

**Dr Daniel Wong** is a Senior Consultant Radiologist at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. He is also the Head of Section of Vascular and Interventional Radiology and is in-charge of managing and running the Interventional Radiological Services in the hospital. In addition, he runs training programmes for medical students, basic and advanced radiological trainees and ad hoc programmes for foreign radiological fellows. Dr Wong is married with three children.

**Dr Philip Wong** is a Senior Interventionist Cardiologist as well as the Director of the R&D Unit at the National Heart Centre. He has strong interests in basic and translational cardiovascular research and is also active in teaching medical students, junior doctors and interventional fellows from around the Asia Pacific Region. Dr Wong is particularly keen on facilitating the integration of technology and biology and speaks frequently on optimising technology for cardiovascular healthcare.

**Dr Adelina Wong** is a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at Thomson Medical Centre. She is currently an invited Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Vulvovaginal Diseases (ISSVD) as well as an accredited member of the British Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (BSCCP). Her numerous appointments also include being a Member of the International Federation for Cervical Pathology and Colposcopy (IFCPC) Scientific Advisory Committee.

## Siblings in Medicine



*In their younger days. (Left-Right: Dr Philip Wong, Dr Adelina Wong and Dr Daniel Wong.)*

## Daniel



Dr Daniel Wong and his Family

**When I was a child, I wanted to be a ...**

I do not remember ever thinking about the future as a child. It was always about the present, and the present was all about fun – fishing, hiking, cycling, swimming, horse-back riding, and football. My first recollection of really thinking about what I wanted to be was probably when I was in the third year of medical school. It was then that I realised that I did not want to be a doctor, at least not in the traditional sense of a well-respected professional who talks to patients and imparts his knowledge about how they should modify their lifestyles and so on. That was probably the most difficult time I had in medical school, grappling with whether I was doing the right thing. Well, as it turns out, there were avenues a young doctor could take that would ensure that he or she is forever hidden in the basements of large hospitals. Obviously there were other reasons why I decided to become a radiologist, rather than a pathologist (which would have been my second choice), but that is another story altogether.

**Growing up, the things I remember best about my brother/sister are ...**

Tough question!

Philip—five years younger. Yes, there were lots of sibling rivalry. But I loved that guy (even though I was very good at not showing it). Philip was quite chubby as a kid and quite

clumsy. He must have been about two or three years old when he tripped and fell while holding a glass. A large piece got embedded in his palm and I remember the poor guy with the nasty gash in his hand. Thankfully nothing vital got damaged, for that pair of hands must have saved countless lives by now.

Addy—eight years younger. Typical little kid sister. No more sibling rivalry (OK, I am sure she does not agree but definitely less). She was very cute as a toddler. I think we spoke Cantonese (surprise, surprise) to each other initially, since we kids were brought up by a very domineering Cantonese *amah*.

**The most influential person in early life is ...**

My dad. It was not obvious at first, but now when I look at myself, there are just so many similarities between the two of us. Finding jobs that use our hands a lot (Dad is a dentist. I am an interventional radiologist, and Philip is an interventional cardiologist too); our work ethic; our attitude towards life; our love for simple things like spending time in the garden and so on.

**My best medical school memory is ...**

Passing the final MBBS.

It was such a stark contrast to my first year in medical school when I nearly got expelled. (I was made to go for a borderline viva in

physiology after the re-examinations.) I hope this serves as encouragement to those still in medical school.

I wanted to be a doctor because ...

As I mentioned earlier, I never really wanted to become a doctor; initially that is. If I had my way then, I would probably would have taken a couple of years off after the 'A' levels before deciding what to do with my life. As it turned out, my 'A' level results were just nice for entering the medical faculty (at that time, if you did too well at the 'A' levels, you would have been barred from doing medicine). Through not too gentle persuasion by my parents and my dad's siblings (there were two other doctors in the family then, including Professor Wong Poi Kwong who was the Dean of the medical faculty at that time), I was made to sign the forms and go for the interview. All this occurred soon after the Basic Military Training, a major brain-washing exercise. Besides, practically all my cousins before me were also doctors. So why break the family trend?

It was quite different deciding on Radiology as a specialty. I was already quite certain of this by the time I was in the fourth year of medical school. The job just seemed a perfect match. Sitting down looking at pictures in an air-conditioned office with coffee in hand; doing that odd myelogram or barium meal. If that paid a decent salary, why not?

The most memorable and touching thing I can remember as a practising doctor ... Has always been when the patients come back to thank you for what you have done for them, whether it is a card or even a little wave. It is also good to see patients getting better. That is what really gives me the drive to carry on.

The worst thing a patient ever said to me ... Some patients have absolutely no perception what a Radiologist does. These people think our job is to take pictures. Perhaps this is the fault of Radiologists: not conveying enough information to the public.

There was an interesting incident recently with a patient's relative because he insisted I could not interpret a CXR taken AP. This of course led on to who had been empowered to decide that CXR could be taken AP, who was responsible for that decision, how decisions were made, and ultimately why the relative thought it was a very bad decision. I think if we had continued, we would have engaged at length on how MOH allocates its budget as well.

