




COLLEGE OF

*Obstetricians &
Gynaecologists,
Singapore*



*The History and Development of the Chapter of Obstetricians
and Gynaecologists / College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*

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ABSTRACT

The Chapter of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (O&G), started by a pioneering group of nine O&G specialists in 1969, had as its main objectives of encouraging postgraduate training, education and research. In the years that followed, continued medical education and professional development played an important aspects of the Chapter's activities, in close collaboration with our sister societies and organisations. Close regional and international links were also made and renowned Visiting Fellows/Academicians from overseas were invited by the Chapter to speak and participate in academic activities. The Academy of Medicine took a momentous step in March 2004 to transform Chapters into autonomous Colleges. The College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Singapore was officially inaugurated on 14 August 2004. In the tradition of its predecessor, the College continues to involve itself in training, continued medical education and examination activities. This also included producing consensus guidelines and distance learning programmes for the purpose of achieving best practices. An important milestone was the signing of the MOU on 3 September 2005 for the conjoint MRCOG/MMed examination between the RCOG and the College of O&G, Singapore. The first conjoint MRCOG/MMed examination was held on 8 May 2006. The College is well poised to address the challenges ahead including keeping the high standards of practice and ensuring that every practitioner maintain competence in his practice.

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INTRODUCTION

The Chapter of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (O&G) was inaugurated in 1969 by the Master of the Academy, Dr NC Tan.



Fig. 1. The late Professor BH Sheares, Protem Chairman of the Chapter of O&G in 1969.

It was started by a group of nine O&G specialists who were committed to continuing medical education. They had the foresight and vision to develop and encourage postgraduate training, education and research within Singapore and the region. The other primary concern then was the training of new specialists towards the Master of Medicine in Obstetrics and Gynaecology [MMed (O&G)].

The protem chairman then was the late Professor BH Sheares (Fig. 1) who initiated the formation of the Chapter within the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

The first meeting of the Chapter of O&G was held on 24 November 1969. Thirteen out of fifteen members attended the meeting. At the first meeting the Chairman briefed the members on the inception and formation of the Chapter of O&G and outline the composition and objectives of the Board of Postgraduate Medical Studies.



Fig. 2. The late Emeritus Professor SS Ratnam, 1st Chairman of the Chapter of O&G, November 1969.

The executive committee included the late Emeritus Professor SS Ratnam (Fig. 2) who became the Chairman of the Chapter of O&G. The other members of the first committee included the Secretary, Dr Khew Khoon Sin and members Dr Yvonne Salmon and the late Dr AC Sinha.

In the years that followed, the chapter continued to play its role in continuing medical education and professional development including organizing symposia and workshops, often with our own sister societies such as the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Singapore (OGSS). Members of the Chapter also took an active part in the running of postgraduate courses for the degree of the MMed (O&G). The first MMed examination in Obstetrics and Gynaecology was held in September 1971.

Closer links with the Indonesian Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society were developed in 1974 when they sent their first candidate for our MMed (O&G) examination in November 1974.

The Chapter was also actively involved in postgraduate training and teaching, and since 1999 the annual postgraduate refresher course has been jointly organised by the Chapter of O&G and the OGSS. The courses had been well attended by both trainees and specialists. In an effort to enhance our ties with our sister Colleges around the world, well known specialists from the American College of O&G, the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of O&G and the Royal College of O&G in UK were invited as speakers.

Joint activities with other Chapters were also organised, recognising our need for strong links with the physicians, surgeons, paediatricians, pathologists, radiologists and other specialists from another discipline.

The Chapter members were also very keen to encourage research and in 1974, a decision was made by the Chapter of O&G to start a Chapter Research fund, the interest from which could be utilised to encourage original research projects from young academicians. A target of \$10,000 was set and with contributions from members of the Chapter and well wishers a sum of about \$7,500 was collected. The recipients of the Chapter of O&G Research Award are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Recipients of the Chapter of O&G Research Award

1974	Dr R L Tambyraja	Prevention of prematurity in twins - a neuron-hormonal approach
1985	Dr Ho Tew Hong	Is the Papanicolaou smear accurate and reliable?
1986	Dr Tan Seang Beng	Breast stimulation - A new method for cervical ripening uncomplicated term pregnancies
1994	Dr Chang Tou Choong	The use of fibronectin to predict preterm labour
1997	Dr Tay Boon Lin	Effects of menopause and its treatment on bone loss
2002	Dr Fong Yoke Fai	Potential of slow release progestin systems for the long-term treatment of pelvic pain secondary to endometriosis

The Chapter of O&G recognised the importance of international networking with our colleagues around the world. Visiting Fellows/Academicians were invited to speak on topics of their special interest.

