



COLLEGE OF

*Paediatrics and  
Child Health,  
Singapore*



*Recent Development in Paediatrics:  
from Chapter to College*

Seng-Hock Quak<sup>1,2</sup> FAMS, FRCP (Glas), FRCPCH  
Nai-Kiong Ho<sup>3</sup> FAMS, FRACP M Med



<sup>1</sup> *President, College of Paediatrics and Child Health*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Paediatrics, National University Hospital,  
Singapore*

<sup>3</sup> *Past Chairman, Chapter of Paediatricians*

*Address for Correspondence:*

**Dr Quak Seng Hock**  
Department of Paediatrics  
National University Hospital  
5 Lower Kent Ridge Road  
Singapore 119074.

## ABSTRACT

Paediatrics is among one of the earliest specialties to develop in Singapore. At the end of the 1980s, there were some 100 practising paediatricians who were trained either locally or overseas. In 1989, there were 52 paediatricians registered as Fellows of Academy of Medicine, Singapore. The number was more than adequate for the formation of a chapter within the Academy. The inaugural meeting of the Chapter of Paediatricians was held on Friday, 31 March 1989 where a total of 24 members attended. The Chapter of Paediatricians functioned as a special group within the Academy, governed by its rules, regulations and by-laws. A number of academic activities such as lectures and scientific meetings were organised by the chapter. The formation of the Chapter of Paediatricians was to look after the interests of paediatricians in the Academy of Medicine. Over the years, it had functioned within the umbrella of the Academy and successfully organised many academic activities for its members. However, there were a number of restrictions for the Chapter. It was not financially independent and was not able to serve its members fully. Prof K Satku the Master of the Academy proposed that those Chapters with sufficient numbers could be transformed into Colleges so that the Colleges can be more independent. The main focus for the Colleges was to maintain professional standard and professional development. The Colleges would have their own rules and regulations and registered as a subsidiary company of Academy of Medicine, Singapore. The College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Singapore, was incorporated on 17 August 2004. This was indeed a milestone in the history of medicine in Singapore and the paediatric fraternity.

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## INTRODUCTION

Paediatrics is among one of the earliest specialties to develop in Singapore and its early development has been documented on various occasions.<sup>1-4</sup> At the end of the 1980s, there were some 100 practising paediatricians who were trained either locally or overseas. They formed the core group of paediatric specialists providing excellent care for all the children in Singapore and the region. About 50% of these specialists are in public service, either in the restructured hospitals or in the National University of Singapore. The remaining 50% of these paediatric specialists were in private sectors.

## POST-GRADUATE EXAMINATION

The School of Post-graduate Medical Studies had been organizing M Med (Paediatrics) examination since 1970. In June 1994, the President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Dr Anthony Toft, invited all the UK Presidents and Presidents or representatives of some Overseas Colleges/Academies for a meeting at the College in Edinburgh, to discuss specialist medical standards including reciprocity and possible joint examinations. Dr Chew Chin Hin (Past Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore and Deputy Director, School of Post-Graduate Medical Studies) attended the meeting. This meeting of June 1994, together with a personal meeting between Dr Chew, Lord Turnberg (PRCP London) and Sir David Todd, President, Hong Kong Academy of Medicine in Singapore led to the first M Med/MRCP joint examinations for Adult and Paediatric Medicine in 1997. In recent years, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health continued the same reciprocal examinations with regard to Paediatric Medicine. Thus, successful candidates received both the

MMed (Paediatrics) and MRCPCH. Since then, Physician Fellows in Singapore were represented on the UK Policy and Examination Boards, initially by Dr Chew Chin Hin, Profs Chan Heng Leong, Low Poh Sim, Tan Chorh Chuan and Yap Hui Kim and later by Profs Chee Yam Cheng, Benjamin Ong and Lee Kok Onn.

## FORMATION OF THE CHAPTER OF PAEDIATRICIANS

In 1989, there were 52 paediatricians registered as fellows of Academy of Medicine, Singapore.<sup>5</sup> The number was more than adequate for the formation of a chapter within the Academy. The inaugural meeting of the Chapter of Paediatricians was held on Friday, 31 March 1989 where a total of 24 members attended. The Master, Academy of Medicine at that time was Dr N C Tan who chaired the meeting. The following members were elected to office:

Chairman	:	Dr Tan Kim Leong
Vice Chairman	:	Dr Ho Nai Kiong
Honorary Treasurer	:	Dr Chay Oh Moh
Committee Members	:	Dr Phua Kong Boo Dr Yap Boh Ghee Dr June Lou

The 2 co-opted members were Dr Choong Chew Thye and Dr Ngiam Thye Eng.

