



COLLEGE OF

*Physicians,
Singapore*



*From the Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine,
Singapore to the College of Physicians, Singapore*

Shih-Hui Lim¹ FAMS, FRCP (Edin & Lond), FRACP (Hon)

Keng-Yeen Ng² FAMS, FRACP (Hon)

Chin-Hin Chew³ FAMS, HonFCPS, HonFHKCP



¹ President, College of Physicians, Singapore (2004-2007)

² President, College of Physicians, Singapore (2007-2009)

³ Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore (1973-1975)

Address for Correspondence:

Dr Lim Shih Hui

Department of Neurology
Singapore General Hospital

Outram Road
Singapore 169608

ABSTRACT

Following the establishment of the Academy of Medicine in 1957, the Chapter of Physicians was formed within the Academy in 1966 when there was a sufficient number of physicians to warrant its formation. Over the 40 years, the Chapter played a major role in providing, promoting and enhancing Continuing Medical Education (CME) for the physician specialists in Singapore. The Chapter gradually grew in size and scope. In early 2000s, it had more than 450 members specialising in 14 Internal Medicine-related specialties. Because of the critical mass, specialization and sub-specialization in Singapore, the Chapter was no longer able to represent the diverse interests of physician specialists, as well as to further develop all these specialties and subspecialties. In 2004, the Chapter of Physicians transformed into the current College of Physicians, with its own 14 internal medicine-related specialty Chapters. Though an independent legal entity, the College and its 14 specialty Chapters continue to be affiliated to the Academy of Medicine. They will now provide and strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for specialists as well as augment physicians' training and certification in Singapore. The initiatives and effort of the College and its Chapters will further enhance the roles and functions of the Academy, the main professional body for all specialists in Singapore. This paper highlights the important milestones of the Chapter over the past 4 decades, describes the rationale and process of College formation, and outlines its strategy for the next decade.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2007;36:525-540

Key words: Chapter, College, Physicians, Singapore

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the previous Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore to the current College of Physicians, Singapore in 2004 was the outcome of a steady progress in and a natural evolution of medical specialty development in Singapore. Just like the Academy which was established in 1957 as the only professional body of the medical and dental specialists, the Chapter of Physicians was formed in 1966 when there were more than sufficient physicians to warrant the formation of the Chapter within the Academy. About 40 years later, the Chapter grew in size with more than 450 members specialising in 14 Internal Medicine-related specialties. Because of the critical mass and as a result of specialty and subspecialty development, it was logical and timely to transform the Chapter into a College with its own specialty Chapters. This paper highlights important milestones and events of the Chapter over the past 4 decades, describes the rationale and process of College formation, and outlines its strategy for the next decade.

THE ERA OF THE CHAPTER OF PHYSICIANS OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE, 1966-2004

By 1965, it was felt that the Academy had more than sufficient physicians and surgeons within its membership to warrant the formation of the Chapters in Medicine and Surgery. Thus the Chapter of Physicians was inaugurated on the 2nd December 1966, by the Master of the Academy, Prof K Shanmugaratnam, as one of the first two Chapters of the Academy. The Chapter was administered by a 5-member Committee elected amongst physician Fellows of the Academy. The Chairman of the Committee was the Chairman of the Chapter. The first Chairman elected was Sir Gordon A Ransome with Dr Chew Chin Hin as Secretary (Fig. 1).¹ Table 1 shows all Chapter Chairmen from its formation in 1966 to its transformation into the College of Physicians in 2004.

Table 1. Chairman, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1966 to 2004

Year	Name of Chairman
1966 - 1968	Dr Gordon Arthur Ransome
1968 - 1972	Dr Khoo Oon Teik
1972 - 1975	Dr Wong Poi Kwong
1975 - 1977	Dr John A Tambyah
1977 - 1979	Dr Feng Pao Hsii
1979 - 1982	Dr Teoh Pek Chuan
1982 - 1983	Dr Chia Boon Lock
1983 - 1985	Dr Tan Yew Oo
1985 - 1986	Dr Arthur Tan
1986 - 1987	Dr Chee Yam Cheng
1987 - 1988	Dr Vernon Oh
1988 - 1991	Dr Richard Guan
1991 - 1993	Dr Lee Kok Onn
1993 - 1994	Dr Tan Wan Cheng
1994 - 1995	Dr Cheng Jun
1995 - 1997	Dr Benjamin Ong
1997 - 1998	Dr Howe Hwee Siew
1998 - 2001	Dr Roland Chong
2001 - 2004	Dr Lim Shih Hui



Fig. 1. Dr Chew Chin Hin with the portrait of Sir Gordon Ransome at the Academy of Medicine.

