



*Academy of Medicine,
Singapore —
The Next Twenty-Five Years
1982-2007*



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ABSTRACT

The Academy of Medicine has been the foremost medical specialist organisation during the last 50 years. Its key roles in postgraduate education and training, specialist certification and continuing professional education have steadily increased. From a little over 500 members 25 years ago, it has now over 2000 specialists as Fellows. The Academy has acquired a permanent home, restructured the organisation, changed several Chapters into Colleges and is set to take on greater responsibility and leadership role in specialist training, examination and certification, accreditation and continuing professional development and maintenance of high standards of specialist practice.

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Key words: Academy of Medicine, Singapore, Postgraduate Medical Education, Specialist Training, Specialist Certification

INTRODUCTION

The Academy of Medicine was founded in 1957 as the professional corporate body of medical and dental specialists in Singapore. From a modest beginning with only 34 members, it has since grown in membership, activities, stature and international reputation. Of special mention among the major activities in the first 25 years were the formation of Chapters in major specialties, organisation of continuing medical education lectures, courses and congresses including the annual Singapore-Malaysia Congress, initiation of the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies and active participation in specialist training and examinations, publication of the Annals of the Academy of Medicine and setting up a roll of specialists.

The last 25 years has seen a steady pace of progress. Through time with medical specialisation and sub-specialisation bringing enormous changes to medical practice, Colleges were formed to cater to the increasing professional needs of specialists. The original home became too small. The training and certification of specialists became more structured and complex. So the governing and regulatory bodies underwent reorganisations to better ensure faster change and flexibility in dealing with the professional issues of specialisation. The major activities with some details are described in this paper. The Annual Reports of the Academy and several publications formed the major reference source.

A HOME FOR THE ACADEMY

When the Academy was established 50 years ago it had a small office located at the basement of the Medical Centre of the Alumni Association building at 4A College Road in the General Hospital premises. The office bearers were Professor Gordon Ransome, Master, Professor E S Monteiro, Assistant Master and Dr Yahya Cohen, Scribe.¹ The Alumni Medical Centre was also home to several medical organisations including the Singapore Medical Association, Singapore Dental Association and Singapore Pharmaceutical Society and remained as the focal point of professional and social activities for many years. As the educational activities of the Academy and its chapters increased over the next two decades, new facilities were urgently required. The Alumni Association graciously provided additional space on the ground floor for a lecture hall. With a generous financial donation mainly from Dato Lee Chee San a new air-conditioned lecture theatre with audio visual facilities and a seating capacity of seventy people was constructed. It was officially opened by the Academy's founding Master on 31 January 1974.

As the number of Chapters and activities increased over the years, the membership felt that it was time for the Academy to have an independent home of its own like the many professional colleges overseas. However, even after discussions but without a firm decision at many annual general meetings, no firm decision was reached. In 1983, a resolution mandated the council of the Academy to actively pursue to purchase an independent building of its own.² Dr V K Pillay, Past Master who spearheaded the concept of an independent home for the Academy several years ago had succeeded in obtaining two major donations. The Shaw foundation had given a donation of \$1.5 million and pledged another \$0.5 million was to be given when the building project is started. The Lee foundation also had pledged a similar donation of \$2.0 million on the understanding that the amount will be given when the membership has raised a sum of \$0.5 million from its own members.³ A search committee headed by Dr Pillay had identified two possible sites, the Science Park adjacent to the National University Hospital and the other a free hold land at the Swiss Club Road. However, Academicians were divided in their opinion and commitment to secure a home for the Academy and in spite of a donation drive and a levy made on all members towards a building fund, the required target sum could not be reached.

In 1984, the Ministry of Health informed that the Academy would be provided with adequate space in the historic College of Medicine Building when the National University moves over to the new Kent Ridge campus. It was at this time that the Medical Alumni Centre building was due to be demolished to make way for an expressway. The government had also decided that the College of Medicine would be preserved as a national monument and would be restored to its original pristine condition by the Ministry of Health.