I spend my Sunday mornings ...

Going to church. Sunday mornings always revolve around church. That was the way my father was brought up. That was the way I was brought up. And that is the way I am bringing my kids up.

A bad habit I would like to kick is ...

Late nights.

Is it good or bad to have siblings in Medicine?

No, it is not good. At family gatherings, we talk shop, which is Greek to everyone else.

My greatest extravagance is ...

Skiing holidays with my wife and three kids.

The book I am currently reading is ...

*Endovascular Today*.

My favourite book/author is ...

Tom Clancy.

The music playing in my car stereo is ...

BB King.

My favourite singer is ...

Elton John.

The last movie I watched was ...

*Jarhead*.

I think everyone should watch ...

*Lord of the Rings*.

My biggest food weakness is ...

*Char Kway Teow* (with *Lipitor, mai hiam*).

I would like to be remembered as ...

A good doctor, a loving husband, a caring father and a role model. ■

## Philip



Left-Right: Dr Philip Wong, Dr Adelina Wong and Dr Daniel Wong.

#### When I was a child, I wanted to be a ...

Hawker selling *char kway teow* in Newton Circus.

#### Growing up, the things I remember best about my brothers/sister are ...

Playing lego and “combat” with my older brother and ‘fighting’ with my younger sister.

#### The most influential people in early life are ...

Bjorn Borg the tennis player because of his ‘ice cool’ demeanor, his unconventional style (wooden racket with double fisted backhand) and his wicked topspin; Sir Winston Churchill because of his ability to inspire a nation depressed and lost, with just words and eloquence, to ultimate victory in World War II; and Han Solo for his ability to ‘get along’ with different ‘people’ and his ability to get out of any situation.

#### My best medical school memory is ...

When they told me I had passed my final year exam.

#### I wanted to be a doctor because ...

I enjoy interacting with people; and if you can help them, that is contentment and ultimately if you can heal them, that is the noblest reason.

#### The most memorable, touching or amusing thing I can remember as a practising doctor is ...

No single incident but I always treasure the ‘camaraderie’ and ‘friendships’ made with my colleagues, both doctors and otherwise, as they make a sometimes depressing job tolerable, and adversity when dealing with life and death, rationale.

#### What are the best things that a colleague has ever said to you?

Working in the hospital environment, I have three simple rules, which are a collection of remarks made by my wise friends:

- a. It is better to keep your mouth shut than to open it and let everyone know how stupid you are.
- b. Never tell someone more senior than you how to do something even though you know you are better.
- c. Action truly counts a lot more than words.

I think what doctors really appreciate from patients is when they say thank you.

#### I spend my Sunday mornings ...

Going to church, marketing and resting (unless I am on call).

#### A bad habit I would like to kick is ...

Trying to manage too many things at one time.

#### It is good to have siblings in Medicine because ...

There is always a chance to ‘gang up’ and start your own hospital.

#### My greatest extravagance is ...

My wife and my Apple computers.

#### My favourite book/author is ...

Unfortunately, I sometimes do not have the patience to read a book but I enjoy reading magazines. My favourites are *Gourmet Magazine* (so I can reminisce on my missed opportunity to be a cook and can

dream of a nice kitchen), *National Geographic* (beautiful pictures) and *Golf Digest*. I sometimes read *Tech* magazines to keep up and if I am in the mood for fiddling with plants, *House and Garden* magazines.

I think a book which researchers should read (as I am interested in research) is *The World as I See It* by Albert Einstein. It has many insights on how scientists should behave and act.

Some of my favourites are:

- I have no special talent, I am only passionately curious.
- Most people say that it is intellect that makes a great scientist, they are wrong: it is character.
- Any fool can make things bigger, more complex and more violent, it takes a touch of genius and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.
- The gift of fantasy has meant more to me than the talent for absorbing positive knowledge.
- The whole of Science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.

**The music playing in my car stereo is ...**

Irish Folk Music, Simply Red, Dire Straits, Bruce Hornsby, Marc Cohn, Duran Duran, U2, Alphaville, Billy Joel, Phil Collins, Elton John, Steve Winwood, Journey, Queen,

Robbie Williams and several movie themes.

**My favourite songs are ...**

Theme from *Dances with Wolves* (composer John Williams); *Lord of the Rings* (Howard Shore) and *Star Trek* (Jerry Goldsmith).

**My favourite songwriter and singer is ...**

Elton John.

**The last movie I watched was ...**

Not a movie but a series: *Battlestar Galactica*; *Series 2.5* (watched all five DVDs at one go).

**I think everyone should watch ...**

All Pixar Movies for their superb animation.

My favourite is *The Incredibles*.

**My biggest food weaknesses are ...**

Fried Hokkien prawn mee and *bak chor mee* at the Housemen's Canteen, Singapore General Hospital, which I have been patronising for 20 years.