Professor Sir John Stallworthy was made the first Visiting Fellow of the Chapter. He gave a talk on "Continuing Medical Education" on 30 January 1975 and held teaching rounds and tutorials for postgraduates at the Kangang Kerbau Hospital over a period of a few days. Table 2 lists the Visiting Fellows/Academicians invited by the Chapter.

Table 2. Visiting Fellows/Academicians Invited by the Chapter

1975	Professor Sir John Stallworthy	1990	Professor Con Michael
1976	Professor C J Dewhurst	1990	Professor Charles Rodeck
1979	Professor James Scott	1992	Professor Jeffrey Robinson
1979	Professor Patrick Steptoe	1993	Professor Roger James Pepperell
1980	Professor Sir Anthony Alment	1994	Professor Ingemar Ingemarrsson
1981	Professor Chien-Tien Hsu	1994	Professor Karel Marsal
1981	Professor Shoichi Sakamoto	1995	Professor Malcolm Symonds
1985	Professor Carl Wood	1995	Professor Martin J Whittle
1985	Dr Hilary Schofield	1996	Professor Ho Pak Chung
1986	Professor Frank Loeffler	1996	Professor Michael de Swiet
1986	Professor Ronald Gibb	1997	Professor Charles Rodeck
1987	Professor Stuart Campbell	2000	Professor Ian Hammond
1988	Professor Ian Johnston	2003	Professor Stephen Robson

A milestone in the Chapter's history occurred on 12 September 1990 when the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RACOG), represented by their President, Professor Con Michael signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Chapter represented by Dr Christopher Chen and the Master, Dr NC Tan.

The Chapter also played an important role in producing evidence-based clinical practice guidelines in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. They included guidelines on Induction of Labour, Management of Preterm Labour and Termination of Pregnancy. It was also involved in drawing up guidelines on Ultrasound Scanning and Endoscopic and Laser Surgery.

The list of Chairmen of the Chapter of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists since its inception in 1969 is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Chairmen, Chapter of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1969 to 2004

1969	Mr S S Ratnam	1986/87	Dr Maurine Tsakok
1970/71	Professor SS Ratnam	1987/88	Dr Maurine Tsakok
1971/72	Dr Yvonne Salmon	1988/89	Dr Christopher Chen
1972/73	Dr Yvonne Salmon	1989/90	Dr Christopher Chen
1973/74	Dr Yvonne Salmon	1990/91	Dr Christopher Chen
1974/75	Dr Yvonne Salmon	1991/92	Dr Christopher Chen
1975/76	Dr Lawrence Chan	1992/93	Dr S Arulkumaran
1976/77	Dr Lawrence Chan	1993/94	Dr S Arulkumaran
1977/78	Dr Lawrence Chan	1994/95	Dr Yeo Seow Heong
1978/79	Dr Chan Yew Foon	1995/97	Dr Yeo Seow Heong
1979/80	Dr Tan Yew Foon	1997/98	Dr Yeo Seow Heong
1980/81	Dr Charles Ng	1998/99	Dr Yu Su Ling
1981/82	Dr Charles Ng	1999/00	Dr Yu Su Ling
1982/83	Dr R L Tambyraja	2000/01	Dr Lim Fang Kan
1983/84	Dr R L Tambyraja	2001/02	Dr Lim Fang Kan
1984/85	Dr Han Jee Fong	2002/03	Dr Chang Tou Choong
1985/86	Dr Han Jee Fong	2003/04	Dr Chang Tou Choong

The Academy Council undertook a major review of the Academy's Memorandum & Articles of Association (M&A) in 2002 and 2003 with a view to transform a number of Chapters into Colleges. Unanimous support from Fellows was received during the Academy's AGM in 2002 and 2003. The aim was to allow the Colleges for more autonomy and to enhance the development of the speciality so as to achieve the objectives, which its predecessors had set out.

This desire to move forward and to address the many challenges ahead, culminated in an Academy's Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) which was held on 27 March 2004. The EGM approved the formation of the College of O&G together with five other colleges viz Surgeons, Physicians, Paediatrics and Child Health, Anaesthesiologists and Radiologists.

Nomination and election followed and Dr Ho Tew Hong was elected as the first President of the College of O&G, Singapore.

Saturday, 14 August 2004 was no ordinary day. It was the official inauguration of the College of O&G, Singapore. The Guest of Honour was the Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Professor K Satku (Fig. 3), who was also the Immediate Past Master. The inaugural lectureship was awarded to Dr George Yeo Seow Heong (Fig. 4) who spoke on "Recent Developments in Obstetric Care/Maternal Fetal Medicine in Singapore." A dinner at the Sheraton Hotel was also organised on the same evening



▲ Fig. 3. Director of Medical Services, Professor K Satku, with 2003/04 Council Members at the Inauguration of the College of O&G, Singapore.



◀ Fig. 4. Inaugural College of O&G Lectureship Medal presented to A/Professor George SH Yeo (on the left) by A/Professor Ho Tew Hong, President of College of O&G, Singapore (14 August 2004).

