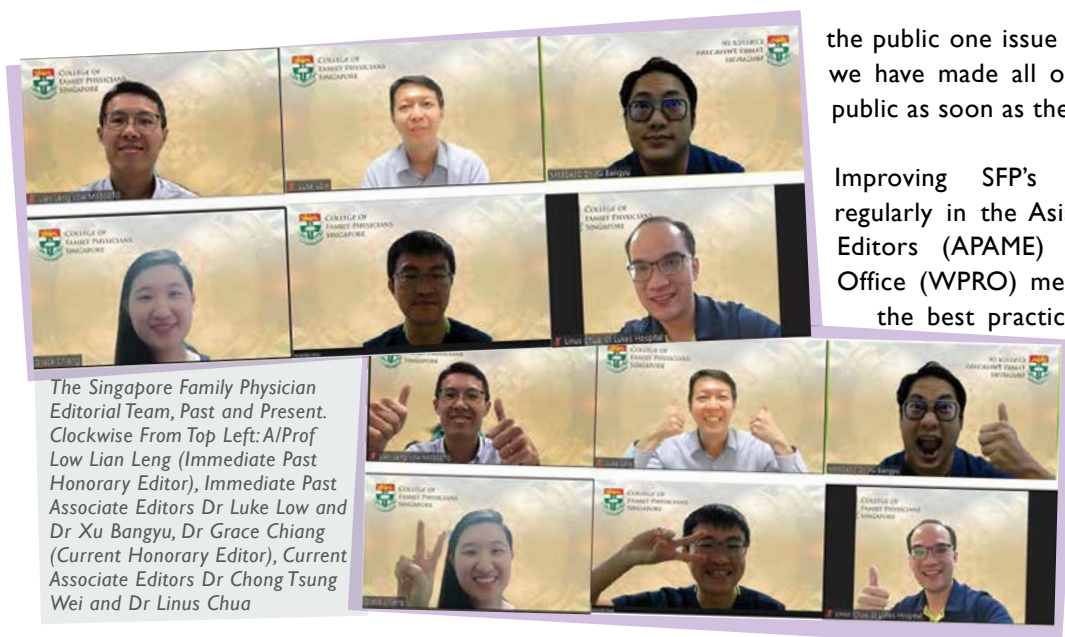


An interview with the past editor and the current editor of Singapore Family Physician

Interviewed by Dr Fok Wai Yee Rose, FCFP(S), Editor (Team A)



The Singapore Family Physician Editorial Team, Past and Present. Clockwise From Top Left: A/Prof Low Lian Leng (Immediate Past Honorary Editor), Immediate Past Associate Editors Dr Luke Low and Dr Xu Bangyu, Dr Grace Chiang (Current Honorary Editor), Current Associate Editors Dr Chong Tsung Wei and Dr Linus Chua

the public one issue late. With the Council's support, we have made all our articles fully available to the public as soon as they are copyedited and typesetted.

Improving SFP's reputation. SFP participated regularly in the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Editors (APAME) and Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) meetings and conferences to learn the best practices and editorial standards from our counterparts. The SFP continues to be indexed in the Western Pacific Regional Index Medicus, and was also indexed in the Global Index Medicus (GIM) since 2019.

CM:

What were your thoughts when you were invited to be the new Editor of SFP?

Dr Grace Chiang (GC):

I was extremely honoured and humbled to be invited to take up this role but nervous at the same time as I had "big shoes to fill". A/Prof Low is a mentor whom I admire and he has accomplished so much during his tenure. Being an editor also comes with heavy responsibility. Editors of medical journals have a responsibility towards authors who provide the journal's content, peer reviewers, readers and medical community, the journal's publishers, and the public. In addition, the SFP has a rich history, it was first published in 1975, and is the official journal of the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS). Taking these factors into consideration, I deliberated for a period of time with regards to whether I would be up to the task. I am thankful for A/Prof Low's guidance, reassurance and trust as it has been a very rewarding six months since I began this journey. Being an editor of SFP has enabled me to combine both my joy of writing with medicine. I hope to be able to follow in A/Prof's footsteps in carrying forward the legacy of the SFP in focusing on clinical problems, peer communication and fostering critical reading among family physicians in Singapore and even regionally or internationally.

CM:

What makes you passionate about being the Editor of SFP?

