Elective Experience
For Dr James Cai, a Year One Internal Medicine Resident, a then student at NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM), picking an elective posting in his fourth year was incredibly daunting.

He shares: “It was way too early for me as fourth year student to know which cluster to pick or where to go. All I knew was that I was interested in Cardiology and that a stint at the National Heart Centre Singapore (NHCS) would provide me with wide clinical exposure and good teaching. So, I emailed Prof Terrance Chua from NHCS for a chance to do a posting with him.”

Prof Chua arranged for James to have a one-month posting at NHCS, during which he had opportunities not only to attend tutorials presented by senior Medical Officers and Registrars, but also to learn from Senior Consultants. In addition, he got to learn about a large range of testing and laboratory work, from cardiac stress tests on treadmills to echocardiography laboratories and cardiac catheterization laboratories.

However, as he had expected, he learnt the most while on the ground. “I knew that joining NHCS for an elective would mean that I would see a tremendous volume of patients with conditions that I had previously learned about only in books”.

James remembers the day when a patient suddenly collapsed in front of him. He had to immediately apply what he had learnt in class. He shares: “As a student, I had read my Basic & Advanced Cardiac Life Support (BCLS/ACLS) protocols many times. I went through simulation drills too, but that pales in comparison to first-hand experience. I realized that the best way to learn ACLS is to be on the ground and to do it yourself. It then becomes more of a reflex than a practiced drill or just theoretical knowledge picked up from a book.”

The Difference a Mentor Makes
The mentorship James received during his elective posting did not end with the elective period. “During my posting, I worked on my research project with Dr Yeo Khung Keong, Program Director of the Cardiology Residency program. He was very supportive and taught me valuable research skills. He spent time going through presentations I was preparing and continued to provide guidance and advice after the program. This has continued to this day, even as I grow into the role of a junior doctor.”
James says: “After graduation, I chose the SingHealth Residency Internal Medicine program because of the good experience I had during my elective postings and the strong mentorship I had. Dr Yeo gave me such close guidance even though I was just a Year Four student. It also helped that I could speak to seniors in the program, giving me confidence in my decision.”

**Being Grounded**

James is not alone in gaining an appreciation for the importance of learning on the ground and having a good mentor. Another former medical student with YLLSoM, Dr Juliana Kan, did her elective with the National Cancer Centre Singapore and Singapore General Hospital.

The Year One Internal Medicine Resident recalls a memorable moment: “During my palliative elective posting at NCCS, there was an elderly female patient who was visually and hearing-impaired. She refused to speak with any medical staff, and would not answer any of our questions. It was very difficult to obtain her history and do a proper assessment of her medical condition.”

Juliana’s supervisor explained that the patient possibly felt very afraid in an unfamiliar environment, with many strangers coming up to her, made worse by her inability to see or hear them properly. She says: “He encouraged me to approach her like I would my grandmother. I introduced myself, held her hand in mine, and spent the next five to ten minutes assuring her that we were all here to help and make her feel better. As I spoke, she started to tear, and told me all the discomfort she was feeling. We were able to identify her problem and subsequently institute appropriate treatment. From that, I learned not to underestimate the value and meaningfulness of spending time to care for a patient beyond the tests we order and the medications we prescribe.”

Juliana adds: “The experience from my elective postings was great and meaningful. I am sure I made the right choice in joining the SingHealth Residency program.”

**Coming Back Home**

However not everyone has a seamless track to an elective posting in Singapore. As an international medical student from the University of Cambridge, Dr Yan Limin had to apply for the postings on her own. Now a Year One Internal Medicine Resident, Limin says: “I always knew I wanted to work in Singapore. I had been away for a while and I missed home. Doing an elective in Singapore was the natural option for me.”

“My school was not involved in the choosing of electives as they give students the complete freedom to choose where to apply. I chose to apply to SingHealth because I was hoping to continue and work here. I applied through the National University of Singapore portal**, selected my preferred speciality and hospital, indicated duration, and submitted the application online.”

“I am very glad I did an elective here,” Limin says. “It gave me a feel of what House Officers were expected to do within the Residency program and helped me decide on where to apply. Furthermore, I was very fortunate to work with Dr Chai Huizhong, who was not only a very efficient and capable doctor, but also very patient with me. She encouraged me to get involved and taught me along the way, which definitely made a difference when I finally came back as a House Officer.”

All three Residents unanimously agree that elective postings had better equipped them for Residency life and helped them greatly in their decision making process. James even goes to add “elective postings are definitely one of the best parts of medical school.

**Students can also apply to SingHealth directly via the ADO office. Click here for more information.**
Why Internal Medicine?
Internal Medicine physicians are experts in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of a wide spectrum of adult diseases. We are trained to solve puzzling diagnostic problems and deal with multiple medical conditions simultaneously. We take pride in the care of the whole patient, and are often consulted by our colleagues in other specialties in the management of challenging medical problems.