The Chapter of Paediatricians functioned as a special group within the Academy, governed by its rules, regulations and by-laws. A number of academic activities such as lectures and scientific meetings were organised by the chapter.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Scientific Meeting of the Chapter was held from 20 to 21 January 1990 at Shangri-La Hotel with the theme "Towards Better Perinatal and Childcare". This was met with overwhelming response with 232 participants.

Dr Tan Kim Leong served as Chapter Chairman from 1989 to 1990.<sup>6</sup> He was succeeded by Dr Ho Nai Kiong in 1991. More academic activities were organised throughout the years and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Meeting was held from 23 to 24 June 1991. Since then, the scientific meeting has become a regular event of the Chapter. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Meeting in 1993 saw the active participation of the Hong Kong College of Paediatricians and the Malaysian College of Paediatricians.<sup>7</sup>

Dr Ho Nai Kiong remained as Chapter Chairman until 1995. In 1994, the Distinguished Academician was a paediatrician, Dr Richard E Behrman, Managing Director of the Centre from the Future of Children (The David and Lucile Packard Foundation), Los Altos, California. He was also the Editor of Nelson's Textbook of Paediatrics. He visited Singapore from 27 November to 3 December in 1993 (Fig. 1). The Chapter had organised many continuing medical education sessions and academic activities such as talks, lectures, seminars, including consensus and workshops. The Chapter played an active role in the paediatric section for the biennial Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine.

Dr Tan Cheng Lim, who was elected as the third Chapter Chairman, held office from 1995 to 1997. By this time, the Chapter membership has grown from 52 to 89. The Chapter has grown from strength to strength. Dr Tan was succeeded by Dr Phua Kong Boo who was the Chapter Chairman until 2000. The Chairmanship



Fig. 1. Distinguished Academician 1993. Professor Richard E Behrman, MD, is pictured here with Dr Chao Tzee Cheng, Master, 1992-93 Council and Dr Ho Nai Kiong, Chairman, Chapter of Paediatricians just before the delivery of his lecture titled "Future Directions in Child Health".

was held by Dr Ho Lai Yun from 2000 to 2001 and he was succeeded by Dr Quak Seng Hock who became the last Chairman of the Chapter when the Chapter of Paediatricians subsequently evolved to the College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Singapore.

One important event in the history of the Chapter of Paediatricians was the establishment of the Chapter of Paediatric Lectureship. The Inaugural Chapter of Paediatrician Lectureship<sup>8</sup> was delivered by Emeritus Professor Wong Hock Boon (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Emeritus Professor Wong Hock Boon delivered the Inaugural Chapter of Paediatricians Lecture titled "The Future of Medicine from the Standpoint of the Practising Paediatrician" at the Opening Ceremony of the 9th ASEAN Paediatric Federation Conference on 9 July 1998.

## FORMATION OF COLLEGE OF PAEDIATRICS AND CHILD HEALTH

The formation of the Chapter of Paediatricians was to look after the interests of paediatricians in the Academy of Medicine. Over the years, it had functioned within the umbrella of the Academy and successfully organised many academic activities for its members. However, there were a number of restrictions for the Chapter. It was not financially independent and was not able to serve its members fully.

Dr Satku K, the Master of the Academy from 2002 to 2004, proposed that those Chapters with sufficient numbers could be transformed into Colleges so that the Colleges can be more independent. The main focus for the Colleges was to maintain professional standard and professional development. The Colleges would have their own rules and regulations and registered as a subsidiary company of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

The College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Singapore, was incorporated on 17 August 2004. This was indeed a milestone in the history of medicine in Singapore and the Paediatric fraternity. The first elected office bearers of the College (Fig. 3) were:

President	: Dr Quak Seng Hock
Vice-President	: Dr Ho Lai Yun
Honorary Secretary	: Dr Goh Yam Thiam, Daniel
Honorary Treasurer	: Dr Rajadurai Victor, Samuel
Council members	: Dr Goh Eng Kim, Anne Dr Chan Kwai Lin, Daisy Dr Lee Bee Wah

The total membership of the College was 129 (as at 31 December 2004).



