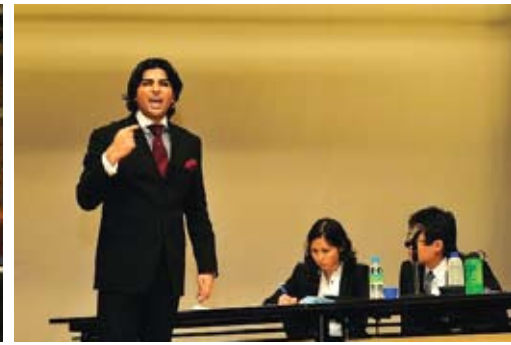


by Priyanka Rajendram



## Law-Medicine Challenge 2009

The Law-Medicine Challenge 2009 was an event that will probably go down in history as one of the most thrilling and audacious battles ever witnessed between the two faculties of friendly (and at times, not so friendly) rivals. After being thrashed 4-1 at last year's inaugural Challenge, the Law faculty was back with a vengeance and out for our blood. They certainly pulled out all the stops and our fellow Medics did all they could to hang on for dear life! Every goal, every try, every word and every bit of sweat that trickled down our faces seemed to count as the competition grew fiercer and fiercer with each passing minute.

Yes, I kid you not. It was that intense!

The Challenge began on 31 January 2009 at the NUS Bukit Timah Campus, home ground of the Law faculty. Women's Soccer was the curtain raiser for the day as our Medical ladies remained dominant and retained possession for majority of the game. Unfortunately, due to a series of wayward finishing and missed opportunities, Medicine lost 3-1 to a tenacious Law that capitalised on the few chances they had. The Medicine Ultimate Frisbee team then took to the field with a skilful and convincing 6-3 win over their Law counterparts. The Medicine Women's Touch Rugby team then continued where the Frisbee team left off. Being the pre-match favourites, our Medicine team did not disappoint as they finished off their opponents with a masterful 2-0 win. The day ended with the sensational Women's Netball game that saw the lead changing hands many times throughout the

game. However, after a brave effort, our Medicine team lost 8-5 to Law.

With the score tally now at 2-2, you can only imagine how pumped both the Law and Medicine teams were for the Men's Contact Rugby match on 3 February 2009. This was a grudge match to say the least, as Law was determined to avenge their past defeats to our apparently indestructible Medicine team. It was, simply put, an electrifying match! Law took the early lead with the first try while Medicine caught up soon enough. However, after a costly defensive mistake, Medicine lost 10-5 to a rejuvenated Law team.

We were now the underdogs, trailing 3-2 to Law. If we were to have any chance of retaining the Law-Medicine Challenge Trophy, Medicine had to win the Men's Soccer game. On 6 February 2009, the finale day, droves of supporters from both faculties arrived at the Law School's upper quadrangle to witness the crucial match. Our valorous boys fought tooth and nail with an undaunted Law right to the very end in an intensely close match. In the end, even the erratic downpour could not quell their spirited determination, and Medicine emerged victorious with a 2-1 win!

With the score tally being squared at 3-3 once again, what better way to decide on the winner than by arguing about it?

Yes, the Challenge ended off with the wildly anticipated Law-Medicine Debate! The equation was simple: the winner of the debate would ultimately win the entire Challenge. After clawing



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our way back to remain in contention for the ultimate prize, the eventual outcome of all the efforts of our sportsmen and women rested on the heavy shoulders of our debate team. From the soccer field, supporters migrated to the Multi-Purpose Auditorium to witness the momentous finale. Although the debate was held at Law's home ground, at least half the auditorium was filled with Medics. Even some of our dignitaries from the medical fraternity, including Professor Arthur Lim, Dr Wong Chiang Yin (President, SMA), Assoc. Professor Paul Tambyah, Assoc. Professor Koh Woon Puay and other distinguished guests were there to lend their support to our valiant debaters. The atmosphere was sizzling hot as the debaters were raring to go while the crowd buzzed with bated breath!