1966-1970

In the formative years, the number of members of the Chapter was small. Efforts were made to promote interests of members and at the same time, to draw new members into the Chapter and the Academy. One such effort was to allow interested members to attend committee meetings. This allowed views to be expressed and subsequently, stimulated the members to take part in the activities of the Chapter. Other initiatives included (a) conduct of examinations for the membership of the Chapter, (b) postgraduate training for General Practitioners and young doctors who had academic interests in Medicine, and (c) organization of refresher courses for physicians.¹

An important meeting was held at Sir Gordon's residence in October 1967 to discuss postgraduate education and examination in Singapore. The Chapter recommended to the Academy Council that the Academy should be the sole authority for the examination and award of higher degrees. Alternatively, the Academy should work in conjunction with the University in the control of training except the granting of the degree. The Chapter also recommended that the Chairman of the Chapter should be a member of the Academy Council.²

In 1968, the Chapter made the following recommendations to the Academy Council on the syllabus and training leading to the degree of Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) [MMed (Int Med)]: (a) the examination should emphasise competency in clinical skills; (b) the standard should be comparable to that of the Royal Colleges and the training should be such that after passing the examination, a candidate would be fit to train as a consultant specialist; (c) the examination should be recognised such that local candidates need not waste time going abroad to take other examinations (the high pass rate in the British Fellowship and Membership examinations spoke well for the local graduates); (d) there should be a definite period of training in specified posts and a period of laboratory attachment; (e) there should be compulsory reading of certain books and monographs. The Chapter also decided that after obtaining the degree of Master of Medicine, there should be Collegiation for the purpose of continuing education. Collegiation could be achieved by successful candidates becoming members of the Academy.³

In the same year, the Academy helped to initiate the formation of the School of Post-Graduate Medical Studies at the National University of Singapore. With the above recommendations from the Chapter, the School conducted the first higher medical examination leading to the degree of the Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine).⁴ This degree was recognised by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians as being equivalent to the FRACP Part 1. The teachers in Internal Medicine at the School were mostly physician Fellows of the Academy, and were also the internal examiners.

In 1970, the Scientific Sub-Committee of the Chapter recommended that the Chapter should hold scientific meetings regularly. Thus, the first Scientific Meeting of the Chapter was held at King Edward VII Hall on 6th March 1970. Subsequent Scientific Meetings were held monthly, bimonthly or quarterly. Teach-In Seminars were added from late 1970.⁵ Attendances were initially modest but improved progressively in subsequent Meetings, although the core support was from the same group of members.

1971-1980

By the mid 1970s, membership began to exceed one hundred. This reflected an increasing interest amongst physicians to be part of the Chapter. As such, the Chapter Committee recognised that more activities were needed to allow the participation of new members. From 1975, all Scientific Meetings and Teach-In Seminars were renamed as Continuing Education Lecture Series, either being held alone or jointly organised with other Chapters of the Academy or specialty societies. The frequency of these meetings was not confined to 4 or 5 per year but more were arranged as needed.⁶

In 1974, the Academy and the Chapter had its first Visiting Academician, Professor (now Sir) David Todd from the University of Hong Kong and in 1976, the Chapter had its first Visiting Fellow, Professor Rosie Young also from Hong Kong.⁶ In 1977-78, Professor Priscilla Kincaid-Smith from the University of Melbourne was the second Visiting Fellow. She also participated in the teaching programme for the Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) course.⁷

In 1978, the Committee met with the trainees in Internal Medicine to upgrade and improve the programme for the Continuing Education Lecture Series. Arising from the meeting, a new format of teaching was tested. In addition to the usual weekly lectures, a monthly clinical session was arranged. These clinical sessions initially took place at the Singapore General Hospital but were held in other hospitals subsequently. A register of trainees was compiled and these trainees were kept informed of talks organised by the Chapter. They also received free copies of the *Annals* of the Academy of Medicine of Singapore upon request.⁷

Another milestone was recorded in 1980. Other than the 34 meetings of the Continuing Education Lecture Series in 1980,⁸ the first official Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) was held on the 2nd November 1980 at King's Hotel.⁹ The number of registrants was about 120 and half were members of the Chapter. The keynote address on "Analysis of Breathlessness" and a lecture on "Prognosis in Chronic Airflow Obstruction" were given by Dr Michael Pain, Director of the Department of Thoracic Medicine, Royal Melbourne Hospital, who was also the visiting Academician for 1980.

