



RUMC Alumni



RCSI & UCD
Malaysia Campus

alumni
e-Newsletter

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International Medical Practice Bulletin
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unthinkable career choice?

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President's Message



Professor David Whitford
President & CEO

Yet another academic year has passed with graduates heading off for housejobs. Best wishes to all of the graduated class of 2022. They have coped with completing undergraduate training through the pandemic. The class of 2023 will be the last class to have significant disruption to their clinical training due to the pandemic.

The RUMC/ICGP/iheed family medicine training programme, MInTFM, goes from strength to strength. We had over 200 applicants for the 110 places on the programme in schemes in the Northern Region, Klang Valley and Johor Bahru. The majority of trainees are now sponsored onto the programme through HLP or MARA.

When the new trainees start the four-year programme in October 2022, there will be over 300 doctors on the MInTFM programme. We plan to start additional schemes in Sabah and Sarawak in 2023. Our aim is to complement the Masters programme and eventually provide 8000 Specialist Family Physicians for Malaysia (currently there are around 800). Feedback on the Irish programme of training is excellent. It is a pleasure to see RUMC alumni joining the programme.

Take care, keep safe and stay in touch.

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Becoming a psychiatrist...the unthinkable career choice?

Doctors have been interested in the aetiologies and treatments of mental disorders since ancient times. Centuries ago, planetary misalignment and having “black bile” were considered causes of depression (Telles-Correia & Marques, 2015). In not-so-distant past, treatment of schizophrenia involved the induction of “insulin coma” (Gibson, 2014).

Sigmund Freud, a prominent figure in psychiatry, has been called a “fraud” as a result of his “pseudoscientific” theories (Lattey, 1969). Taken together, it is not at all surprising that psychiatry has long been an unpopular career choice for medical students, and those who choose to practice psychiatry are being derogatorily labelled as “shrinks”!

During the 1950s, the discovery of chlorpromazine – the first conventional antipsychotic – having psychoactive properties has revolutionised psychiatry pharmacotherapy (López-Muñoz et al., 2005). Subsequently, more sophisticated drug treatments for psychiatric conditions began to emerge. There had been major developments in psychotropics and evidence-based psychotherapeutic interventions during the Decade of the Brain (1990 – 2000). Psychiatry has come a long way since Hippocrates’ time!

Unlike other branches of medicine where biological investigations can yield accurate diagnoses, a diagnosis in psychiatry remains highly subjective. Taking a history from a patient with mental disturbance is more time-consuming, especially when the patient is not a reliable informant. In many countries, mental disorder sufferers continue to be stigmatised, and fundings for mental health facilities are often lacking.

I often hear from medical school applicants they want to “help people” and that “empathy” is one of the most important attributes of a physician. If you indeed have the passion to help and have further developed your empathic sense, then psychiatry could be a wonderful career, especially if you are also curious about the unknown – the brain is one of the final frontiers of medical breakthroughs.

As a psychiatrist, you will be helping a highly vulnerable patient population, either being silenced by stigma or their incapacities. This is the only specialty that you can heal without a pill, or a knife – a successful outcome of psychotherapy is immensely gratifying! In psychiatry, there is much room for you to make a difference! It is arguably the most holistic medical field. Depending on the psychiatric subspecialty, there could be substantial opportunities to use your internal medicine knowledge. You can work closely with many other allied health colleagues. Comparing to other medical and surgical specialties, psychiatry can offer a better work-life balance.



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The length of postgraduate training for psychiatry varies in different countries – usually four to five years (Zisook et al., 2007). For those who have a higher research degree in a related discipline may be granted a shorter training period. There is a wide choice of fellowships for those who have completed their general training and wish to subspecialise. Being an academic clinician-scientist in geriatric neuropsychiatry, I have enjoyed going to work for the past two decades without “Monday blues”!

If you are currently in your housemanship or foundation year, or a more experienced medical officer without a firm career choice, and that you are fascinated by the brain and a “people person” who enjoys knowing your patients well, then despite the drawbacks described, a potentially highly fulfilling career awaits!

