

## Paving the Way into the New Year

Year 2010: A new year, a new beginning. We always hope that the year will be better than the previous one. When the transition from 2009 into the new year comes along, a period of reflection and new year's resolutions in seeking improvement of oneself comes with it. Very often, clinicians may be too focused in the daily turmoil of working life and the challenges they faced living in a society of materialism and pragmatism, that they may sometimes forget the fundamentals of being in the medical profession. In this last issue for 2009, Low *et al* has a good article on the virtues of medical professionalism<sup>1</sup>. The seven core virtues identified in the article as important in professional medical practice are integrity, discernment, compassion, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, humility and courage. With these in mind, we can constantly be reminded of what it takes to be a good clinician of integrity and compassion, to play our part in building and maintaining a humane medical society for the people. The teaching of such virtues should also be emphasised at the beginning of a medical student's education.

Medical education should constantly be revised and improved on its curriculum, to adapt to the ever-changing medical and technology landscape. Some academics and students feel that the traditional approach to the teaching of basic medical sciences, such as anatomy and physiology, lacks clinical focus and is not effectively applied to practical medicine as hoped. Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore is the brainchild of Duke University School of Medicine (DSOM) from Durham, North Carolina, USA and the National University of Singapore (NUS). Its MD programme allows students, who already have an existing first degree (bachelors or higher), to further pursue a career in medical specialisation. Hence there is a need to implement a specially tailored programme for such student calibre, focusing on the education of both translational and clinical medicine. In this issue, Chow *et al* has highlighted a unique integrated anatomy-physiology course, "the Normal Body course", specially designed by the Duke-NUS faculty members<sup>2</sup>.

Results on student performance and student feedback are also analysed in the article.

An insight to the achievement of good holistic "medicine psychology and education" has been well described in the previous two articles mentioned. On the clinical medicine front, a technique to treat blindness has been described by Huang *et al*<sup>3</sup>. Central retinal artery occlusion (CRAO) often leaves the affected eye blind. With the increasing use of fibrinolytic therapy in coronary and peripheral artery occlusions, attempts have been made to improve the treatment of CRAO. In the article, Huang's group did a meta-analysis of relevant studies published since 2000, with an emphasis on treatment criteria and visual outcomes. In the area of bacteriology, Tulsidas *et al* present a case of bacteremia caused by an emerging pathogen called *Leuconostoc*, a member of the *Streptococcaceae* family, and such bacteria should be considered in immunocompromised patients and in those with underlying chronic diseases<sup>4</sup>. In the translational research arena, Han *et al* did a study on the identification of a novel class of allosteric modulators of the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptors, which are glutamate-gated ion channels that play key roles in processes underlying learning and memory<sup>5</sup>.

In this last issue of *SGH Proceedings*, we hope to have provided you with an enlightening insight to medicine in all aspects, to prepare ourselves for the coming year, extending from the development of a sound medicine psychology, to a well-suited medical education programme, to a latest technique to treat blindness, to an emerging bacteremia-causing pathogen to the development of new improved drugs. I would like to thank everyone who has worked tirelessly and cohesively, in producing *SGH Proceedings*. We have come a long way and it will be no doubt, that the coming issues of 2010 will be as enlightening as the previous years.

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Guest Editor

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