1981-1990

Due to the success of the ASM, members felt that this should be an annual event for the Chapter. Hence, the 2nd ASM was held in 1981 at Equatorial Hotel, which included a Keynote Address, 3 symposia, and free communications. The Academy's Galloway Memorial Lecture was also held during this ASM. 173 doctors participated in this ASM.¹⁰

In 1983, the Chapter and the Academy organised a joint scientific meeting with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. A total of 238 delegates attended this 3-day meeting in Singapore.¹¹

For the first time during the 8th ASM in 1987, a Merit Award was given to the best scientific paper. The 1st recipient of the Award was Dr Vernon M S Oh from the Department of Medicine, National University Hospital. His paper was titled "Sodium and Potassium Ion Transport across Lymphocyte Plasma Membranes in Hypokalaemic Periodic Paralysis". Also, for the first time, Medical Officers and Trainees were asked to assess speakers at the ASM, using a simple assessment form drafted by the committee's chairman.

By the late 1980s, total membership of the Chapter exceeded 200. The Continuing Education Lectures were renamed as Continuing Medical Education (CME) Lectures from 1988.

1990-2004

Following the demise of Professor Seah Cheng Siang (Fig. 2) in June 1990, the Council of the Academy resolved to set up the Seah Cheng Siang (SCS) Memorial Research Fund, to perpetuate the memory of the distinguished Physician, Academician and Past Master of the Academy of Medicine. The primary objective of the Fund was to promote medical research in Singapore. In early 1991, the SCS Memorial Research Fund was renamed SCS Memorial Fund, not only to promote research, but also to endow an annual lectureship in Professor Seah's name – "The Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lectureship", as well as to establish a medal to be awarded annually to the top candidate in the Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) Examinations.



Fig. 2. Professor Seah Cheng Siang.

A fund-raising committee for the SCS Memorial Fund was formed in early 1991 to formally launch the Fund. The Committee was chaired by the Master Dr Raj Nambiar, and its other members were Drs Chee Yam Cheng (Bursar), Christopher Chen, Richard Guan, John Tambyah and Teh Lip Bin. With the support of Professor Seah's family and through the goodwill of former colleagues and friends of Professor Seah and well-wishers of the Academy, the fund grew substantially. By January 1993, two of the objectives for which the SCS Memorial Fund was established had been realised, namely the endowment of an annual Lectureship (Table 2) and the establishment of a Gold Medal for award annually to the top graduate in the clinical segment of the Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) examination. The remaining objective of supporting and promoting medical research in Singapore would be realised with the award of Research/Travelling Fellowships.

In 1991, the Chapter Committee made a deliberate decision not to continue the series of CME Lectures for a year.¹² This was because of the poor attendances at these lectures, reflecting a decreasing interest amongst physician specialists to attend CME lectures outside their specialty or subspecialty. This phenomenon was not unexpected as various internal medicine specialties started to flourish in the 1990s.

In 1993, the Chapter organised its ASM together with the Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology of Malaya, the first time the Chapter had its ASM with a specialist society.¹³ Subsequently, the Chapter co-organised its ASMs with a number of specialty societies such as Society of Infectious Disease, Singapore (1994), Singapore Thoracic Society (1995), Singapore Cardiac Society (1996), Clinical Neuroscience Society (1997), Gastroenterological Society of Singapore (1999), and Singapore Society of Hematology (1999). Other ASMs were either stand-alone meetings or held during the Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine.

In June 1994, the President Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Dr Anthony Toft invited the Presidents of the UK Royal Colleges of Physicians and Presidents or representatives of some Overseas Colleges/Academies for a meeting at the College in Edinburgh, to discuss specialist medical standards including reciprocity and possible joint examinations. Dr Chew Chin Hin (Past Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore and Deputy Director, School of Post-Graduate Medical Studies) attended the meeting. This meeting of June 1994, together with a personal meeting between Dr Chew, Lord Turnberg (PRCP London) and Sir David Todd, President, Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, held in Singapore, led to the first MMed/MRCP joint examinations for Adult

Table 2. Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lectures, 1991 to 2006

