



What Doubling the Number of Doctors REALLY Means

Okie Dokie, The Honourable Minister for Health has just announced that he wants to see the number of doctors working in hospitals doubled, so that instead of having one doctor to every two beds, there will be one doctor per bed in the future.

Doubtless, academicians and administrators are now looking at the impact of such a move, making simulations and creating models to study this issue. All this *cheam cheam* stuff is necessary.

But the Hobbit, having sat at tea rooms and canteens in every hospital in Singapore, gives you his thinking of this very difficult subject and what it means to different people.

TO MOUNT ELIZABETH

The tea-room will be filled with more doctors. Kitchen will have to double the amount of porridge cooked everyday. Doctors now have to go to work before 5am to get a decent parking lot.

To handle the increased business, Crystal Jade may want to consider setting up a branch at Mount Elizabeth to relieve the medical crowd at its Ngee Ann City and Paragon branches.

TO GLENEAGLES

The cardiac intervention laboratory just got even more crowded. This time round, there may be actual fist fights and more police reports will be lodged.

Clinic space will go up to S\$7,800 psf.

TO SGH

The administrators there will quadruple the number of administrators just to keep up with the doubling of doctors. Instead of squeezing two consultants into a room in the departmental offices, they will just pack four and they will sit on stools and work on benches. The queue for coffee at Houseman Canteen at 9.30am will now snake to Block 7.

The SGH Museum will also house live exhibits of old and redundant local specialists.

TO TTSH

Nothing very much. Its A&E will continue to close at the worst moments and leave other hospitals to fend for themselves. That is because they need more beds and not just doctors. Also, double the number of surgeons available for poaching, sorry, I mean, recruitment by NUH.

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TO AH

There will now be double the number of doctors to listen to the CEO's inspiring speeches about the need to change, compete and work harder.

TO NUH

The number of gastroenterologists will double BUT the number of people accredited to perform ERCPs will still be three. And if ever all three are on leave, they will still get a private sector gastroenterologist to cover ERCPs.

TO KKH

There will not be any real increase because there will be more people to quit soon after AST anyway.

TO PLASTIC SURGEONS AND OGBYNS

More plastic surgeons will offer proprietary method vaginoplasties while OBGYNs will do more anti-aging work and removal of breast lumps.

And the number of plastic surgeons wanting to specialise in burns will still be ONE.

TO GERIATRICIANS AND PALLIATIVE CARE ETC

Sorry, these guys will still be in the same rut because with the way we are paying them in the public sector, nobody local wants to train to become one of these specialists and foreigners with any self-respect certainly do not want to come here and be one. And there is not really that much work in the private side as well.

TO OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Double the number of MPs and Ministers from three to six. And double the number of BMWs, Mercedes in the (still!) unsheltered SNEC parking lot.

TO SICCA AND OTHER GOLF CLUBS

It will now be even more difficult to get a slot on Wednesday afternoons!

TO PATIENTS

Double the number of old uncles and aunties saying in the wards: "*Kong simi, lor-kun?*" (What are you saying, doctor?); since most of these doctors are foreigners who cannot speak Mandarin or dialect anyway.

Local doctors have less to do but may have a new lease of life by doubling as interpreters for these foreign doctors. Local doctors should be allowed to levy an interpreter fee in such cases.

TO TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

We then have double the number of plastic surgeons and ophthalmologists to feature on TV leading glamorous lifestyles that have absolutely nothing to do with 99% of the medical profession.

TO SMA AGM

The AGM may actually get a quorum of 50.

TO CFPS AGM

Sorry, probably still cannot reach quorum because these additional doctors work in hospitals.

TO OUR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Double the number of doctors going to these countries to promote Singapore as a Medical Hub and making insensitive remarks saying how lousy their neighbours are. Good thing is, if they are foreigners and sound foreign, our neighbours may not actually blame us local folks.

TO LAWYERS

Of course, needless to say – double the number of lawsuits against doctors.

TO NURSES AND ALLIED HEALTH

When are they going to double you poor fellas? ■