After renovation, the Ministry of Health moved its offices to the upper floors of the building and allowed the Academy the use of the west wing on the ground floor and part of the mezzanine floor.

The office of the Academy shifted temporarily to the Harrower Hall on College Road in June 1985. In March 1987, after refurbishing at a cost of 0.5 million dollars, the Academy moved into the College of Medicine Building which was officially opened on 19 October 1987 by the Minister of Health, Mr Howe Yoon Chong. An exhibition was staged to show case the 30-year history of the Academy. A commemorative dinner was also held with President Wee Kim Wee, Patron of the Academy, as the Guest of Honour.

In the College of Medicine Building, the Academy had excellent facilities under one roof, namely the administrative secretariat, offices for the *Annals*, a member's lounge, Conference room, Archives room, Lecture Hall and a modern Postgraduate Library on the mezzanine floor jointly operated with the College of General Practitioners. The Academy had some 5000 sq.ft of office space and 4000 sq.ft of space for the library at a nominal rental of \$12 per annum.⁴ Later, when the Academy of Medicine became jointly responsible for specialist training with the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies, an additional office space was allocated for the Academy within the premises of the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies.

Although the facilities at the College of Medicine Building were excellent, serious problems started to occur when the Government policy changed and rental charges were revised to conform to market rates. Even with increased annual subscriptions, the Academy could not afford a monthly rental of over \$14,000. A renewed effort to search for a permanent home finally resulted in locating a three-storey shop house in the city. Although not ideal or adequate for all its needs, the Academy had to find space for its secretariat that was affordable and within easy reach for its Fellows. The free hold property, a gazetted heritage building, at 142 Neil Road was not too far from the Singapore General Hospital Campus and was suitable after renovation for accommodating administrative offices. It was bought at a cost of \$3.3 million and renovated at a cost of \$750,000. On 3 October 2001, the new home of the Academy at 142 Neil Road, named as the Runme Shaw Building, was officially opened by the Patron of the Academy of Medicine, President S R Nathan. The

building houses the offices of the administrative secretariat and the Annals, rooms for the Council and Chapter meetings but no lecture halls.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

The year 1905 was a major land mark in the history of medical services and education as the local medical school was finally established after much debate, disagreement and delay for many years. The postgraduate education and training may be regarded as having started 5 years later when the first batch of doctors graduated from the medical school.⁵ However, there was no organised postgraduate education until after the Academy of Medicine was formed some 50 years later.⁶

The British colonial government before World War II was against any postgraduate medical education for local doctors, as they were accorded a lower grade in the medical service than the British doctors. Even then, some forms of apprentice type of training probably would have occurred in the form of hospital ward rounds and occasional clinical case discussions.

The Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 acted as a watershed in the evolution and progress of Singapore medical service and medical education. There was a marked change in the attitude of the British administration which recognised the pressing need to expand the hospital services and initiate postgraduate training. A scheme was introduced in sending a small number of local doctors on scholarship for 1 to 2 years to the UK. This arrangement was significant as it provided the opportunity for local doctors to attend postgraduate courses in the UK and take the relevant internal medicine and general surgical examinations (MRCP and FRCS), although it did not offer much practical training. In the 15 years between 1946 and 1960, some 40 local doctors obtained higher qualifications from the UK.⁷ They became leaders in their profession and created a general awakening and enthusiasm among the local doctors. They were responsible for two major initiatives, firstly to abolish the anomalous two tier medical service and secondly to establish postgraduate medical education system.

Historically, the first organised form of postgraduate education was started in 1947 by the Alumni Association in the form of weekly clinico-pathological conferences and lectures. The clinical meetings were held mainly at the General Hospital and Tan Tock Seng Hospital and later also at the Kandang Kerbau Hospital.⁶ These sessions were very popular among both hospital doctors and private practitioners. The Alumni Association, which was the only medical organisation in the early years after the war, also initiated the quarterly publication of the first medical journal – *Proceedings of the Alumni Association of the King Edward VII College of Medicine*.⁵ It included detailed record of interesting clinical cases and discussions. In 1960, the educational activities of the Alumni Association were taken over by the newly formed Singapore Medical Association. Later, the Association also started publication of a new medical journal – the Singapore Medical Journal.