Year	Event	Name of Lecturer	Title of Lecture
1991 Inaugural Lecture	11 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Dr Chew Chin Hin	Life and Times of Dr Seah Cheng Siang
1992 2 nd Lecture	12 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor James W Lance	Clinical Skills in an Age of Technology
1993 3 rd Lecture	13 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor Lawrie W Powell	Research & the Practising Physician – Gastroenterological Perspective
1994 4 th Lecture	14 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor David Todd	Primary Gastro-Intestinal Lymphomas
1995 5 th Lecture	15 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor Homer A Boushey	HIV and the Respiratory System
1996 6 th Lecture	16 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor John Newsome-Davis	Autoimmunity and the Nervous System
1997 7 th Lecture	17 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Dr Ian A D Bouchier	The Etiology of Gallstones
1998 8 th Lecture	18 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor Marc Verstraete	New Anti-Thrombotic Agents
1999 9 th Lecture	19 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor Lam Shiu Kum	Gastric Cancer: Where are we now?
2000 10 th Lecture	20 th ASM of the Chapter of Physicians & 34 th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine	Professor Feng Pao Hsui	Going Places – A Rheumatological Odyssey
2001 11 th Lecture	21 st ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Prof Simon D Shorvon	Temporal Lobe Epilepsy – The Past, Present and Future
2002 12 th Lecture	22 nd ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Professor Ng Han Seong	Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Are we different from the West?
2003 13 th Lecture	23 rd ASM of the Chapter of Physicians	Dr Alan Colman	The Rocky Road from Dolly to Human Embryonic Stem Cells: Has it been a worthwhile and justifiable scientific pursuit?
2004 14 th Lecture	1 st ASM of the College of Physicians & 38 th Singapore Malaysia Congress of Medicine	Professor Carol Black	Systemic Sclerosis: State of the Art
2005 15 th Lecture	2 nd ASM of the College of Physicians & 39 th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine	Professor Roger Williams	Liver Transplantation: Lessons Learnt and Future Horizons
2006 16 th Lecture	3 rd ASM of the College of Physicians	Professor Chia Boon Lock	Changing Face of Cardiology Practice, Training and Research in Singapore

ASM: Annual Scientific Meeting

& Paediatric Medicine in 1995. In recent years, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health continued the same reciprocal examinations with regard to Paediatric Medicine. Thus, successful candidates received both the MMed (Paediatrics) and MRCPCH. Since then physician Fellows in Singapore were represented on the UK Policy and Examination Boards, initially by Drs Chew Chin Hin, Chan Heng Leong, Low Poh Sim, Tan Chorh Chuan and later by Drs Chee Yam Cheng, Benjamin Ong and Lee Kok Onn.

It is worthy to note that the first ever Practical Assessment of Clinical Examination Skills (PACES) of the MRCP (UK)/MMed (Int Med) was held in Singapore from 9 to 11 June 2001, even before they were held in centres in the United Kingdom (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Examiners, Visitors and Coordinators, the first MMed/MRCP (UK) PACES examination, 9 to 11 June 2001, Singapore.

In October 2000, a joint scientific meeting was held in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong College of Physicians, Hong Kong College of Pediatricians, Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom and the Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore. The Chapter was represented by a few senior Physicians, including Drs Chew Chin Hin, Roland Chong (Chapter Chairman) and Benjamin Ong. In the same year, the Chapter Committee, together with the representatives and specialists from various hospitals drafted and proposed indicators for the following specialties: Respiratory Medicine, Cardiology, Neurology, Emergency Medicine, Dermatology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Geriatric Medicine, Haematology, Infectious Diseases, Medical Oncology, Rehabilitation Medicine, Renal Medicine and Rheumatology.

THE ERA OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, SINGAPORE, 2004 – PRESENT

Rationale of Forming the College of Physicians, Singapore

By 2003, the Chapter of Physicians was the largest Chapter in the Academy, with more than 450 Physician Fellows. Unlike other single-specialty Chapters (e.g. Chapter of Obstetricians & Gynaecology and Chapter of Anaesthesiologists), the Chapter of Physicians represented all physicians from 14 Internal Medicine Specialties recognised by the Specialist Accreditation Board (SAB). Under the organizational structure of the Academy in early 2000s, it was grossly inadequate for a 5-member Chapter Executive Committee (even with co-opted members) to act on behalf of these 14-specialty physicians, to develop these specialties professionally, and to cater for the development of additional subspecialties. There was also no financial autonomy for the Chapter, as all finances are handled by the parent body.

The strong growth of specialist societies and restructured hospitals affected the status of the Academy and the Chapter of Physicians as CME organiser and content provider, an unstoppable trend which started in the early 1990s. These bodies organised not only their own ASMs but also CME activities throughout the whole year. The establishment of the SAB in 1998 further weakened the position of the Academy. SAB took over from the Academy the role of training and accreditation of specialists, albeit fully assisted by the Joint Committee on Specialist Training (JCST) which comprises the Academy and the Division of Graduate Medical Studies (DGMS). It was no longer a statutory requirement for specialists to be Fellows of the Academy. This led to a decreasing interest of many specialists to join or remain in the Academy in late 1990s and early 2000s.