LLL:

The College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) was formed in 1971 by a group of family physicians in Singapore who wanted an institution to enshrine and promote the values and ideals of family medicine. Some of CFPS's mission include to advance the art and science of medicine, and to

Under the previous leadership of Clinical A/Prof Low Lian Leng and the current leadership of Dr Grace Chiang, Singapore Family Physician (SFP) continues to be the main wagon which supports the continuous medical education and clinical updates for primary care physicians in the local community.

College Mirror (CM):

Can you share with us some of the key developments of the SFP during your three terms as Editor?

Clinical A/Prof Low Lian Leng (LLL):

I became Honorary Editor of the Singapore Family Physician (SFP) since August 2015. It has been a wonderful 3 terms over 6 years, leading and journeying with the SFP editorial team and developing the SFP into a credible family medicine journal.

Some of the key developments include:

1. **Online publication.** One of the key challenges when I first took over as Editor was the late submission and subsequent delayed hardcopy publication of articles. This resulted in our College members receiving their journals late after the Family Physician Skill Courses (FPSCs). We addressed this by copyediting, typesetting and publishing the articles online on our College website as soon as they are ready.
2. **Regular publication.** Working closely with the Institute of Family Medicine (IFM), we were able to organise regular FPSCs, webinars, and identify regular authors and contributors to the SFP, publishing 5-6 issues each year.
3. **Enhancing SFP's Open Access.** Our articles used to be only fully available to college members, and available to

discuss medical and scientific problems. The SFP is an academic symbol of the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) and our representation to the scientific community and family physicians globally. Therefore, I am passionate to improve the editorial standards of SFP, and to grow the editorial board, the authorship and readership of SFP. In 2015, I just completed my FCFP and was completing my Master of Clinical Investigation. I became active in research and publication and was glad to contribute as Honorary Editor of SFP.

GC:

As an editor of SFP, I have been given the rare opportunity to exercise my creative spark in envisioning the direction of the journal to align with the future of family medicine; and employ my love of language. As I have to discern not only what SFP readers might want but more importantly what they need, I am constantly learning and growing as a family physician by watching the medical, social and economic events that are shaping family medicine. With challenges of an aging population and infectious diseases, the role of family physicians has become increasingly important. There is a need for well-trained family physicians who are able to provide holistic and integrated care. I hope to continue to improve medical care by publishing sound scientific articles and focusing on topics that are important to SFP readers.

CM:

What do you see as the most fulfilling aspect of being an editor?

LLL:

There are so many fulfilling aspects, so I am spoilt for choice. I learnt a lot in editorial standards from other APAME editors and our editorial consultants A/Prof Goh Lee Gan and Prof Wilfred Peh. These have contributed to my own academic growth as well. I am also indebted to Prof Goh and my Associate Editors Dr Xu Bangyu and Dr Luke Low Sher Guan for their tireless assistance. In turn, I imparted skills such as copyediting and referencing to our editorial assistants to develop a core team for the SFP. I am proud and pleased to have Dr Grace Chiang who is capable and passionate succeed me as editor. I am confident Grace will bring the SFP to much greater heights, and you just have to read our upcoming 50th Anniversary commemorative issue to agree with me.

GC:

Medical journals are a special part of the world of medicine and have an ability to inform discussions about the future of medicine. Being an editor is fulfilling in so many aspects, but the most fulfilling would be in helping researchers improve their work. As an editor, I have been given the opportunity to provide constructive feedback to researchers when making decisions about which manuscripts to accept, which to reject and which to revise. Original research papers



*Editorial Team for the SFP
College of Family Physicians
Singapore 50th Anniversary
Special Commemorative
Issue. Clockwise from top left:
Dr Grace Chiang (Honorary
Editor), Chester Kwan
(Professional Development
and Programme Executive),
Terence Lee (Editorial
Executive) and A/Prof
Goh Lee Gan (CFPS Past
President [2007-2011])*

are fundamental to medical journals; however, research projects are incomplete till the work has been reviewed by a researcher's peers, published in a journal, and critiqued by the medical community. Such research papers then become the underpinning for further research and the basis of medical practices.

CM:

What do you envision for SFP's future?

LLL:

We should aspire to professionalise the SFP to serve an international readership. This will require greater investment and an enlarged editorial team to maintain the highest editorial standards, culminating in potential indexing in PubMed. To achieve this, we also need more journal submissions from our family physicians. I hope the strength of the SFP can grow in tandem with the academic rigour of our family physicians.