References

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5. Zisook, S., et al. (2007). Academic Psychiatry, 31(4), 309–325.

Prof Andrew Law

Vice Dean (International Student Services)
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus

*Prof. Andrew welcomes your thoughts, ideas, and contributions.
Feel free to email them to andrew.law@rcsiucd.edu.my*

Written By,



Congratulations Class of 2022

92 medical doctors from the Class of 2022 were conferred with medical degrees in a physical conferring ceremony, on 5th of June 2022 at Bayview Beach Resort, Batu Ferringhi, Penang.





ALUMNI STORIES

Name:

Dr Arvinder Singh HS

MSc Health Research
Class of 2016



About Dr Arvinder

I am currently a medical officer in clinical research and pursuing my PhD in Community Health (Epid&Stats) in UKM. I have been actively conducting clinical research and trials in Malaysia. I have expanded my research horizons to overseas as well. I have also been actively publishing research papers with the latest one being published in the Lancet Regional Health- Western Pacific.

Why did you choose the MSc Health Research programme at RUMC?

As I was heavily involved in clinical research, I decided that I needed to learn more about the field and the mechanics involved in clinical research. The programme we attended was wholesome and it carved me into being a better researcher and brought out the potentials in me.

What did you like the most about the programme?

The flexibility and expertise available among the faculty's staff. The programme was a good training and stepping stone for me.

Any other information about yourself and current practice?

I am a reviewer for many journals and bodies including the NIHR review board for the UK – deciding if researchers deserve grants for clinical trials in the UK. All this was after I completed my MSc Health Research at RUMC.

Cochrane Update and Meet-up for Volunteer Translators 2022 : 22 & 23 April 2022

Cochrane Malaysia organised its first training and meet-up session for volunteer translators at RUMC/ MInTFM Office in Empire Subang. The main objective of the session was to emphasise on the trustworthiness and certainty of the Cochrane evidence. It was followed by a hands-on session to determine degrees of certainty of the evidence when expressed in the Malay language.

The session was jointly delivered by Prof Dr Jacqueline Ho and Dr Tan May Loong Co-Directors Cochrane Malaysia, Associate Prof Dr. Teguh Haryo Sasongko, Cochrane Malaysia Translation Project Manager, Perdana University and Ms Nila Pillai, Cochrane Support Coordinator and Translation Project Coordinator.

A total of 13 volunteer translators from all over the country met in the 2 sessions. Among them was a RUMC 4th year student – Nur Nadheerah Abd Haleem.



Cochrane Protocol Development Workshop : 17-19 May 2022

RCSI and UCD Malaysia Campus (RUMC) hosted the Cochrane Protocol Development Workshop. The workshop was attended by 9 participants which included 1 RUMC alumni and 2 current students from the Class of 2022. There were also two international participants from Thailand. The trainers for this workshop were Prof Jackie Ho, Dr Tan May Loong, Assoc/Prof Foong Siew Cheng and Dr Foong Wai Cheng. This workshop, recognised by Cochrane, covered what is needed to complete a Cochrane protocol for an intervention review including with an introduction to how to use Cochrane to answer a clinical question.

The workshop was held for 3 days where participants were introduced to the steps of a systematic review, interpreting meta analyses and a hands-on session on RevMan – Cochrane's software for writing and analysing systematic reviews.

The next workshop is scheduled from 29 November to 1 December 2022 at Empire Subang Office and is now open for registration. For registration, please visit: <https://malaysia.cochrane.org/news/developing-protocol-cochrane-systematic-review-workshop-29th-1st-december-2022>



CONNECT WITH COCHRANE

Cochrane workshop, Hospital Tunku Azizah Kuala Lumpur : 27 May 2022

“How to read, understand, and use a Cochrane Review in clinical practice” was organised by the Paediatric Neurology Unit and CRC, Hospital Tunku Azizah (Hospital Wanita dan Kanak-kanak), Kuala Lumpur on 27th May 2022.