For the Academy to remain relevant and for the Chapter of Physicians to further develop and grow, the possibility of transforming the Chapter of Physicians into a College of Physicians and to form individual Chapters for these 14 Specialties, under the umbrella of the College, was seriously considered by the Chapter and the Academy, in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Transformation of the Chapter to the College of Physicians in 2004

The Academy's Council, with the strong involvement of the Chapter of Physicians, 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 AGMs in 2002 and 2003. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Academy under the chairmanship of Master. K Satku was held in March 2004 and a strong mandate was given by Fellows to proceed to amend the M&A to form various Colleges. This led to the formation of 3 single specialty Colleges (College of Anaesthesiologists, College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and College of Paediatrics and Child Health) and 3 multi-specialty Colleges (College of Physicians, College of Radiologists and College of Surgeons) in 2004. All 6 Colleges, however, remained under the umbrella of the Academy.

The College of Physicians, Singapore was officially incorporated on 17 August 2004. The College also successfully registered as a charity under the Charities Act with effect from 13 October 2004.¹⁴

Organisational Structure of the College and its 14 Specialty Chapters

The College has 14 Chapters for the 14 SAB-recognised specialties, i.e. Chapters of Cardiologists, Dermatologists, Endocrinologists, Gastroenterologists, Geriatricians, Haematologists, Infectious Disease Physicians, General Physicians, Medical Oncologists, Neurologists, Rehabilitation Physicians, Renal Physicians, Respiratory Physicians and Rheumatologists. As Palliative Medicine specialty was yet to be recognised by the SAB, a Section of Palliative Medicine was created. Fellows in the Emergency Medicine specialty, previously under the Chapter of Physicians, decided to form a Chapter of Emergency Medicine under the Academy of Medicine.

The College is governed by a Council, comprising 7 elected and 15 appointed Council Members. Elected Council Members hold the following offices: President, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. Each Chapter and Section is administered by a Specialty Board with elected and appointed Board Members. The Board comprises a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, an Honorary Secretary, and 2-4 Board Members of which 1 or 2 will be representative(s) from the related specialist society. All Chapter Chairmen are appointed College Council Members. The Chapter Specialty Board is responsible for the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of specialists, which include organizing CME talks and scientific meetings of their respective Chapters.

After the College was officially incorporated on 17th August 2004, nomination, election and appointment of College Council members, President, College Office Bearers, 14 Chapters' Chairmen and the respective Chapter Specialty Board members were carried out. An elected Interim Council took office at the College's First Annual General Meeting on 28th June 2005 (Table 3) (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Interim Council of the College of Physicians, Singapore.

Front Row from left to right: Drs Khoo Kei Siong, Sum Chee Fang, Julian Thumboo, Lim Shih Hui, Ng Keng Yeen, Chan Kin Ming, and C Rajasoorya.

Middle Row from left to right: Drs Vernon Oh, Roy Chan Kum Wah, Wong Kok Seng, Wong Sin Yew, and Richard Guan.

Last Row from left to right: Drs Alan Ng Wei Keong, Toh Han Chong, Ho Kheng Thye, Kong Keng He and Christopher Chen Li Hsian

Table 3. First Council of the College of Physicians, Singapore (2005-2006)

President	Dr Lim Shih Hui
Vice-President	Dr Ng Keng Yeen
Honorary Secretary	Dr Julian Thumboo
Honorary Treasurer	Dr Chan Kin Ming
Council Member	Dr Terrance Chua Tju Siang
Council Member	Dr Khoo Kei Siong
Council Member	Dr Sum Chee Fang
Chairman, Chapter of Cardiologists	Dr Ho Kheng Thye
Chairman, Chapter of Dermatologists	Dr Roy Chan Kum Wah
Chairman, Chapter of Endocrinologists	Dr C Rajasoorya
Chairman, Chapter of Gastroenterologists	Dr Richard Guan
Chairman, Chapter of General Physicians	Dr Vernon Oh
Chairman, Chapter of Geriatricians	Dr Philip Choo
Chairman, Chapter of Hematologists	Dr Patrick Tan
Chairman, Chapter of Infectious Diseases Physicians	Dr Wong Sin Yew
Chairman, Chapter of Medical Oncologists	Dr Toh Han Chong
Chairman, Chapter of Neurologists	Dr Christopher Chen Li Hsian
Chairman, Chapter of Rehabilitation Medicine	Dr Kong Keng He
Chairman, Chapter of Renal Physicians	Dr Wong Kok Seng
Chairman, Chapter of Respiratory Physicians	Dr Alan Ng Wei Keong
Chairman, Chapter of Rheumatologists	Dr Leong Keng Hong
Head, Section of Palliative Medicine	Dr Cynthia Goh

Note: For the Council 2006-2007, Dr Ng Keng Yeen became the President-Elect, Dr Chan Kin Ming took office as Vice-President, Dr Khoo Kei Siong as Honorary Secretary, and Dr Julian Thumboo as Honorary Treasurer. Dr Sum Chee Fang retired while Dr Roland Chong was elected a Council Member. Chapter Chairmen and Head of Section remained unchanged.