The founding members of the Academy of Medicine had envisaged that the Academy should uphold the highest standards of professional and ethical practice and should be responsible for postgraduate education, assessment, examination and certification of specialists. Accordingly, the Academy submitted a Memorandum on Postgraduate Medical Education to the Minister for Health expressing interest and seeking the grant of a State Charter to conduct examinations for specialist practice.⁵ The application, which was not supported by the University, was rejected by the Ministry of Health.

In the 1950s, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians offered to conduct postgraduate courses in Singapore.⁷ The approval and finance was secured from the

Australian Government under the Colombo Plan. The written examinations for the part were held in Singapore following which the successful candidates were sent to Australia for a period of clinical attachment before taking the final postgraduate examination. In later years, both parts of the Australasian College examinations were conducted in Singapore until Singapore established its own postgraduate examination system.

In 1961, the University appointed a Board of Studies with representatives from the Faculty of Medicine, the Ministry of Health and the Academy of Medicine. The Board recommended the immediate establishment of a Committee on Postgraduate Medical Education to formulate policies and an Executive Board for the management of postgraduate education. The Academy of Medicine and the Faculty of Medicine had already initiated courses to prepare candidates for the examinations of the Royal Colleges in Australia and the UK.

THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDIES AND MMed EXAMINATIONS

With the increasing involvement in conducting courses and future possibility of postgraduate qualifications, the University established a School of Postgraduate Medical Studies in 1966. However, when the Deputy Prime Minister Dr Toh Chin Chye expressed the interest of the Government in establishing a local postgraduate examinations, the Academy of Medicine quickly took the initiative to further its mission. The Academy of Medicine sought a meeting of the Academy Council with the Deputy Prime Minister in November 1967. This was followed by a Memorandum by a Joint Committee of the Academy, University and SMA to the Minister for Health which recommended the reconstitution of the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies and the award of higher professional qualifications by the University.

In 1970, the School was formally established independent of the Faculty of Medicine under a Board consisting of the Vice Chancellor as Chairman, a Director appointed by the Vice Chancellor, 4 members each from the Academy of Medicine and Faculty of Medicine and one member recommended by the Ministry of Health.⁵

The School has been responsible for organising regular structured courses and postgraduate examinations for the degree of Master of Medicine or MMed in various medical specialties. After starting with those disciplines which were more in demand such as Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology, it has expanded to include Anaesthesiology, Diagnostic Radiology, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Occupational Medicine, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Paediatric Medicine, Psychiatry and Public Health.

The School of Postgraduate Medical Studies has from its very beginning emphasised on maintaining international standards for its postgraduate qualifications. To ensure this, all MMed examinations have had participation of external examiners from the Royal Australasian Colleges or the UK. Over the years, many of the overseas Colleges have recognised the high standard of the local examinations in the form of reciprocal exemptions of part of the examinations or have established joint examinations and the award of joint qualifications. Joint examinations with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh have been held in surgery since 1986 and ophthalmology since 1989.⁸ Joint examinations have been held for medicine and paediatrics with the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Physicians and Child Health in the UK since 1996.⁶

In 1998, the University changed the name of the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies to Graduate School of Medical Studies and in 2002 changed its status and name as Division of Graduate Medical Studies within the Faculty of Medicine. The Board of Graduate Medical Studies previously independent and responsible for the policies now remains as an Advisory Committee.⁵

SPECIALIST TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION – FROM MEMBERSHIP TO FELLOWSHIP OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

Specialist training and certification have been an important focus of the Academy of Medicine from its very beginning. Membership of the Academy has been based on strict requirements. Therefore, a recognised postgraduate qualification and a minimum of 5 years of specialist training experience in an accredited institution, good professional standing, character and conduct and contribution to medical literature were deemed mandatory for membership of the Academy. Members were entitled to use the letters AM after their names. Until the 1960s, only specialties of the broad disciplines were present in Singapore. These were surgical specialties of general surgery, orthopaedics, otolaryngology and ophthalmology and medical specialties of general medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, psychiatry and anaesthesia besides pathology, radiology and radiotherapy. When the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies started, the MMed degree was established as the higher qualification in the main specialties.