Fig. 5. 2nd College of O&G Lectureship Orator, Professor Allan Templeton, President, Royal College of O&G, UK with Professor Low Cheng Hock, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore and A/Professor Ho Tew Hong, President, College of O&G, Singapore (2 July 2005).





Fig. 6. 3rd College of O&G Lectureship Medal presented to Professor Ho Lai Yun, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore by A/Professor Ho Tew Hong, President of College of O&G, Singapore (6 October 2006).

Fig. 7. Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between College of O&G, Singapore and Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Singapore at the Academy of Medicine Building on 17 December 2004.



Fig. 8. 2004/05 Elected Council with Professor Low Cheng Hock, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore (front row third from left) and Professor Allan Templeton, President, Royal College of O&G, UK (front row second from right).



The College of O&G, Singapore was formally incorporated as a legal entity on 17 August 2004 (Fig. 3 to 8).

This was a highly significant milestone for the O&G fraternity in Singapore as it was the first time that an independent and autonomous College could make decisions that would shape the future of O&G in Singapore and to make significant contributions to the care of women not only in Singapore but to the region and beyond.

With the transformation of the Chapter to College, the question that is most frequently asked by Fellows is what role will the new College play and how would it differ from the role the Chapter. Many Fellows have also wondered whether there would be duplication of roles with the O&G Society.

The transition from Chapter to College status brings about new challenges. The primary role must remain as the guardian of standards for all O&G. The College remains focused on continuous professional development and continuous medical education.

As a demonstration of its commitment to work closely with everyone in the O&G community, the College had committed itself to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OGSS to further cement our enduring relationship.

The MOU was signed by the President of the College of O&G, Dr Ho Tew Hong and the President of the O&G Society, Dr Lee Keen Whye in the Lee Kong Chian Room at the Academy of Medicine Building, 142 Neil Road on 17 December 2004 (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. 2005/06 Elected Council College of O&G, Singapore.

Table 4. Office Bearers for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 Council

2005-2006 Council	
President	Dr Ho Tew Hong
Vice President	Dr Lai Fon-Min
Honorary Secretary	Dr Jeffrey Low
Honorary Treasurer	Dr Fong Chuan Wee
Council Members	Dr Chang Tou Choong Dr Suresh Nair Dr Ann Tan
Co-opted (OGSS)	Dr Lee Keen Whye Dr See Tho Kai Yin Dr Christine Yap
Section Chairpersons	
Gynaecological Oncology	Dr Tay Eng Hseon
Maternal Fetal Medicine	Dr Yeo Seow Heong
Reproductive Medicine	Dr Sheila Loh
Urogynaecology	Dr Roy Ng
2006-2007 Council	
President	Dr Ho Tew Hong
President Elect	Dr Chang Tou Choong
Vice President	Dr Lai Fon-Min
Hon Secretary	Dr Suresh Nair
Hon Treasurer	Dr Fong Chuan Wee
Members	Dr Jeffrey Low Dr Tan Kok Hian
Section Chairpersons	
Gynaecological Oncology	Dr Tay Eng Hseon
Maternal Fetal Medicine	Dr Yeo Seow Heong
Reproductive Medicine	Dr Sheila Loh
Urogynaecology	Dr Roy Ng

The office bearers were elected at the first meeting of the 2004-2005 Council on 11 October 2004 (Table 4).

In addition, according to the constitution of the College of O&G, Singapore, the College council conducted nomination and election of Chairman and members of the four subsections ie. Gynaecological Oncology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Reproductive Medicine and Urogynaecology (Table 4) (Fig. 10).

In the tradition of its predecessor the Chapter of O&G, the College of O&G continues to involve itself in training, continuing medical education and examinations. The College has since January 2006 taken over the main role of organising the very successful annual Regional MRCOG Part Two Examination Course in Singapore, first started in 2001 by the Singapore Representative Committee of the RCOG. Currently other co-organisers included the Singapore Representative Committee of the RCOG, the Division of Graduate Medical Studies, National University of Singapore and KK Women's and Children's Hospital.



Fig. 10. 2006/07 Elected Council College of O&G, Singapore with Professor Ho Lai Yun, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore (front row third from right).

A historic milestone for O&G in Singapore was achieved with the conduct of the conjoint MMed/MRCOG examinations for the first time in Singapore on 8 May 2006 (Fig. 11). With this historic event, Singapore became one of the only two centres (together with Hong Kong) outside London to conduct the international MRCOG Final Part Two Oral Assessment Examination. This followed intense discussions with the President and the council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology. The MOU was signed on 3 September 2005. Clinical A/Prof Ho Tew Hong signed on behalf of the College of O&G, Singapore. The other signatories were Professor Allan Templeton, President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, UK and

Professor Lee Eng Hin, Director, Division of Graduate Medical Studies, National University of Singapore. It was witnessed by Professor Low Cheng Hock, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore (Fig. 12).