Finance of the College

To facilitate the growth of the College, the Academy transferred 25% of the Academy's annual subscription of physician Fellows to the College. This is the main "income" of the College for the initial 3 years. The College obtained the status of an Institution of Public Character (IPC) under Section 37(3)(c) of the Income Tax Act with effect from 15 February 2005 for a period of one year, and was renewed for another 2 years subsequently. With the IPC status, the College is now able to raise funds on its own to enhance its effort in CPD.

The College has also established its financial framework to facilitate its 14 Chapters to carry out CPD activities. Each Chapter is allocated seed money to organise educational activities including meetings, at a minimum of \$500 per calendar year or up to 25% of membership subscription.

ASMs, SCS Memorial Lectures, College of Physicians Lectures, and Chapters' Lectureships

Since the inauguration of the College in 2004, the College had organised 3 ASMs of which the first 2 were held in conjunction with the Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

From 2004, the College took over the administration of the Endowment Fund for the Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture (SCSML). The lecture continues to be scientific in content in the field of Internal Medicine, with a gastroenterological subject at least once in three years (since Professor Seah was a gastroenterologist). The 14th Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture was delivered by Professor Carol M Black on “Systemic Sclerosis: State of the Art” during the 1st ASM of the College, the 15th SCSML titled “Liver Transplantation: Lessons Learnt and Future Horizons” by Professor Roger Williams (Fig. 5) and the 16th SCSML titled “Changing Face of Cardiology Practice, Training and Research in Singapore” by Professor Chia Boon Lock (Fig. 6) (Table 2).

The College has also established its own College of Physicians, Singapore Lecture (CPSL). This is an Annual Lectureship during the ASM of the College. The Lecture is opened to distinguished members of the medical profession by invitation (local as well as overseas). Distinguished members of allied medical disciplines may be invited from time to time but the lecture given must be medical in content. Invitation of non-medical professionals should not be more than once in 5 years. The recipient of this award will be presented with a gold medal and a certificate.

The Inaugural CPSL was delivered by Professor Chee Yam Cheng in 2004 (Fig. 7), the second Lecture by Prof Dame Carol Black (Fig. 8) and the third Lecture by Prof Woo Keng Thye (Fig. 9). Table 4 shows the names of the lecturers and the title of their lectures.

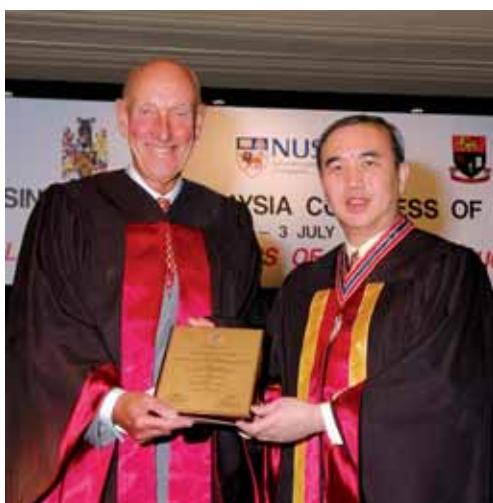


Fig. 5. Dr Lim Shih Hui with Prof Roger Williams who delivered the 15th Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture.



◀ Fig. 6. Dr Lim Shih Hui with Prof Chia Boon Lock who delivered the 16th Seah Cheng Siang Memorial Lecture.

Fig. 9. Dr Lim Shih Hui with Prof Woo Keng Thye who delivered the 3rd College of Physicians Lecture.

▼



◀ Fig. 7. Dr Lim Shih Hui with Prof Chee Yam Cheng who delivered the Inaugural College of Physicians Lecture

Fig. 8. Dr Lim Shih Hui ▶ with Prof Dame Carol Black who delivered the 2nd College of Physicians Lecture.