In 1974, a Memorandum on Specialist Certification and Registration was submitted by the Academy to the Government. This was followed by formation of a Standing Committee on Specialist Certification and later a report on the requirements of specialist certification to the Singapore Medical Council. Since 1979, the Academy instituted a roll of specialists to register members who fulfilled the criteria for specialist certification in their respective specialties.

With the rapid development of various specialties and subspecialties in Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s, it was recognised that the training in the broad disciplines was inadequate for practice in the various new specialties. It was also recognised that the MMed qualification, like its overseas equivalent qualifications, did not denote completion but the beginning of specialist or advanced training. In line with the changes taking place in developed countries, specialist training became divided into two stages namely basic and advanced. The basic training could be commenced two years after graduation and was for a period of 3 years, while advanced specialist training was for a period of 3 to 4 years after completion of basic training and passing of MMed or equivalent examination. The required clinical training could be done in accredited clinical departments with appropriate supervision and monitoring. In 1991, a Joint Committee for Advanced Specialist Training (JCAST) with representatives from the Academy of Medicine, the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies and the Ministry of Health was set up. The object of the JCAST included the provision of advanced specialist training and certification and accreditation of training posts and promotion of continuing medical education, all of which were the mission of the Academy of Medicine.

In 1985, the Academy decided to initiate the specialist training programme through its own standing committee on specialist certification. In 1989, an interim document was published on criteria for advanced specialist training in 32 specialties. The Ministry of Health officially asked the Academy to be responsible for advanced specialist training in the 23 specialties, while the School of Postgraduate Medical Studies was responsible for the specialties for which there were MMed examinations. The definitive document on criteria for advanced specialist certification, which was completed and published in 1991 and the trainee logbook that was designed by the standing committee on specialist certification, were accepted by JCAST for all trainees.

In 1992, in view of the need to conduct exit certification for the Academy's cohort of advanced trainees, the specialist committees were replaced by the formation of specialist boards each consisting of 3 representatives of the chapter and one representing the Academy and another from the specialist society. The Academy also decided to conduct exit certification exercise in the form of oral assessment test for which the court was to include two local assessors and an external assessor.

Following the revision of the Medical Registration Act in 1997, a Specialist Accreditation Board (SAB) was formed under the Ministry of Health.⁶ The SAB, which is chaired by the Director of Medical Services, comprises senior specialists appointed by the Minister of Health and the Master of the Academy and Director of Division of Graduate Medical Studies. A Joint Committee on Specialist Training (JCST) with members of the Academy and Division of Graduate Medical Studies coordinates the specialist training through 35 specialist training committees (STCs) appointed by the SAB.

In 1999, the Academy passed a resolution for amendment to regulations for the award of Fellowship of the Academy.⁹ The Fellowship was to be granted to local medical and dental trainees on successful completion of approved specialist training programme and exit certification in the specialties recognised by the SAB. The SAB certifies those who have successfully completed the structured training programme in the specialties and passed the final assessment examination. The SAB certificate enables the specialist to be placed on the specialist register of the Singapore Medical Council. The SAB as a rule allows certification in only one specialty although dual certification in some medical specialties have been permitted since 2001.