With the rapid advancement in medical therapeutics, as well as changing population demographics, the future of Internal Medicine is exciting. Specialising in Internal Medicine promises to open the door to vast career opportunities. Upon completion of our Residency program, you can focus on general Internal Medicine or further specialise in one of many related fields e.g. Cardiology, Oncology.

Why SingHealth?
SingHealth offers an amazing case-mix, unrivalled clinical experiences and personal mentorship by leading clinicians at Singapore General Hospital, National Cancer Centre, National Heart Centre and National Neuroscience Institute and also at our major participating site, Changi General Hospital. If you share our belief that clinical experience is the most effective teacher, then ours would be the program of choice.

Starting Residency can be a challenging experience, and no one understands this better than the seniors. Second and third year Residents play an active role guiding new Residents. Our strong and cohesive family of Residents, led by our Chief Residents, have organised many peer-support initiatives, e.g. CADENCE (exam support), COMPASS (orientation) and REACH (Residents-As-Teachers)

We believe that Residency is the first step of your postgraduate training and a start of a long-term career at SingHealth. We see career guidance as a priority and actively facilitate the seamless progression of our Residents to the excellent Medical Senior Residency training programs at SingHealth.

Who Are We Looking For?
If you are strongly committed to Internal Medicine, and share our belief in putting "patients at the heart of all we do", I invite you to take the step forward to join our community.

Dr Phua Ghee Chee,
Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency Program

If your interest has been piqued and you like to find out more about this great program, contact us now at i.am.interested@singhealthimresidency.com
Dr Marianne Anastasia DeRoza, a first year Internal Medicine Resident, presented a poster entitled “Diagnostic Yield of Bronchoscopic Biopsy in the Diagnosis of Peripheral Cancers In The Lung” at the 18th World Congress for Bronchology & Interventional Pulmonology, held in April 2014 at Kyoto, Japan. For her effort, she walked away with the best poster award.

She speaks of her experience: “It was great meeting respiratory physicians from all over the world. I was honored to hear from famous names in the field; renowned physicians who have written text books and published outstanding research and practice guidelines.”

Marianne adds: “It was a privilege to attend the symposiums and learn about new or current practices that have been fine-tuned. Through this, I’ve realized that in medicine the learning never stops!”

To view Dr DeRoza’s poster, click here.

As Phase Two of Project Hope, SingHealth Residents have put together an e-exhibition of photographs featuring the elderly patients they met during an earlier community outreach initiative.

Phase One of Project Hope, held in conjunction with the Singapore General Hospital’s (SGH) annual Project Groom Over in January this year, saw the Residents going to the Henderson and Bukit Merah neighbourhoods to provide free basic health screenings and medicine reconciliation to elderly patients.

The photographs taken by Residents not only capture their experience participating in the outreach initiative, but also reflect the tenacity of the patients. As the young Residents mingled with the older generation, they learned that hope is essential to keep patients going strong and healthy, and that their real mission is to bring hope to the people.

Click here to view the e-exhibition.

More than 260 SingHealth Residents found themselves tested both mentally and physically on 26th April: Day Two of the SingHealth Residency Orientation 2014.

The day began at the Graduate Medical Education Office on the Singapore General Hospital Campus, the starting point for an island-wide “Running Man” race. Each team was given a race pack containing mission clues that led them to four destinations throughout Singapore. The first team to reach the final destination, Sapphire Pavilion along Siloso Beach on Sentosa Island, was declared the champion.

While the morning’s "Running Man" challenged the Residents’ mental capacities, the afternoon program challenged their strength and agility with a series of inter-team beach games, including water soccer, Zorb ball, Captain’s Ball and an interactive Bollywood-themed dance session.

Joining in the fun was Group Chief Executive Officer of SingHealth, Prof Ivy Ng, the Chief Executive Officers and
Chairmen Medical Board of Singapore General Hospital, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital and Changi General Hospital, Designated Institutional Official Prof Lim Boon Leng, as well as the Program Directors and core faculty of the various Residency programs. The day culminated with a sumptuous buffet spread, capping off the range of activities meant to forge a deeper bond between Residents and Faculty. Teamwork is an integral part of multidisciplinary patient care, and the Orientation marked an important first step for the Residents to embark on their journey in Medicine.

**Hot Read**

**Differences No Longer Hinder**
Read about the new treatment protocol available to help kidney failure patients find a match among incompatible living donors. To read more, click [here](#).

**What’s New?**

**New Family Medicine Clinic At Chinatown Officially Opens**
Guest of Honour, MP Lily Neo officiated the opening of a new Family Medicine Clinic at Chinatown. The new Clinic caters to patients referred by SingHealth’s hospitals and national specialty centers for follow-up treatments. To read more, click [here](#).

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