Table 4. College of Physicians Lectures

Month & Year	Events	Name of Lecturer	Title of Lecture
August 2004 Inaugural Lecture	1 st Annual Scientific Meeting 38 th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine	Professor Chee Yam Cheng	The Role of Internal Medicine as a Specialty in the Era of Subspecialisation
July 2005 2 nd Lecture	2 nd Annual Scientific Meeting 39 th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine	Professor Dame Carol Black	Challenges in Medical Education in the Making of Tomorrow's Doctors
July 2006 3 rd Lecture	3 rd Annual Scientific Meeting	Professor Woo Keng Thy	Translational Research – From Bench to Bedside and from Bedside to Bench

The Chapter of Neurologists also established its own lectureship. The Inaugural Chapter of Neurologists Lecture was delivered by Professor Samuel F Berkovic from the University of Melbourne. The Lecture titled "Genetics of Epilepsy" was delivered during the 11th Asian Oceanic Congress of Neurology in November 2004 in Singapore. The 2nd Lecture was delivered by Professor Lawrence Wong from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His Lecture entitled "The Vascular Lesions Underlying Stroke in Asia" was given during the 1st Asia-Pacific Stroke Workshop in (September) 2005 in Singapore.

The Chapter of Dermatologists' Inaugural Lecture was delivered by Professor Sakari Reitamo from Helsinki University. His lecture titled "Current Concepts in the Pathogenesis of Inflammatory Skin Disease" was given in July 2005. The Second Chapter of Dermatologists Lecture was held in October 2006. It was delivered by Prof Sewon Kang of the University of Michigan Medical Center with a lecture titled "Pathophysiology & Treatment of Skin Aging".

The Chapter of Renal Physicians, Lecture is being finalised and the 1st Lecture will be held in May 2007.

Conferment Ceremony and Links with Overseas Colleges & Academy

The College's 1st Conferment Ceremony was held on 2nd July 2005 in conjunction with the College of Paediatrics and Child Health. Dr Chew Chin Hin was conferred Honorary Fellowship, to recognise his significant contributions to the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, College of Physicians, the medical community and in the development of Internal Medicine in Singapore (Fig. 10).

Building upon the harmonious relationships between the Academy and overseas Academies and Physicians' Colleges, 3 Presidents of fraternal Colleges (Dr C Anderson Hedberg from the American College of Physicians, Professor Dato' Mrs S T Kew from the Academy of Medicine, Malaysia, and Professor Dame Carol Black from the Royal College of Physicians, London) received Fellowships from the College, to recognise their contributions in fostering stronger ties between their respective organization and our College (Fig. 11). The President, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Dr Jill Sewell, a paediatrician, received the fellowship of the College of Paediatrics and Child Health.



Fig. 10. Dr Chew Chin Hin receiving the Honorary Fellowship from Dr Lim Shih Hui, President, College of Physicians, Singapore.



Fig. 11. Dr Lim Shih Hui, President, College of Physicians; Dr Chan Kin Ming, Honorary Treasurer; Dr Ng Keng Yeen, Vice-President; recipients of Fellowship, Dr Anderson Hedberg, Prof Dato' (Mrs) ST Kew, Dame Prof Carol Black; and recipient of Honorary Fellowship, Dr Chew Chin Hin.

Dr Lim Shih Hui, first President of the College, received honorary fellowships from the American College of Physicians in 2005, Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 2006, and Academy of Medicine, Malaysia in 2006.

First Strategic Planning Session And Future Directions

Having settled a number of operational issues arising from the transformation of the Chapter of Physicians to the College in August 2004, the College held its 1st Strategic Planning Session on 17 September 2005 at the Singapore General Hospital. The purpose of the session was to help the Council draw a road map for the College for the next 3 years. In addition to members of the Council and 14 Chapter Specialty Board Chairmen or their representatives who attended the session, members of the Specialists Training Committees of the 14 specialties were also invited to contribute.

At the meeting, the following were reaffirmed and decided (Table 5).¹⁵ Based on these 6 strategic priorities, 6 main committees were set up at College level in 2006 to implement the College's strategic plans. These Committees are: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Committee, Postgraduate Training & Certification (PTC) Committee, General Medicine Committee, National and International Relations (NIR) Committee, Membership Committee, and Finance Committee. These committees, augmenting each other, will receive support from Standing Committees of the College and relevant Chapter's Committees, especially in areas of CPD for Fellows and training of specialists in Singapore.

College Website and Access to On-Line Journals

As part of the College's strategy to provide and strengthen CPD programme for physician specialists, the College Council decided to leverage on information technology and set up its own website: <http://cps.ams.edu.sg>. Decision was made to subscribe to Harrison's On-Line Textbook which is useful for all 14 specialty Fellows. In addition, each Chapter will subscribe to at least one specialty specific on-line journal or textbook, all of which will be accessible to physician Fellows and trainees in Internal Medicine and its 14 specialties. It is hoped that access to on-line journals and textbooks through the College website will not only enhance Fellows' life-long learning but also add value to their Academy's and College's membership.