CHAPTERS AND COLLEGES

Some years after the Academy was formed, the members were grouped according to their postgraduate qualifications as Physicians, Surgeons, Dental Surgeons, Radiologists, Anaesthetists, Obstetricians & Gynaecologists and Public Health & Occupational Physicians. The first two Chapters – the Chapter of Physicians and the Chapter of Surgeons – were inaugurated in 1966; followed by Chapters of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (1968), Radiologists (1974), Anaesthetists (1974), Dental Surgeons (1989) and Community and Occupational Medicine (1981). In the 1983 Annual Report, there were these seven chapters. In December 1986, the Chapter of Psychiatrists and the Chapter of Pathologists were inaugurated with 17 and 22 members, respectively. Of these 9 Chapters, the larger ones were Physicians (193), Surgeons (156), Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (99) and Dental Surgeons (43). The tenth and final chapter, the Chapter of Paediatricians, was inaugurated on 31 March 1989 with 52 members. The Chapters had their own election of office bearers and educational meetings.

The Chapters' activities were reported yearly at their Annual General Meetings. The Academy Council considered then that 10 Chapters would be the maximum, as further fragmentation of the medical community would have its disadvantages.

When the Academy's specialist roll was set up, there were 35 specialties listed. It was inappropriate to have 35 chapters running semi-autonomously. Many of the surgical and medical specialties were subsumed under the Chapters of Surgeons and Physicians.

This continued until the formation of Colleges. At the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Academy on 27 March 2004, some 15 years after the last chapter was formed, special resolutions for the formation of 6 Colleges out of the 10 Chapters were passed. Ninety-five members were present. Nine special resolutions were passed to incorporate the Colleges as separate legal entities registered with the Registrar of Companies and Businesses with their own Memorandum and Articles of Association and Bye-Laws. At the EGM, the then Master Dr K Satku explained *"that the Academy had to reexamine its role and formulate a strategy to maintain its position as the leading organisation for medical and dental specialists in Singapore in view of the rapid changes in Medicine in the past few years. The current Academy's constitution had significant restraints on the larger chapters as it was difficult for the existing small executive committees to look into the interests of each speciality, especially for chapters with multiple specialties. The formation of Colleges*

will stimulate and allow for an enhanced role of the various specialties in Training, Examination and Continuing Professional Development of Specialists".¹⁰

Hence, the 6 Colleges of Anaesthesiologists, Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Paediatricians and Child Health, Physicians, Radiologists, and Surgeons came into being. The remaining specialists kept their Chapters – Dental Surgeons, Pathologists, Psychiatrists, and Public Health & Occupational Physicians.

It was not just a matter of size of membership that allowed Chapters to become Colleges. The dental surgeons are an integral part of the Academy and its Chapter is one of the oldest, yet it did not become a College. Smaller chapters did. There were 138 dental surgeons in 2004 compared to 101 radiologists, 106 anaesthesiologists and 129 paediatricians.

With the elevation of these 6 preexisting Chapters into Colleges, new Chapters under the Colleges were formed. There were 14 new Chapters under the College of Physicians viz Chapter of Cardiologists, Dermatologists, Endocrinologists, Gastroenterologists, General Physicians, Geriatricians, Haematologists, Infectious Disease Physicians, Medical Oncologists, Neurologists, Rehabilitation Medicine Physicians, Renal Physicians, Respiratory Physicians and Rheumatologists. Under the College of Radiologists, there were 3 new Chapters – Radiation Oncologists, Nuclear Medicine Physicians and Diagnostic Radiologists. Under the College of Surgeons, 10 new Chapters were formed – Cardiothoracic Surgeons, General Surgeons, Hand Surgeons, Neurosurgeons, Ophthalmologists, Orthopaedic Surgeons, Otorhinolaryngologists, Paediatric Surgeons, Plastic Surgeons and Urologists. Some Colleges also had sections; e.g., section on Palliative Medicine in the College of Physicians and 3 sections under the College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, viz section of Maternal Fetal Medicine, Reproductive Medicine and Urogynaecology.

