

GAINING INSIGHT INTO PRACTICAL ISSUES BY PHYSICIANS

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From 2012, Singapore Family Physician enters a new phase with the articles indexed in WPRIM (Western Pacific Regional Index Medicus). This allows wider access of the SFP articles to readers in the Asia Pacific region. In this issue, the secretariat has published a step-by-step instruction for reader to use the WPRIM to search for articles published in the first SFP issue in 2012.

From the third quarter of 2012, SFP will introduce a new category of articles to provide additional educational resource to enrich the knowledge of our primary care physicians. It will be termed “PRISM” or “Patients’ Revelations as Insightful Studies of their Management”. It is frequent for patients to present to primary care physicians unique or unusual scenarios, which either the latter have little knowledge or experience to deal with it or do not have comprehensive or integrative approach in managing the issues, especially in the context of the local socioeconomic, cultural and healthcare system. This category of articles can also cover common presentations or issues, which the physicians have yet to have a consistent approach; this may arise from a paucity of evidence for effective management or complexity due to multiple disciplinary involvement source utilisation of the local healthcare system. The boundary will extend beyond single topic review and will bridge the chasm in areas of family practice that are rarely covered by our specialist colleagues.

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The article will start with an actual case scenario encountered by the author(s) in their practice, which will include key details on how patient reveals the issue to the physician or clinic staff. The next step is to frame the issue into a clinical question, which will prompt a search for plausible answers or solutions. The authors will search current medical literature for answers and to suggest or recommend possible solutions that can be effectively applied to the specific case scenario presented. The focus is to highlight any gaps of knowledge, delineate the issues and identify the resources that may be available to support the proposed management. Details of this category of articles will be included in the next issue of SFP.

Learning directly from patient’s revelation can therefore be another modality of direct hands-on training for the physicians. Any new knowledge gained should be shared with fellow physicians in the community. If we embrace evidence-based practice, then we should build it on practice-based evidence. PRISM approach provides impetus to expand beyond an insight into single patient’s issues to measurement of the magnitude of such issues in a wider context such as the entire practice or a larger establishment such as a network of primary care clinics.

The editorial team hopes that local physicians will embrace this new approach of medical writing and submit related articles to SFP. It is the aspiration of the editorial team that SFP will become an effective prism to refract the learning bandwidth of our physicians to focus on providing comprehensive, effective and patient-centric primary care and eventually accentuates the practice of family medicine in Singapore.