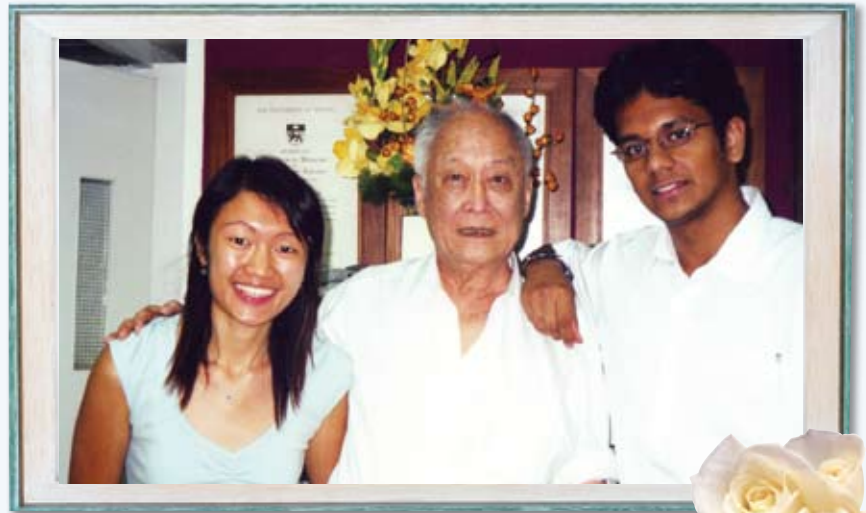


Here was a 78-year-old GP who replenished his bookshelf every month with the latest copies of *Lancet*, *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), *NEJM* and latest editions of medical reference texts with dogged discipline. He was evidence-based medicine personified. Come to think of it, he was our very own real-life version of “House” – both for his diagnostic ability and his straight-talking personality.



Dr See Yunn, Dr Wong Kun Hoong, and Dr Jayant.



An Ode to my Mentor, DR WONG KUM HOONG

By Dr Jayant V Iyer

Little did I know as I stepped in through the doors of a rather nondescript looking “Wong Clinic”, that I was in for the time of my life.

My fellow CG-mate, See Yunn, was covering as the old doctor rained his morning dose of expletives on her while opining on the current standards of the Singapore medical student. So it was with relief that she viewed me as I casually strolled into the clinic five minutes late, mini Oxford Clinical Medicine handbook in hand. There was a brief spell of uneasy silence as the old doc turned to face me and then to stare at the handbook I had in my grasp.

And then I had it...

“You jolly well throw that excuse of a book away son before I rip it out of your...” And it went on for five minutes before he thrust some *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) articles onto our hands and asked us to enrich our minds and discuss the latest diagnostic and management guidelines on systemic lupus erythematosus with him the following day.

I was told to expect a nice breather of a rotation when entering my two-week general practice (GP) attachment as a Year

Four medical student. At least that’s what my seniors had told me... Clearly Dr Wong had other plans for the two of us.

While many of our classmates went about playing Counter-Strike (yes that was the “in” thing back in good ol’ 2003), shopping or just slacking during their “Fam Med” rotations, See Yunn and I got ourselves Harrison’s – the only medical reference book allowed through his clinic doors – and prepared judiciously every night for the morning “journal clubs”. It was perhaps the most (enjoyably) gruelling (but fruitful!) two weeks of our Year Four schedule as we watched evidence-based medicine being applied and practiced in a heartland GP setting. Such was the commitment Dr Wong had in his students’ development that he’d even called up my home once to discuss a journal article I was given to read (and this was at 2300 hrs...).

Dr Wong, for all his strong opinions punctuated with unique and hilarious analogies that can have no parallel (wongisms, shall we coin these?), was truly a remarkable man. Here was a 78-year-old GP who replenished his bookshelf every month with the latest copies of *Lancet*, *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), *NEJM* and latest editions of medical reference

texts with dogged discipline. He was evidence-based medicine personified. Come to think of it, he was our very own real-life version of “House” – both for his diagnostic ability and his straight-talking personality.

During the two-week rotation, I asked him whether he would ever consider retiring. “Over my dead body, son”, he sneered. True enough dear Dr Wong saw his last patient on a Friday morning in late August 2009, before heading home for his afternoon break. He later passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Dr Wong, you will be dearly missed by many of us – your students, peers, family and patients alike. We loved you for all your eccentricities, hilarity, drive and passion. We have all been inspired by your constant thirst for knowledge and pursuit of practicing medicine at the highest level for your patients. May your soul rest in peace Dr Wong. SMA



Dr Jayant V Iyer sincerely hopes to live up to the ideals and high standards set by his medical school mentor Dr Wong as he goes about his training in Ophthalmology.