With these new organisational structures within one umbrella of the Academy, the membership of over 2000 Fellows have many opportunities to contribute and spearhead the growth of their specialties and subspecialties. In contrast with Hong Kong and the UK, there were Colleges in the beginning, some over 500 years old, and their Academies were only formed recently. So our Academy remains the sole representative body of all specialists (including dental surgeons) in Singapore when dealing with other professional bodies, Colleges, Ministries and the public.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME)

The Chapters and Colleges of the Academy of Medicine have always made CME one of their core activities in their annual calendars. When CME credit points were awarded to participants who signed in their attendance, there was even greater impetus that each speciality catered relevant CME for its members. Initially CME was voluntary, but in 2003 it became compulsory. A few years later, the CME points had to be from activities relevant to the specialists' own practice. Points were classified as core and non-core. When audiocassettes and slide tape programmes were in vogue in the 1990s, the Academy subscribed to these and made them available for borrowing by members and also set up two audiotape carrels in the Members' Lounge at the Academy's office on the ground floor of the College of Medicine Building.

As many speakers at CME activities were often foreigners en route to the many regional and international congresses, they were often sponsored by pharmaceutical and medical device or machine companies. The Academy's administrative set up facilitated the award of CME credits for these CME for a small fee. Hence, in each Annual Report of the Chapters and Colleges, there is documentation of the multiple CME activities. Among them are named lectures usually delivered in conjunction with the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Chapter/College. Courses, symposia, updates and workshops are usually organised.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The second objective in the Memorandum of Association of the Academy is promoting the study and research into medical and scientific problems. Hence, there are endowed fellowships and the Singapore Malaysia Congress of Medicine is the main forum for presentations from funding of local research. Among these are the named research/travelling fellowships such as the Seah Cheng Siang, Johnson and Johnson, and Roche & Glaxo. Also available are the Galloway Memorial Lectureship, AM/Nestle O&G Award, Yahya Cohen Lectureship and the Chapter of Surgeons Travelling Fellowship.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1999, the Education Committee chaired by the Assistant Master, Dr Fock Kwong Ming, was given the responsibility of advising council on all aspects of continuing professional development (CPD). This would incorporate CME and other features like teaching and research, quality assurance and hospital credentialing.¹¹

The CPD plan was overtaken in 2003 when the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) approached the Academy to propose a detailed framework for the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) programme scheduled for implementation in January 2007. Under the Assistant Master, Dr Ho Lai Yun, the concept plan was discussed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Academy in June 2005 and the revised paper forwarded to the SMC in August 2005. At the AGM, there was much debate over the logbook of cases as a record for educational purposes. In particular, the College of Surgeons voiced some dissent, especially surgeons in the private sector. The final agreement of the House was that category 4D on lifelong learning (record of cases for education) or log book (in any form) be reviewed.¹² At the Annex A to the minutes of this meeting is a table comparing the current SMC-CME program and the proposed CPD-MOC by the four categories. The first category is on preapproved established programmes like tutorials, updates, local events for named lectureships, plenary lectures, symposia and seminars; and overseas events/congresses. The second category covers publications, editorial work and scientific paper/poster presentations. Category 3 is for self-study and distance learning. Category 4 is new and covers Quality Care and Professionalism.

The Education Committee chaired by Dr Ho Lai Yun (Master Elect) also reported on the work of the Professional Development Division which is principally responsible for recommending to the SMC the accreditation of CME programmes for specialists; the Distance Learning Program (DLP) Subcommittee which looks into the provision of content for the various modules; and the Subcommittee on the implementation of CME accreditation fees.¹³ The DLP was launched on 1 November 2005.

SINGAPORE-MALAYSIA CONGRESS OF MEDICINE

This annual congress between the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia and the Academy of Medicine, Singapore is held alternately in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Singapore. The 39th Congress was held in Singapore from the 30 June to 3 July 2005 in conjunction with the Faculty of Medicine, National University of Singapore to commemorate 100 years of medical education. Singapore's first medical school was established on 3 July 1905 at Sepoy Lines.

