



SINGAPORE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION*¹

Bertha WOON¹

COUNTRY REPORT



Dr Bertha Woon
SINGAPOREMEDICALASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP

- 7,029 members and growing!
- Approximately 12,000 registered medical professionals in Singapore and about 1,800 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 (2014-15)

President	A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
1 st Vice President	Dr Wong Tien Hua
2 nd Vice President	Dr Toh Han Chong
Honorary Secretary	Dr Tammy Chan
Honorary Asst Secretary	Dr Lim Kheng Choon
Honorary Treasurer	Dr Daniel Lee
Honorary Asst Treasurer	Dr Lee Yik Voon
Members	
Dr Chong Yeh Woei	A/Prof Tan Tze Lee
Dr Anantham Devanand	Dr Tan Yia Swam
Dr Lee Pheng Soon	Dr Toh Choon Lai
Dr Benny Loo	Dr Wong Chiang Yin
Dr Noorul Fatha As'art	Prof Wong Tien Yin
Dr Ng Chee Kwan	Dr Woon Yng Yng Bertha
A/Prof Tan Sze Wee	

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

*¹ This article is based on a presentation made as the Report of Activities by each NMA at the 29th CMAAO General Assembly and 50th Council Meeting, Manila, the Philippines, on September 24-26, 2014.

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MAJOR EVENTS

- 9th and 10th May 2014 – Medical Association of South East Asian Nations (MASEAN) meeting in Singapore; took over chairmanship (2 years)
- 30 Aug 2014 - Medical Convention for doctors and public - "Active with Allergies"
- 1 Nov 2014 - SMA Lecture 2014 – Professor Tan Chorh Chuan "Innovating for Future Health"

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]
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) & Automated External Defibrillator (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 (case reports) – 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
- Currently conducting fund-raising, creating awareness
- Activities
 - Financial assistance on living expenses for selected students of all 3 medical schools
 - Financial support for needy medical students for overseas conferences
 - Promote volunteerism amongst members and matching to opportunities available
 - Recognising outstanding mentors & researchers
- **Challenge:** making a positive impact in the healthcare landscape

Challenges for the medical profession

- Disciplinary processes
 - a Review Committee was formed after several high profile appeal cases in Court
 - recommendations made to improve training, transparency, timeliness, separation of powers, etc.
- Ethics & Professionalism
 - review of SMC Ethical Code has been delayed, but recently SMC has launched a consultation exercise for doctors
- Cost of medical treatment
 - SMA Guideline on Fees (GOF) was withdrawn in 2007 due to concerns of breach of Competition Act
 - Medical fees have been increasing; overcharging difficult to prove
 - Lack of protection for patients
 - Hints from regulatory bodies of a possible revival of GOF

Thank you