The Chief Examiner for the RCOG was Professor William L. Ledger, Chair of the Examination Committee of the RCOG. The Chief Examiner for the MMed (O&G) was Clinical A/Prof Ho Tew Hong. Dr Michael G Murphy, Director of Education, RCOG was present to help facilitate the examinations (Fig. 13).

Other examiners for the first conjoint examinations included Professor Tony Chung Kwok Hung and Dr Pang Chung Pui (Observer) from Hong Kong. The other Singapore examiners were Dr Jothi Kumar, Dr Mahesh Choolani, A/Prof Mary Rauff, Dr Kelvin Tan Kok Hian, CI A/Prof Tay Sun Kuie, A/Prof P C Wong and CI A/Prof George Yeo S H. Prof Kuldip Singh and Dr Lai Fon-Min were observers.

There were a total of 11 candidates (8 from Hong Kong and 3 from Singapore). All 3 Singapore candidates viz Dr Tan Eng Loy, Dr Khoo Chong Kiat and Dr Ng Ying Woo were successful in the first conjoint MMed / MRCOG Examinations held in Singapore.

Increasingly, Fellows of the College are also involved in the Exit Assessment of advanced specialist trainees conducted by the Specialist Training Committee (O&G).

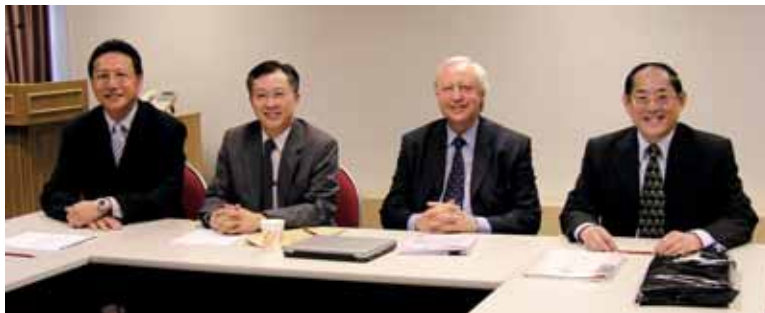


Fig. 11. From left to right (2005) - Professor Tony Chung Kwok Hung, Vice President of Hong Kong College of O&G, Dr Lawrence Tang, President of Hong Kong College of O&G, Professor Allan Templeton, President of Royal College of O&G, UK and A/Professor Ho Tew Hong, President of College of O&G, Singapore.

Fig. 12. Panel of examiners of the 1st Conjoint M.MED / MRCOG Examination held on 8 May 2006 with Professor William L. Ledger (front row third from left) and Dr Michael G Murphy (front row second from left).



Fig. 13. Examiners' Meeting at the 1st Conjoint MMed / MRCOG Examination held in KK Women's and Children's Hospital on 8 May 2006.

Another significant development is the acceptance by the College of O&G as the main key player of the proposed Staff Registrar Scheme for O&G proposed by the Ministry of Health, Singapore. The College will be responsible for the training, monitoring, examinations and accreditation of the Staff Registrar Scheme which will lead to the Diploma in O&G, Singapore.

In support of continuing education, the College has an Education Subcommittee to address this aspect. Consensus Guidelines and Clinical Practice Guidelines are being produced. The Distance Learning Programme (DLP) was officially launched on 1 November 2005. Fellows may access the DLP through the Member Login secured area via the Academy's website.

COAT OF ARMS

The College Coat of Arms (Fig. 14) consists of a central shield, supporters at the side, mantle on top and a banner at the bottom of the shield with a motto which encapsulates the ideals or visions of the College. There are medical symbols, features that represent Singapore and features that are specific for the specialty of O&G.

The content of the shield is the Caduceus. The wing-topped staff, a Roman symbol for truce, neutrality and noncombatant status has two snakes winding about it. The symbol of the two intertwined snakes is related to other serpent symbols of fertility, wisdom and healing. The caduceus is used as a symbol of Medicine.

Supporting the Shield on the left is the Lion which represents Singapore. The Lion symbolises courage, strength and excellence. On the right is a typical modern Singaporean woman, one who juggles work and family, the very same that the profession has sworn to provide the best medical care for.

The mantle is the national flower, Vanda Miss Joaquim. It symbolises Singapore and the coming together of all Obstetrics and Gynaecology subspecialties. The banner contains the College Motto "In Scientia Veritas, in Arte Honestas". This means In Science Truth, In Art Honour.

The College is thankful to Dr Chua Yang a Fellow of the College for the initial ideas in the design of the crest. The beautifully designed crest gives a face to the College and represents our quest for excellence and our duty and obligation to provide the highest standards of obstetrical and gynaecological care to all our women.



Fig. 14.