The 41st Singapore-Malaysia Congress will be held in 2007 in Singapore to commemorate the golden jubilee of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

STANDARDS

The third objective in the Memorandum of Association of the Academy is about “maintaining and fostering postgraduate education, specialist training, conducting higher professional examinations and awarding diplomas.” In the 1999-2000 Annual Report of the Academy,¹¹ the activities listed were as follows: the first was setting standards in collaboration with the Graduate School of Medical Studies, NUS where appropriate for specialist training programmes. The Graduate School has been renamed the Division of Graduate Medical Studies under the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS. Its function through the various STCs is to run courses, conduct examinations (some in conjunction with overseas Colleges) and certify completion of specialist training, whereupon the Specialist can apply to have his name on the Specialist Register of the Singapore Medical Council.

The second activity was listed as ensuring that the contents, faculties and conduct of specialist training programmes meet defined standards. The third is conducting specialist exit assessment/examinations jointly with the DGMS. To facilitate these, there is a Specialist Training and Certification Committee, a Standing Committee of the Academy, chaired by the Censor-in-Chief.

The exit assessment/examination is differently programmed for the different specialities. To maintain standards, continuing assessments and interviews with inspection and discussion of logbook entries for trainees at both the Basic and Advanced Speciality levels are performed by the STCs. At the exit exam level, some specialities, especially the surgical ones, use the existing Royal College examinations Part III as the exit exam. This means for example, that Orthopaedic Surgeons need to fly to Hong Kong to sit the exam when it is held there. For the Medical Specialities, an external examiner, either local (may be from the private sector) or foreign, is part of the assessment panel. For yet others, e.g. Pathology, the final exam for MRC Path is the exit examination.

In the proposed CPD-MOC schedule earlier referred to under CME¹² participants are awarded credits for overseas and local meetings. Speakers and those who present papers or publish them also gain points. The other categories that merit credits are self-study, distance learning and activities related to improving quality care and professionalism.

In September 2000, the SAB formally appointed a JCST with the Master of the Academy and the Director of the DGMS as co-chairman. The JCST is responsible for setting professional standards for specialist training for all the 35 specialities and for establishing mechanism for assuring the quality of specialist training in Singapore.

CONCLUSION

The Academy has grown from strength to strength from just over 500 members 25 years ago to about 2000 Fellows today. The fellowship numbers have enabled the formation of Colleges under its umbrella to further the standing of the various specialties and subspecialties of Medicine. As with any profession, the maintenance and enhancement of public trust in its fellows is a critical function of any professional body. This is no less so with specialist doctors. So with an independent new home, a revamped organisational structure within the Academy and continued cooperation with the University and the Ministry of Health (for the Singapore Medical Council and Specialist Accreditation Board), the Academy is well positioned to deliver higher professional standards that would improve the care and trust of not only of regional but also of international patients.

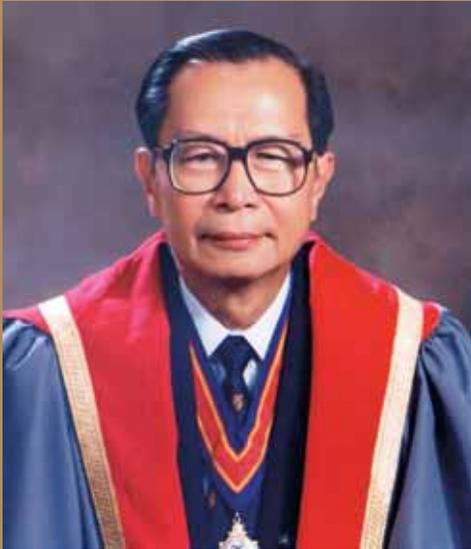
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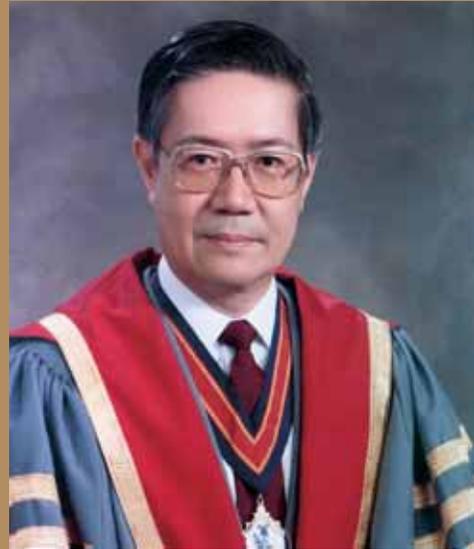