Prof Jackie Ho and Dr Jasmine Lee (RUMC Alumnus, (Class of 2016) and Cochrane author), conducted this workshop, attended by 12 doctors.



Do you want to get involved with Cochrane Malaysia? We have other opportunities where you can help overcome misinformation out there by spreading trusted Cochrane evidence. You can be a volunteer translator as part of your contribution to the community. You can also learn more about understanding and using Cochrane Evidence by attending the upcoming Cochrane Protocol Development Workshop at RUMC/MInTFM Office in Empire Subang from 29 November – 1 December 2022.

*For more information, please contact **Ms. Nila Pillai** at nila@rcsiucd.edu.my*

ALUMNI NETWORK



Dr Wan Syahmi Wan Mohamad

Class of 2013

Current position: Emergency Physician

Current place of work: Universiti Sains Malaysia

Stay in touch with your alma mater & fellow alumni.
Email alumni@rcsiucd.edu.my to update your contact details.

RUMC's Silver Jubilee Celebration Dinner Event

RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus (RUMC) celebrated its Silver Jubilee in a marketing-led dinner event on 21 May 2022 at Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur. The event was held to commemorate the journey of RUMC as an Irish medical university in Malaysia and to appreciate the contribution and support from our school partners and stakeholders over the last 25 years.

Some of RUMC's alumni, namely Dr Fiona Chew (C2002), Dr Basil Sulaiman (C2010), Dr Ajayan Nair (C2012) and Dr Ahmad Soufi (C2014) also attended the event. They engaged the audience in a panel sharing session and took the audience through their journey in Medicine at RUMC. Dr Fiona Chew also won the Best Dress (Female) award that evening.

Other distinguished invitees of the day include guests of honour, Dato Dr Godfrey Geh Sim Hwa, Founder of RUMC (then Penang Medical College) and spouse, Datin Loh Mei Ling, Professor David Whitford, President and CEO, RUMC, Professor Simon Jones, Vice-President and Registrar, RUMC, Professor Premnath Nagalingam, Dean, RUMC, Ms Raji Sogamaur, Head of Corporate Marketing and Student Recruitment, RUMC, Mr Danny Martin Nathan, Financial Controller, RUMC, Professor Andrew Law, Vice Dean of International Student Services and Head of Psychiatry, RUMC.





A unique Pre-University programme, offering students an early introduction to medical and clinical fields in a hospital setting. Upon conclusion of the programme, with a CGPA of 3.5-4.00, students are eligible to apply for the 5-Year Medical Degree Programme at RUMC.

Next Intake: June 2023



The University's flagship programme, the MB BCH BAO, is awarded by the National University of Ireland (NUI). Receive the best of both worlds with our transnationally delivered medical degree. RUMC is well-known for offering high-value tuition and exceptional quality in clinical training, as it continues to graduate high performing, industry-ready doctors.

Next Intake: September 2022

Malaysian doctors can now pursue the Family Medicine specialist training using the ICGP curriculum and assessment. Managed and delivered by RUMC, the curriculum of the programme is specifically adapted for the Malaysian healthcare scenario.

Next Intake: October 2023

For more information, visit rcsiucd.edu.my/programme/mintfm or email: mintfm@rcsiucd.edu.my



Career Opportunities @ RUMC

Available Academic Positions

Head of Department in:

- o Medicine

Lecturers in:

- o Psychiatry
- o Medicine
- o Surgery
- o Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- o Family Medicine
- o Orthopaedics

Structured PhD

This is a 4-year (full-time) & 5-year (part-time) programme which includes a 1-year pre-doctoral training year. The pre-doctoral training enables you to learn some core PhD skills such as research methods, research ethics & integrity and academic writing.

For more information, please visit our website at www.rcsiucd.edu.my

To apply & for more info:
email hr@rcsiucd.edu.my OR contact 04-217 1999