



The Hobbit is Reassured!

The Hobbit welcomes and is greatly reassured by the Director of Medical Services' (DMS) clarification dated 13 July 2009 to the entire medical profession on the rationale behind amending the Medical Registration Act to allow SMC the option to appoint legally trained persons to chair the Disciplinary Tribunals (DTs) of SMC. This shows that a little communication can go a long way to soothe frayed nerves and address unnecessary anxiety. After all, the main scenario given in the section on "Frequently Asked Questions – Discipline Committees" states that the main reason for needing a chairman who is legally trained is for cases where "a prominent or senior medical practitioner, or someone known to the entire Council is the subject of the disciplinary proceeding". DMS further clarifies in his letter to us that having lawyers or judges chair the DT adds value by "avoiding potential conflicts in the medical community in high profile cases".

This is great news for the Hobbit because

- At 3 feet tall, the Hobbit is anything but prominent or high-profile.
- The Hobbit is NOT senior (she has a large four-digit MCR number).
- While many SMC members may claim to know the Hobbit, the Hobbit hereby states that she doesn't know more than half of these revered 19 SMC members who are in turn

definitely prominent, high-profile, senior and known to themselves.

- Most importantly, the Hobbit practises in Middle Earth, not Singapore.
- Just to be sure, the Hobbit is returning last year's *SMA News* Doctor of the Year Award back to the Editor.

But still, there are some doctors out there who are still not reassured. For the avoidance of doubt, the Hobbit would like to humbly suggest to DMS the following guidelines for his consideration on determining who is high profile or not; and who is senior or not.

For Guidelines on Prominence and High-Profileness, we have:

- **Super Duper Awesome High-Profile** – This would include doctors who are present and past members of SMC, past and present DMSes, Emeritus Professors/Consultants, past and present Deans, or any doctor who drives any of the following – Ferrari, Lamborghini, Porsche, Bentley, Rolls Royce and Mercedes (S Class only). Socialite-doctors who have their own catwalks, museums and TV shows or who at least appear in every other issue of *The Peak* or *The Tatler* may apply for inclusion into this esteemed category.
- **Mount Doom High-Profile** – Cluster and hospital CMBs, CEOs

of the public sector and Chairman of Medical Advisory Boards of private hospitals. Doctors who have appeared on the cover or been exclusively interviewed in at least one issue of *The Tatler* or *The Peak* qualify. Past and present Professors of Medicine, Surgery and so on are also included.

- **Bukit Timah Hill High-Profile** – Division Chairman of public hospitals and any private doctor with GST registration for his practice fall under this category. Any surgeon with a procedure named after himself/herself automatically qualifies. Any specialist with a Datuk or equivalent salutation on his name card and stationery also qualifies for this category.
- **Tall High-Profile** – Heads of Departments/Services and any doctor with a reserved parking lot in any hospital. Also any doctor who is taller than 1.8 metres. Any GP who owns more than three branches also may be considered to be a member of this category.
- **Lamely High-Profile** – Past and present Council Members of SMA, CFPS, AMS, SAB, JCST, STC or any other professional body/committee that is important enough to have its name in abbreviation are also included in this lowest category. This is to ensure that we get only pliant people running these organisations and not troublemakers. Doctors who have prominent figures such

as big busts/butts or prominent rhinophyma noses also qualify. SMA News Editor makes it to this category by the skin of his teeth.

For Guidelines on Seniority, we have the following categories for consideration:

- **Doctors of Antiquity** – Anyone who matriculated before WWII. A person with a MCR number of three digits or less may also qualify on a case-by-case basis. Anyone older than Dr Chee Phui Hung (AKA “The Agong”) automatically qualifies.
- **Ancient Doctors** – Anyone who was in medical school when Tun Dr Mahathir was there definitely qualifies. Also included in this category is a special dispensation given to doctors who are old enough to call President of SMC and/or DMS by name.
- **Very Old Doctors** – Anyone who has seen Sir Arthur Ransome alive (recent Bowyer Block sightings/ manifestations do not count) or anyone who was old enough to have had a crush on Ah Ling’s daughter in KE Hall or anyone who still has outstanding debts owed to Ah Ling.
- **Old Doctors** – Doctors who are still practising without a fax machine or a computer may also be included and anyone who paid medical school fees less than one thousand dollars a year.
- **Meekly Old Doctors** – Anyone who is old enough to qualify for Eldersfield and can also still remember doing MO calls for 40 miserable bucks.

In the meantime, the Hobbit has received news that a secret fast-growing medical organisation has just spawned

in Singapore. No, we are not talking about the second, third or even the tenth medical school in Singapore. We are referring to the Singapore Low-Profile Junior Doctors Association in Singapore. Rumours have it that it is now bigger than SMA and has grown to 6000 members! This organisation has only one unique function – it certifies that the doctor-member is not high-profile and not senior, hence its name. Doctors all over the island are queuing up to join this prestigious and exclusive association. It is said that should a member be the subject of a disciplinary proceeding, the said member can flash his membership card which clearly states “I am a low-profile and junior doctor!” Naturally, no one knows for sure who belongs to this association because it’s so low-profile, its membership data is secret.

But of course, you cannot please everyone and prominent doctor Yang Berhormat Dato’ Dr Atas Bin Tinggi said “*Alamak*, I thought that when I voted my classmate into SMC, he would be safeguarding ethical standards for people like me. But I now realise I am too prominent for him to bother about me! *Apa ini?*”

Next, it is also very reassuring to note that from the pastexperience of SMC, “most disciplinary cases do not usually pertain to medical ethics”. Konfew Singh s/o Purplex Singh, a doctor who was previously investigated but fortunately found to be innocent now realises his folly. He has this to say “No wonder I was misunderstood. All the time I was assiduously trying my best to stick to the *SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines*. Only now do I realise that most proceedings do not deal with medical ethics but “conduct in general”. I will refer to the *SMC Conduct in General Code*

much more from now on, once I find a copy of it.

I have since passed Dr Konfew Singh my copy of the *Middle Earth Medical Council Conduct in General Code* which clearly states that Hobbits with MBBS are strictly mythological in nature and their general conduct is such that whatever is said by them should be treated with a large pinch of salt.

In the meantime, Rivendell Hospital’s Director of Clinical Risk Management Dr Ng Putt Lee, had offered this unsolicited piece of advice: at the next SMC elections (if there is one and not a walkover like the last time), if you are hard-pressed to choose between very qualified candidates coming forth to serve the profession, vote for the one who does *not* know you. SMA

(Written in 72 minutes)