Masters
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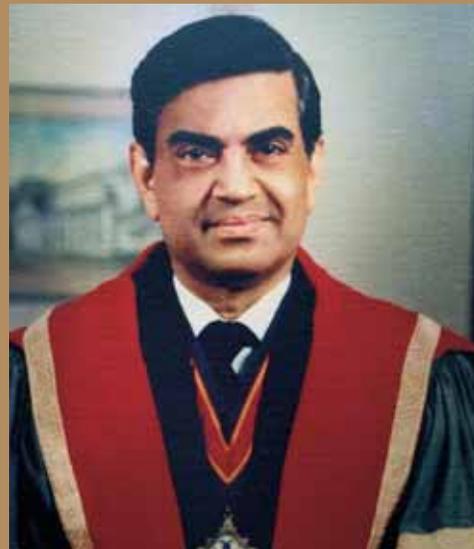
Thirteenth Master 1982-1984
Dr Chow Khuen Wai



Fourteenth Master 1984-1987
Dr Lawrence Chan



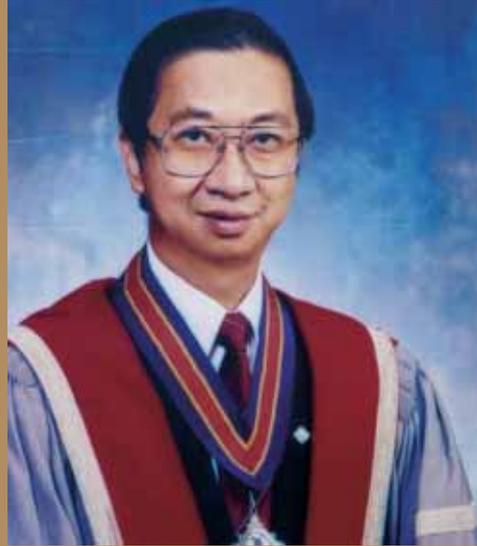
Fifteenth Master 1987-1990
Dr Tan Ngoh Chuan



Sixteenth Master 1990-1992
Dr Raj Nambiar



Seventeenth Master 1992-1995
Dr Chao Tzee Cheng



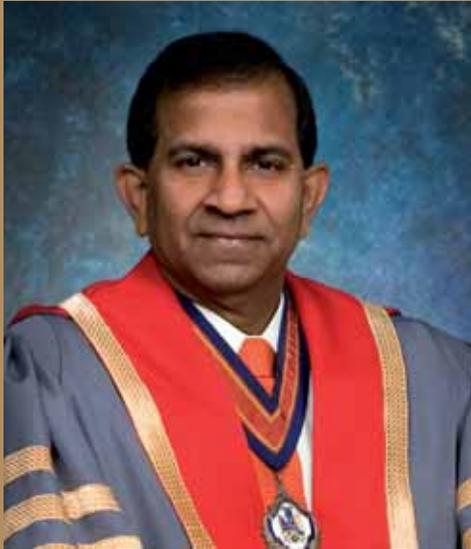
Eighteenth Master 1995-1998
Dr Tan Ser Kiat



Nineteenth Master 1998-2000
Dr Chee Yam Cheng



Twentieth Master 2000-2002
Dr Walter TL Tan



Twenty-first Master 2002-2004
Dr K Satku



Twenty-second Master 2004-2006
Dr Low Cheng Hock



Twenty-third Master 2006-2008
Dr Ho Lai Yun