Don Corleone from *The Godfather* once said, "It makes no difference to me what a man does for a living." However, as with almost every Law-Medicine debate, what a man does for a living makes all the difference! The motion was:

'This house believes that organ donations should go to lawyers rather than doctors.'

Speaking for the Proposition was the Law Team whose members comprised Christine Huang, Nabil Mustafiz and Vishal Harnal. The Opposition was spoken for by the Medicine Team which included Samantha Yeo, Joshua Ho and Tan Li Feng (last year's Best Speaker Award recipient). The esteemed judges for the evening were Dr Sim Sze Keen, a Medicine debater during his student days, Professor Dr Thio Li-Ann, a Nominated Member of Parliament and Mr Viswa Sadasivan, CEO of Strategic Moves Training & Consultancy, who is no stranger to such Law-Medicine encounters.

The debate that ensued certainly lived up to the reputation (or notoriety!) of previous Law-Medicine Debates! It was a fiery, witty, irreverent and all round entertaining affair as the debaters from both sides flippantly disregarded one another, much to the audience's immense glee. The doctors-to-be argued that since lawyers are prone to many bad habits such as drinking and smoking, they should not be given organs over doctors as it would be considered a 'waste'. However, the lawyers-to-be countered by saying that lawyers are prone to such bad habits due to long work hours in a high-stress environment. Therefore, it is especially prudent that they get the organs because they are unhealthy. Furthermore, lawyers need organs more so as to continue providing essential legal service to society. They also supported their argument by saying that Medicine can only work within the constraints of the Law and thus without lawyers, there will be no effective system for doctors to perform their roles.

Team Medicine responded that doctors were more useful to society as they operated more in

the spirit of altruism while lawyers were simply out to fleece their clients. Law refused to agree to this as they pointed out the 'many Jaguars and BMWs that can be seen at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital carpark'. Furthermore, many lawyers engage in pro bono work to help the poor and needy too. However, the Medicine Team stood their ground and pointed out that the role of the lawyer, while important, was not essential in the bigger scheme of things. As Joshua Ho eloquently quipped, "A good doctor knows the anatomy inside out. A great doctor knows how to infuse compassion and understanding with this knowledge. A good lawyer knows the legal system like the back of his hand. Whereas a great lawyer... knows the judge!"

After the debaters said their piece, it was time for members of the audience to have a go at the motion during the Audience Round. Before we knew it, a queue soon formed behind the microphones as audience members from both faculties eagerly waited to have their say on the motion. Finally, after two hours of contentious arguing, the Law-Medicine Debate 2009 came to an end as the judges left the auditorium to deliberate on the results.

It was an extremely close debate with no one able to predetermine a clear winner. While awaiting the results, the worried expressions on everyone's faces proved just how much was hanging in the balance for both sides. Since messianic oration was the lawyers' forte, it was understandable to assume that Law would win the debate. After all, their flair on the podium surpassed that of Team Medicine, who focused on being clear, concise and straight to the point. Therefore, you can imagine why the victory was all the more sweet when the emcees announced Medicine as the victors of the debate, and ultimately, the Law-Medicine Challenge 2009! The Medicine supporters leapt to their feet and cheered with utmost pride as the Guest-of-Honour for the evening, Professor Tan Cheng Han handed the Professor Arthur Lim Challenge Trophy to the 60th Medical Society President, Sivashankar Subramaniam. They also graciously applauded our Law counterparts as Vishal Harnal received the Best Speaker trophy for the debate.

What a nail-biting finish to the Law-Medicine Challenge 2009! However, more than the victory itself, the amazing show of sportsmanship, camaraderie, spirit, tenacity and good cheer was certainly a sight to behold. The pride that we felt to be a part of the Medical fraternity emanated through our bodies like never before as we cheered our friends on as one big team: Team Medicine! It was most heartening to see the purpose of reintroducing the Law-Medicine Challenge being fulfilled before our very eyes. May this be an event that becomes entrenched in our Medical school culture as the must-see event of the year, every year! ■