

SINGAPORE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



Bertha WOON*¹

Membership

The Singapore Medical Association (SMA) currently has 6,589 members and is growing. There are approximately 11,000 registered medical professionals and about 1,700 medical students in Singapore. As membership is voluntary, it is a constant challenge for SMA to recruit and retain members. To attract new members, some strategies SMA has adopted include increasing the suite of courses available to membership, increasing the number of professional and social engagement activities, and waiving membership fees for medical students and spouses (who are doctors) of current members.

Events

SMA aims to create tangible benefits and refresh professional competency for members through the events it organises. These events focus mainly on professional ethics, while others are related to medical practice or lifestyle activities. Events held in 2013 include the SARS 10th Anniversary Symposium, 44th SMA National Medical Convention: Staying in the Pink of Health, SMA Lecture 2013: Developing Singapore as an International Medical Centre, Medical Experts Training Course, Workplace Safety and Health workshops, and Annual Golf Tournament.

SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (CMEP)

SMA CMEP aims to develop and promote the art and science of medical ethics and medical practice for the betterment of patient care and

public health. The teaching faculty includes doctors from various specialties and lawyers with experience in medico-legal cases. CMEP organises courses on medical confidentiality and consent, medical negligence, professional misconduct and dispute resolution.

Publications

SMA's two monthly publications, the *Singapore Medical Journal* (SMJ) and *SMA News*, have each undergone improvements. For example, SMJ has implemented an article processing charge (waived for members and invited articles) to manage the cost of administering peer reviews. Meanwhile, *SMA News* has new columns like From the Heart, which provides charitable organisations with complimentary advertising space to promote volunteerism among members and match volunteers to volunteering opportunities available.

SMA Charity Fund (SMACF)

SMACF, an entity separate from SMA, was set up in 2013 to consolidate SMA's charitable activities and spearhead new initiatives, in order to make a positive impact in the healthcare landscape. The SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund, which is under SMACF's umbrella, will support students of all three local medical schools. SMACF also aims to provide support for public health education, mentorship in medical research, exposure of needy medical students to overseas education and elective programmes, and volunteerism amongst the profession and students.

*1 Council Member, Singapore Medical Association, Singapore (sma@sma.org.sg).

This article is based on a presentation made as the Report of Activities by each NMA at the 28th CMAAO General Assembly and 49th Council Meeting, New Delhi, India, on September 13, 2013.

COUNTRY REPORT



DR BERTHA WOON
SINGAPORE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP

- 6,589 members and growing!
- Approximately 11,000 registered medical professionals in Singapore and about 1,700 medical students
- Total membership of the Singapore Medical Association (SMA) represents approximately 50% of all registered medical practitioners in Singapore
- Waiver of membership fees for medical students
- Waiver of membership fees for spouse of members [if they are also doctors]
- **Challenge:** Recruitment & retention as membership is voluntary

54th SMA COUNCIL (2013-14)

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| President | A/Prof CHIN Jing Jih |
| 1 st Vice President | Dr WONG Tien Hua |
| 2 nd Vice President | Prof WONG Tien Yin |
| Honorary Secretary | Dr Tammy CHAN |
| Honorary Asst Secretary | Dr LEE Yik Voon |
| Honorary Treasurer | A/Prof TAN Sze Wee |
| Honorary Asst Treasurer | Dr Daniel LEE |
| Members | |
| Dr Abdul RAZAK, JR Omar | A/Prof TAN Tze Lee |
| Dr CHIA Ghim Song | Dr TAN Yia Swam |
| Dr CHONG Yeh Woei | Dr TOH Choon Lai |
| Dr CHOW U-Jin | Dr TOH Han Chong |
| Dr LEE Pheng Soon | Dr WONG Chiang Yin |
| Dr LIM Kheng Choon | Dr WOON Yng Yng Bertha |
| Dr NOORUL Fatha As'art | |

The current SMA Council is made up of a mix of doctors, in public and private practice, doctors-in-training and experienced doctors, general practitioners and specialists

ACADEMY & EVENTS

- **Aim:** Refresh professional competency and creating tangible benefits for members
- Focus on ethics - SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP)
- Practice-related issues, e.g. taxation, workplace safety & health, healthcare assistant course
- Member-centric lifestyle activities, e.g. sports, leisure events
- Partnering with other organisations (e.g. Medical Protection Society, Medico-Legal Society)
- **Challenge:** Staying relevant to needs of doctors and changing landscape

MAJOR EVENTS

- 9 Mar - SMA Lecture 2012 – "Euthanasia: A Matter of Life or Death?"
Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon
- 11 May – Annual Dinner - Guest of Honour: Minister for Health
- 31 May - SARS 10th Anniversary Symposium
- 31 Aug - Medical Convention for doctors and public - "Staying in the Pink of Health, a Convention for Women and All Who Love Them"
- 26 Oct - SMA Lecture 2013 – "Developing Singapore as an International Medical Centre"
- May 2014 – MASEAN meeting in Singapore


OTHER EVENTS

- Ethics course for doctors-in-training [compulsory for all doctors training to be specialists]
- Risk Management Workshops, in partnership with the Medical Protection Society (MPS)
- Medical Experts Training Course [medical reports, expert witness in court, etc]
- CPR & AED Courses
- Tax Obligations of a Medical Practice
- Workplace Safety & Health workshops
- Lifestyle events, like Annual Golf Tournament, Social Dance Nite, Wine Chapter Dinner

SMA CENTRE FOR MEDICAL ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM (SMA CMEP)

- To develop and promote the art and science of medical ethics and medical practice for the betterment of patient care and public health
- Domain knowledge: Professionalism, Medical Ethics, Health Law, Medical Practice
 - Medical Confidentiality & consent
 - Medical Negligence & Professional Misconduct
 - Dispute resolution
 - Medical Report Writing, expert witness
 - Death Certification
- Teaching faculty: doctors from various specialties and lawyers with experience in medico-legal cases
- Resource articles on SMA website, and dedicated column in monthly newsletter

PUBLICATIONS



- Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ) – scientific journal
- SMA News – members' newsletter reporting on current local medical landscape
- Both published monthly
- Special themed issues focusing on specific topics throughout the year
 - E.g. SMJ – Endocrinology
 - E.g. SMA News – Doctors-in-Training
- **Challenge:** controlling print costs and keeping publications in public domain

PUBLICATIONS

Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ)

- New features
 - Article processing charge – manage cost of administering peer-review
 - CrossRef membership and article DOIs – enhance online search of published articles
 - Subscription to CrossCheck powered by IThenticate – curtail scholarly plagiarism and duplicate publications
 - E-pub ahead of print – ensure timely publication of authors' research findings

PUBLICATIONS

SMA News

- New features
 - "From the Heart" column – complimentary space for Charities, NGOs, etc. to feature their projects and appeals for volunteers
 - E.g. health screening projects, request for volunteer/pro-bono doctors/nurses

SMA CHARITY FUND (SMACF)

- Separate entity, newly set up in 2013 to consolidate charitable activities of SMA and to spearhead new initiatives
- SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund under the SMACF will be supporting students of all 3 medical schools. Needs-centric rather than school-centric
- Currently at fund-raising stage
- Over the horizon
 - Research project, cost of living expenses
 - Promote volunteerism amongst members and matching to opportunities available
- **Challenge:** making a positive impact in the healthcare landscape

THANK YOU