We can engage the 3 medical schools and 3 public healthcare clusters family physicians to increase awareness, and co-develop strategies to encourage submissions that are relevant to family medicine and primary care. The continuous engagement with international family medicine journals, WPRO and APAME will also be key. We look forwards to reaching out and continuing the engagements as Covid-19 restrictions ease.

GC:

Medical journals play an important role in disseminating medical knowledge. However, medical journals have to transform and innovate with the appearance of new platforms propagating medical knowledge. The SFP must continue to improve the quality of its publications and contribute to the advancement of medical care. One of my goals as SFP editor is for the SFP to be indexed in an international database such as PubMed. The editorial team will work towards applying for the SFP to be selected as either a MEDLINE journal or be deposited to PMC to facilitate this goal. I am grateful to have a supportive editorial team (Terence Lee and Chester Kwan) and assistant editors (Dr Chong Tsung Wei and Dr Linus Chua) working alongside me as we work towards this endeavour.

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CM:

Can you share with us what you find most memorable being an editor?

LLL:

Outperforming the need to publish an issue every quarter. The SFP published 5, 7, 7 and 8 issues in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively!

GC:

It has been six months since stepping into this role, but I can say with certainty that one of the most memorable pieces of work during my tenure will be the special commemorative issue of the SFP celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the CFPS. I am immensely thankful and indebted to my fellow colleagues in the 50th Anniversary editorial team (A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Terence Lee and Chester Kwan). This was a major undertaking spanning many months of effort and commitment; involving countless zoom meetings, calls and emails. Work on the commemorative issue began in early August 2021, and over these past few months, the support from the editorial team has been invaluable: from content curation; conceptualizing the layout and aesthetics of the issue; reaching out to invited authors; obtaining permission from government bodies to publish content; editing articles; and liaising with the typesetters.

I would also like to thank A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean for his input and contribution, all invited authors who readily responded to the call to contribute articles, and the unfailing support of the 28th Council and secretariat.

The 50th anniversary of the CFPS is one to be celebrated. Much has been achieved since the early pioneers in family medicine had the foresight to establish the College five decades ago. The SFP commemorative issue showcases what the CFPS has accomplished and sheds light on the future direction of family medicine. This issue serves as a legacy of this memorable historical milestone.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this special edition.

CM:

Is there any message that you will like to convey to our readers?

LLL:

Please support the SFP and our new editor! The SFP will continue to deliver the latest, up to date educational articles relevant to our family doctors. Please submit your academic work to the SFP so that it can spread the good work done by our Singapore family doctors to an international readership. The SFP can be the flagship of the rising academic standards of Singapore family medicine.

GC:

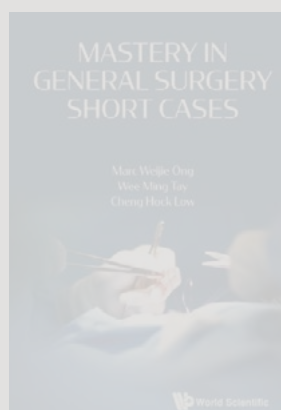
I would like to extend my sincere thanks to SFP readers for their continual support of the SFP through readership and contribution of articles. I hope that the articles published will continue to make an impact in their day-to-day clinical practice.

■ CM

Mastery in General Surgery Short Cases

by Ong, Marc Weijie, Wee Ming Tay, and Cheng Hock Low
(World Scientific, 2021)

Reviewed by Dr Wong Peng Yong, Andrew, MCFP(S), Family Physician



This book is useful reading for family physicians as it emphasizes the systematic way of examining the various surgical systems (e.g. thyroid, breast, inguinal area) and shares “pro tips” on how to avoid the usual pitfalls as well as red flags of common complications.

There are succinct summaries of the treatment for each surgical condition and the complications associated with them. Having this knowledge will enable the family physician to better counsel the patient on the diagnostic approach, treatment and road to recovery.

For some readers who have an affinity for evidence-based medicine, this book compares the efficacy and safety between various treatment and diagnostic options based on the latest landmark trials and delivers an overall conclusion and recommendation after listing the evidence. It is useful for the busy practitioner who needs to make a quick clinical decision as well as one who wishes to research further in these domains.

Equipped with dozens of photographs, illustrations, tables, charts and Q&A style of presentation, this book provides family physician with bite-size up-to-date information at his fingertips which can be instantly translated into clinical work and medical education.

■ CM