Fig. 3. The first elected office bearers of the college: back row (L to R) Dr Rajadurai Victor, Samuel (Hon. treasurer), Dr Quak Seng Hock (President), Dr Low Cheng Hock (Master of Academy of Medicine Singapore), Front (L to R) Dr Ho Lai Yun (Vice President), Dr Chan Kwai Lin, Daisy (council member), Dr Goh Yam Thiam, Daniel (Hon. secretary), Dr Lee Bee Wah (council member), Dr Goh Eng Kim, Anne (not in picture).

**Table 1. College of Paediatrics and Child Health and Chapter of Paediatricians Lectures**

Year		Lecturer	Topic
2006	2 <sup>nd</sup> College of Paediatrics and Child Health Lecture	Chay Oh Moh	The Wheezy Child
2005	Inaugural College of Paediatrics and Child Health Lecture	Ho Lai Yun	Caring for Children with Special Needs in Singapore
2004	4 <sup>th</sup>	Yap Hui Kim	Treating the Future Adult
2002	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Ho Nai Kiong <sup>9</sup>	Neonatology in Singapore - The Way We Were, The Way Forward
2000	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Tan Cheng Lim <sup>10</sup>	The Future of Paediatrics in Singapore
1998	1 <sup>st</sup> Chapter of Paediatricians Lecture	Wong Hock Boon <sup>11</sup>	The Future of Medicine from the Standpoint

With the formation of the College, the Chapter of Paediatric Lectureship became the College of Paediatrics and Child Health Lectureship (Table 1).

To celebrate the formation of the College, an inaugural lectureship was organised on 30 April 2005 at Sheraton Towers Hotel.<sup>12</sup> There was an inauguration ceremony followed by the Inaugural College of Paediatrics and Child Health Lecture, delivered by Dr Ho Lai Yu on “Caring for Children with Special Needs in Singapore” (Fig. 4).



*Fig. 4. Dr Quak Seng Hock with Dr Ho Lai Yun, who delivered the Inaugural College of Paediatrics and Child Health Lecture titled “Caring for Children with Special Needs in Singapore”.*

The College also had its first full day scientific meeting on 2 July 2005. It was held in conjunction with the 39<sup>th</sup> Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine. During the Congress, Dr Jill Sewell, President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians was conferred Fellowship of the College (Fig. 5).

In line with the objective of the College, Distant Learning Programme (DLP) was officially launched on 1 November 2005. This programme would allow members the flexibility to partake Continuing Medical Education modules online and to learn and update at their own pace and time.

The history of the Chapter of Paediatricians and College of Paediatrics and Child Health is short. However, there are many changes and new developments. With time, the College will evolve into a more mature institution, with the main objective of providing excellent care for the children in Singapore.



*Fig. 5. Dr Quak Seng Hock and Dr Jill Sewell, President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, who was conferred the Fellowship of the College at the 39th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine on 2 July 2005.*

## COLLEGE JOURNAL

The only paediatric journal in Singapore was published by the Singapore Paediatric Society. With the formation of the College of Paediatrics and Child Health, the executive committee of the Singapore Paediatric Society and the Council of the College decided that there should be only one official journal for paediatrics in Singapore. The Singapore Paediatric Journal became the official publication of both the Paediatric College and Paediatric Society and re-named '*Paediatrics, Child and Adolescent Health*' which was published quarterly. The first issue was published in March 2006.

## COAT OF ARMS

The Coat of Arms of the College was designed by its members (Fig. 6). In the centre of the shield, the chevron, symbolises the coming together of all medical specialties to provide the best medicine care for the nation. The two children represent paediatrics and healthy children. The snake coiling around the rod symbolises "healing". The four circular red dots joined together by olive leaves symbolise the four races living harmoniously in Singapore and in the pink of health. Supporting the shield are two lions which represent Singapore. The olive branches symbolise anointing and medicinal values. The motto "Recta Sapere" urges us to seek and savour the truth at all times.



Fig. 6. Coat of Arms of the College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Singapore.

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