



CHAPTER OF

*Dental Surgeons*



# *A Brief History of the Chapter of Dental Surgeons*

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## ABSTRACT

When the Academy of Medicine was formed in 1957, Dr J A Jansen was as one of its dental founding members. As the membership strength of dental surgeons increases in the ensuing years, the Chapter of Dental Surgeons was officially formed within the Academy of Medicine, Singapore in 1979 with Dr Edmund Tay Mai Hiong as the first Chairman of the Dental Chapter Committee 1979-1980. Following upon the footsteps of Dr Edmund Tay, many prominent Dental Academicians from both Institutions and Private Sector had come forth to lead the Dental Chapter since then. The membership strength in the Dental chapter had grown steadily from 37 members in 1982 to the current number at 179 Fellows. Over the years, the Dental Chapter has continued to play a significant role in the continuing education of dental surgeons in general as well as influencing and contributing to the nurturing and development of dental specialties in Singapore.

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## INTRODUCTION AND MEMBERSHIP

The idea of having an Academy of Medicine in Singapore was first proposed by some 20 medical specialists on 19 July 1957 and was named then as "Academy of Physicians & Surgeons". It was officially formed by 34 founding members (comprising Dental Surgeons, Physicians and Surgeons) and was renamed in 1958 as "Academy of Medicine, Singapore". Dr JA Jansen (Professor of Prosthetic Dentistry) was one of the dental founding members.

In the ensuing years, more dental surgeons with specialist training joined its fold and took part in the Academy's continuing education activities starting from the 8<sup>th</sup> Singapore-Malaysia Congress held between 26 and 29 July 1973. The following papers were presented: "Myofacial Pain in Medical Practice" by JA Jansen; "Current Concepts in the Conservation of the Natural Dentition" by Liok Yew Ai & Leslie Yong; "Dental Identification" by Lye Thin Loke and "The A,B,O (H) Isoantigens in Oral Cancers" by Yip Wing Kong.

Besides the dental founding members from the Annals records which was first published in 1972, some of the earliest dental specialists admitted to the Academy of Medicine, Singapore were as follows: 1971 - Drs Liok Yew Ai, Loke Sua Jun, Lee Swee Khiang & Chee See Kong;<sup>1</sup> 1973 - Drs Chan Yee Wing, Lee Chee On, Henry Lee, Lim Swee Teck, Tan Yok Lin & Leslie Yong; and 1975 - Drs Allan Choo, Si-hoe Kok Soon & Wong-Lee Tzu Kia. One of the earlier publications by dental specialists appeared in the Annals in the 1979<sup>2</sup> entitled "Surgical Treatment of Mandibular Prognathism: A Review of 25 Cases" authored by Dr FMS Lee, the Professor of Oral Surgery, University of Singapore.

The membership strength in the Dental chapter had grown steadily from 37 members in 1982 to the current number at 179 Fellows (173 local and 6 overseas).

## FORMATION OF THE CHAPTER OF DENTAL SURGEONS

The Chapter of Dental Surgeons was on records officially formed within the Academy of Medicine, Singapore in 1979 with Dr Edmund Tay Mai Hiong (the Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry University of Singapore) as the first Chairman of the Dental Chapter Committee 1979-1980.<sup>3</sup> It organised the first Public Lecture on the 25 March 1980 which was delivered by Mr Gordon Fordyce entitled “Oral Surgery & Dental Practice” and chaired by none other than the Chapter Chairman Dr Edmund Tay himself.<sup>4</sup> The initial years of the Dental Chapter saw the leadership predominantly provided by the dental specialists from the government sector and the University. But this had gradually shifted to a more balanced source of leadership from both institutional as well as from the private sector as the critical mass in the dental specialists become established in the latter sector.

Following upon the footsteps of Dr Edmund Tay, there are many prominent Dental Academicians from both institutions and private sector that had come forth to lead the Dental Chapter as Chairmen since 1979 till to date. Just to name some of the pioneering dental chapter leaders; Dr Edmund Tay handed over the chair of the Dental Chapter to Dr FMS Lee in 1980, followed by Dr Lim Kheng Ann in 1981 who in turn was succeeded by Dr Tan Yok Lin in 1982 who was then succeeded by Dr Lye Thim Loke in 1983. The Dental Chapter’s leadership baton was next passed to the following younger generation of dental leaders, i.e. Dr

Teo Choo Soo in 1984 , Dr Loh Hong Sai in 1985, Dr Keng Siong Beng in 1986-1988, Dr Ho Kee Hai in 1989, Dr Richard Ow in 1990, Dr Yeo Jin Fei in 1991-1993, Dr David Tay in 1994, Dr Yeo Jin Fei in 1995-1996, Dr George Y W Soh in 1997-1998, Dr Chung Kong Mun in 1999-2003, Dr Varawan Sae-Lim 2004-2005 and Dr Chan Siew Luen in 2005-2006 (Fig. 1). A complete list of past Chairpersons of the Chapter of Dental Surgeons is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Past Chairmen for Chapter of Dental Surgeons