**I would like to be remembered as ...**

If I may quote Einstein:

"It gives me great pleasure to see the stubbornness of an incorrigible nonconformist warmly acclaimed." ■



Front Row: Mrs Jessie Wong (Mother), Ms Esther Paige Wong (Philip's daughter), Ms Erin Wong (Daniel's youngest), Dr Wong Hee Deong (Father), Mr Zachary Koh (Adelina's Youngest).  
Back Row: Dr Philip Wong, Mrs Wong, Ms Jacklyn Koh (Adelina's eldest), Dr Koh Thuan Wee, Master Benjamin Koh, Dr Adelina Wong, Mrs Daniel Wong, Master Ryan Wong, Ms Dawn Wong and Dr Daniel Wong.



Dr Adelina Wong and her family in New Zealand.

**When I was a child, I wanted to be a ...**  
Solid Gold Dancer. This was at some stage in my younger years. If you do not know what a Solid Gold dancer is, you are a lot younger than me.

After which, it was a kindergarten or childcare teacher. Then for a fleeting moment, it was a lawyer.

Medicine was the result of me being an obedient daughter. In those days, dad told us what to do. He felt that being a doctor was a stable career. It was only after the first year that medicine started growing on me and by the fourth year, I knew I wanted to be a Gynaecologist.

**Growing up, the things I remember best about my brothers are ...**

Daniel was a lot older than me, so my memories of him were watching him practising disco dancing at home and playing Elton John music on the piano. I was more of a pesky little sister to him. I remember he once left me upside down on the staircase because I irritated him too much. Still he was a good older brother who was a comfort to have around.

Being closer in age to Philip, we used to fight a lot as kids. I remember quarrelling with him a lot and almost always getting my way with mom's help (I was the little princess of the

house). Dad was fair and I remember being caned by Dad once for fighting with Philip. At the same time, I remember having fun with Philip playing "combat" around the house and "chatek" as well. Philip took care of me during medical school as he was only three years ahead, like telling me what and how to study and teaching me the ropes.

**The most influential person in early life is ...**  
Dad. He was always the first person to go to when there was advice needed or trouble encountered. He always had a way of ironing things out and a good explanation for everything. He was also the decision-maker at home. Mum always said: "Go ask your dad" if we needed permission for things. Dad's early life was always an inspiration. He came from a poor God-fearing family where all the children had to earn their chance to further their study through scholarships. They always topped their class. He also had to stop school for three years during the war but through sheer hard work and determination, he caught up the three years later. Dad's constant sharing of his life story was an inspiration to us and made us thankful for all the privileges we had.

**My best medical school memory is ...**

Meeting my husband in second year. In a stroke of divine intervention, I was elected class rep in second year and he was

appointed the assistant class rep. We suddenly discovered each other's existence and our class has since always claimed credit for bringing us together. Initial dating involved planning CG groupings and ordering of personal medical equipment for our transition into clinical years. That was the beginning of our 19 years together to date.

I wanted to be a doctor because ...

Like I mentioned earlier, it was decided for me by my dad. In the first year, I was just going along as a good daughter and student would but not completely certain that this was what I wanted. But as I learned the subjects, they grew interesting and I began to enjoy it. When we started our O&G posting, that is when I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I enjoyed the subject tremendously and enjoyed bringing into this world these little miracles of life and witnessing the joy that these little bundles bring along with them.

The most memorable and touching thing I can remember as a practising doctor is ...

When patients are happy with your care for them, and you know you have done your best for them.

One of my patients gave me a picture of herself and her two sisters with all their children just before I left KKH for private practice. She said she wanted me to have the picture because I had delivered 7 of the 10 children in the picture. I felt very moved. It is even more touching when despite an unhappy outcome, like a miscarriage, they still come back and show their appreciation for what you have done.

The worst thing a patient ever said to me was ...

"Doctor, you look very young *lei!*" You kind of know that they are subtly stating their concern about your experience. Nowadays, I have decided to take it as a compliment.

I spend my Sunday mornings...

Going to church. Sunday is the Lord's day and the day revolves around church. Occasionally, I need to do my ward rounds before church. Otherwise, I am at church with my family the

whole morning from 9.45am to 12.30pm. I play the piano during the main service.

A bad habit I would like to kick is ...

Watching too much TV. It is my way of relaxation. I am a TV addict and my husband would usually say that the house could burn down totally and I would not even know when I am watching TV.

It is good to have a sibling in Medicine because ...

Having a sibling in Medicine means we will always have medicine as a common topic of discussion when we meet up. We can identify with each other's lifestyle and difficulties. It also helps when I have patients who require a radiological or cardiac opinion.

My greatest extravagance is ...

My BMW 320i. My husband has been grumbling that for the price of a BMW, we could have had two cars instead of one in our driveway.

The books I am currently reading are ...

*Ultrasound in O&G* and lots of children storybooks to the kids.

My favourite author/book is ...

C S Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. (The book is much better than the movie and musical.)

The music playing in my car stereo is ...

"Rain's world". I bought it to see what all the fuss was about.

My favourite singer is ...

Norah Jones.

The last movie I watched was ...

*Cars* (Disney/Pixar).

I think everyone should watch ...

*Lord of the Rings*.

My biggest food weaknesses are ...

Cockles, oysters and anything durian.

I would like to be remembered as ...

A positive influence to people around me and a doctor with a heart for her patients. ■