Table 5. Vision, Mission, Core Values, Objectives and Priorities for the College of Physicians, Singapore

Vision	To be the recognised leader in training, education, advocacy, and enhancement of professional satisfaction for internal medicine and its subspecialties
Mission	To promote and maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in internal medicine and its subspecialties
Core Values	E-IMPACT: Excellence, Integrity, Mutual Respect, Professionalism, Adaptability, Commitment, Teamwork
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To advance the art and science of internal medicine and its subspecialties b) To promote study and research into medical and scientific problems c) To sustain and foster postgraduate education; to conduct higher professional examinations and to award diplomas d) To grant specialist certification to persons who have fulfilled the criteria laid down e) To maintain and promote the highest standards of professional practice f) To maintain a high code of ethical conduct amongst its members g) To represent, express and give effect to the views and opinions of its members h) To protect the interest and dignity of the College of Physicians
Current Strategic Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide and strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme b) To augment postgraduate training and specialist certification c) To promote practice of, and sustain interest in general internal medicine d) To improve College's standing nationally and internationally e) To attract and maintain membership f) To increase College revenue and its build financial reserve

Membership as of 31st December 2006

As of 31 December 2006, the College had a total of 497 Fellows, of which 485 were local and 12 were overseas fellowa. The following Table 6 shows the number of Fellows by Chapters.

Concluding Remarks

The College has taken 4 decades to establish itself in Singapore. Though still in its infancy, the College has high ambitions to achieve more. Like Singapore, the College will not be constrained by its physical size or the number of Fellows each Chapter has. With vision, passion and dedication, the College aims to accomplish its goals and objectives, which are to ensure high quality care for patients by improving standards and influencing policy and practice in modern medicine. The College is determined to set high standards for clinical practice, establish education and training programmes for physicians, support its fellow doctors in their practice of medicine, participate in the conduct of postgraduate examinations, and advise the Government, the public and the profession on important healthcare issues.

Table 6. Number of Fellows by Chapter (as of 31 December 2006)

Chapter of Cardiologists	83
Chapter of Dermatologists	52
Chapter of Endocrinologists	39
Chapter of Gastroenterologists	43
Chapter of General Physicians	43
Chapter of Geriatricians	29
Chapter of Haematologists	20
Chapter of Infectious Disease Physicians	11
Chapter of Medical Oncologists	24
Chapter of Neurologists	38
Chapter of Rehabilitation Physicians	16
Chapter of Renal Physicians	27
Chapter of Respiratory Physicians	48
Chapter of Rheumatologists	24
Total**	497

** Fellows in the Section of Palliative Medicine are Fellows in other Chapters. There are another 24 Fellows of the Academy who are Physicians waiting to be transferred to the College.

Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms of the College (Fig. 12) consists of a shield supported by 2 lions on each side. The lions represent Singapore and dauntless courage. Within the shield, the Chevron symbolises the coming together of the specialties of internal medicine under one roof - the College. The 16 bars in the Chevron represent 14 current and future chapters. The column represents fortitude and constancy, with a serpent coiled around it, representing wisdom with fortitude. The orchid *Vanda Miss Joaquim* is Singapore's national flower. Its hardy and resilient qualities and its ability to bloom throughout the year are the characteristics which reflect our quest for progress and excellence. The Singapore's Lion Head symbolises courage, strength, as well as resilience in the face of challenges. On top of the shield is a banner with the wordings "College of Physicians". Below the shield is a banner inscribed with the Academy of Medicine, Singapore's motto, "Recta Sapere", which urges us to seek and savour the truth at all times.



Fig. 12. Coat of Arms of the College of Physicians, Singapore.

References

1. Annual Report 1966-1967, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1967
2. Annual Report 1967-1968, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1968
3. Annual Report 1968-1969, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1969
4. Chew CH: The Academy of Medicine. An article published by the Academy of Medicine in May 1976.
5. Annual Report 1969-1970, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1970
6. Annual Report 1975-1976, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1976
7. Annual Report 1977-1978, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1978
8. Annual Report 1979-1980, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1980
9. Annual Report 1980-1981, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1981
10. Annual Report 1981-1982, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1982
11. Annual Report 1982-1983, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1983
12. Annual Report 1991-1992, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1992
13. Annual Report 1992-1993, Chapter of Physicians, Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 1993
14. Annual Report 2004-2005, College of Physicians, Singapore, 2005
15. Annual Report 2005-2006, College of Physicians, Singapore, 2006