1978 - 1980	Dr Tay Mai Hong, Edmund
1980 - 1981	Dr Lee Moh Shin, Francis
1981 - 1982	Dr Lim Kheng Ann
1982 - 1983	Dr Tan Yok Lin (deceased)
1983 - 1984	Dr Lye Thim Loke
1984 - 1985	Dr Teo Choo Soo
1985 - 1986	Dr Loh Hong Sai
1986 - 1988	Dr Keng Siong Beng
1988 - 1989	Dr Ho Kee Hai
1989 - 1990	Dr Ow Kok Keng, Richard
1990 - 1991	Dr Yeo Jin Fei
1991 - 1992	Dr Yeo Jin Fei
1992 - 1994	Dr Tay Kheng Lip, David
1994 - 1997	Dr Yeo Jin Fei
1997 - 1999	Dr Soh Yi-Wei, George
1999 - 2003	Dr Chung Kong Mun
2003 - 2005	Dr Varawan Sae-Lim
2005 - 2006	Dr Chan Siew Luen

Over the years, there were even more numbers of equally passionate and prominent Dental Academicians who gave off their time by stepping forward to dedicate their services to the Dental Chapter Committees.

## THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE DENTAL STUDIES

Postgraduate Dental Education started in 1949 with the then King Edward VII College of Medicine (including the

Fig. 1. Chapter of Dental Surgeons – 2006-2007 Committee Members  
 Standing (left to right): Dr Varawan Sae-Lim (Co-opted Member), Dr Keson Tan (Co-opted Member), Dr Neo Tee Khim (Committee Member), Dr Victor Fan (Committee Member)  
 Seated (left to right): Dr Christina Sim (Co-opted Member), Dr Ansgar Cheng (Vice-Chairman), Dr Chan Siew Luen (Chairman), Dr Andrew Aw (Honorary Secretary), Dr Marianne Ong (Committee Member)



Department of Dental Surgery) attaining its Faculty status. The School of Postgraduate Dental Studies (PGDS) was formally established in 1970 and the objectives set then were to train dental specialists, promote continuing dental education and develop research in dentistry which remains just as relevant today. Associate Professor RV Lam was its first Director from 1970 to 1973 followed by Professor FMS Lee (1973-1978) and Associate Professor Chan Yew Ai from 1978 to 1980. In 1980, Clinical Associate Professor Lim Kheng Ann took over the Directorship until when the Faculty of Dentistry, NUS moved to Kent Ridge in 1986. Professor Chew Chong Lin assumed the post of Director PGDS since that date. In 2002, the School of PGDS was renamed Division of Graduates Dental Studies (DGDS) and was placed under the Dean, Faculty of Dentistry, NUS. DGDS continues to build upon the foundation and standard set. In addition to specialty training, it continues to conduct the Part I Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) Examination in Basic Medical and Dental Sciences to local and regional dentists who wish to pursue further postgraduate dental specialty training. The current clinical residency training programmes leading to a Master of Dental Surgery comprises a 3-year structured course, which is available in the following specialties, i.e. Endodontics, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Periodontology and Prosthodontics. As at year 2004, the DGDS (with its predecessor, School of PGDS) had produced 65 MDS graduates.

In addition, it also provides Continuing Dental Education (CDE) in various disciplines to local dentists through its annual clinical symposiums, seminars and hands-on workshops.

## CONTINUING DENTAL EDUCATION AND MEETINGS

In the ensuing years, more and more Continuing Dental Education Programmes (Public Lectures, Seminars and Scientific Meetings) were organised for the Dental Fellows of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore and the dental community at large.

The Chapter Committee for 1984 to 1985 under the chairmanship of Dr Teo Choo Soo should be credited for staging the Inaugural (First) Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) for the Chapter of Dental Surgeons on 21 September 1985. This 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Meeting was organised by an Organising Committee headed by Dr Chan-Liok Yew Ai. The theme of the 1<sup>st</sup> ASM was "The Management of Non-vital Teeth and Tooth Discolouration". The Plenary Lectures were delivered by Dr Lee Ek Chong (Management of Non-vital Teeth) and Dr Teo Choo Soo (Management of Tooth Discolouration).

The Dental Chapter held its first Annual Dinner on 27 September 1987 following the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASM. The 4<sup>th</sup> ASM marked the first time the Chapter held a two-day scientific programme on the theme: "Pain In Dentistry" which was graced by Dr Gwee Ah Leng, the President of Pain Association of Singapore. The keynote speaker was Dr Richard Juniper, from Oxford, UK with 9 other invited speakers. Free paper sessions were held with participation of 9 oral presentations. On 24 September 1989, the Chapter organised the 5<sup>th</sup> ASM on the theme "Dentistry – State of the Art". The ASM was held jointly with the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of the Faculty of Dentistry, National University of Singapore. Through the years, the Chapter continues to regularly organised many successful ASMs (Fig. 2), meetings and symposia.

In conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine, 6-9 September 1990, the Chapter organised a symposium entitled "Medical Problems and their Dental Management" which was held on 8 September 1990.

During the period from 1991 to 1993, the Chapter organised 2 seminars: "Orthodontics & Surgical Correction of Dentofacial Anomalies" on 16 June 1991 and "Dentistry in Peace and War" with the SAF Medical Services. The Academy's Council was pleased to appoint Professor Geoffrey Sperber (Oral Biology Department,



*Fig. 2. The 12th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Chapter of Dental Surgeons, Academy of Medicine, Singapore held on 18 November 2001. Theme: Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery – The Next Step Forward. Left to right: Dr Keson Tan, Dean, Faculty of Dentistry, NUS; Dr Lionel Lee; Dr Go Wee Ser, Chairman of Organising Committee; Dr Ling Sing Lin, Deputy Director of Medical Services (Elderly and Continuing Care), MOH, Guest-of-Honour; Dr Chung Kong Mun, Chairman, Chapter of Dental Surgeons; Dr Yeo Jin Fei, Censor and Chapter Committee member; and Dr Sim Wee Kiat.*

*Fig. 3. At the opening of the 11th Biennial Meeting of the International Association of Oral Pathologists (IAOP), organised by the Chapter of Dental Surgeons. From left to right: Dr S Balaji, Guest-of-Honour; Prof Paul M Speight, Secretary, IAOP; A/Prof Yeo Jin Fei, Chairman, Organising Committee; Prof Colin Smith, President, IAOP; and Prof Satku, Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore.*



University of Alberta Canada) as Distinguished Academician who was also keynote speaker for 6<sup>th</sup> ASM held on 7 to 8 September 1991.

The Chapter organised the 1st Joint Meeting with the Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons on 15 to 16 October 1994. A get together tea reception for dental practitioners was organised on 11 October 1995.

From 5 to 8 August 2002, the Chapter organised the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial Meeting of the International Association of Oral Pathologists (IAOP) (Fig. 3). There were a total of 222 participants from 35 countries including Singapore.

## PUBLICATIONS

In September 1989, the Chapter published for the first time an issue of Annals of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore on “Dental Surgery” with Drs Keng Siong Beng, Loh Hong Sai and Teo Choo Soo as Guest Editors.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1999, The Chapter produced another issue entitled “Craniofacial Trauma and Disorders”.<sup>6</sup> The guest editors for the issue were Drs Yeo Jin Fei, Andrew Sandham and Martin Huang. A total of 24 papers were published.

In July 2004, a supplementary issue was published entitled "Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology and Medicine".<sup>7</sup> The guest editor for the issue was Dr Yeo Jin Fei. A total of 14 papers were published

## DENTAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

From 1989 to 1990, the interim criteria for the accreditation of medical specialties were being determined. Dental specialties were based on the UK lines; e.g., Prosthetic Dentistry and Conservative Dentistry were two separate specialties.

On 1 February 1990, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Faculty of Dental Surgery Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Academy of Medicine, Singapore was signed.

Following a survey on the issue of dental specialist certification, the Dental Chapter appointed a Working Committee on Dental Specialisation under the Chairmanship of Dr Yeo Jin Fei with the following members Drs George Soh, Loh Fun Chee, David Tay, Crace Ong, Chen Nah Nah, Yong Sui Len and Chew Chong Lin. The results of this survey identified the following 8 specialties: Orthodontics, Paedodontics, Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Endodontics, Dental Public Health, Oral Pathology, and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery. This Working Committee was re-named the Specialist Certification Subcommittee on Dental Specialties.

After extensive consultation with the specialists concerned, the training criteria and requirements leading to specialist certification in Endodontics, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontology and Prosthodontics was finally completed and submitted to the Academy's Council in 1997.

The "Criteria for Advanced Dental Specialty Training Programmes" was published in January 2002 for the 6 dental specialties. This publication marks an important milestone in the development of dental specialty in Singapore. It was a culmination of the effort of past and present Chapter committee members as well as input obtained from representatives from teaching institutions, dental specialty organisations and national dental associations.

In addition, a Specialist Board for each of these specialties was also appointed which would be responsible for the following specific functions: a) the formulation and implementation of advanced training programme; b) the monitoring and assessment of training programmes and advanced trainees; and c) the organisation and conduct of exit examinations.

The Chapter was privileged to have Dr Chung Kong Mun as Chapter Chairman from July 1999 to July 2003 to oversee the formalisation and recognition of the 6 dental specialties.

I quote from the foreword of the training criteria booklet, which is still relevant today even as we evolve and would finally see the birth of the Dental Specialists Register soon.

*"It is hoped that our current and future Fellows of the Dental Chapter will support this initiative and continue to contribute actively towards upholding clinical standards and competency in their respective dental specialties while working closely with general dental practitioners, their respective organizations and training institutions as well as the Singapore Dental Council and the future Dental Specialists Accreditation Board. This will help ensure that professional standards are upheld and maintained for the benefit of all patients and our community."*

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