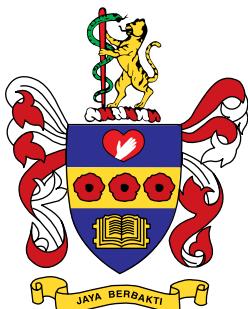


COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS



'EVOLUTION & TRANSFORMATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE IN MALAYSIA'

INTRODUCTION

Emergency Medicine is seen as the frontline and a very critical service of each hospital. It is a specialty domain that offers clinical care to a wide range of acute medical infirmities, illness or injuries which are undifferentiated, presenting at unscheduled times. This involves the provision of emergency and critical medical care that includes diagnostic, resuscitation and stabilisation components and life-saving interventions. The general scope includes pre-hospital and hospital-based emergency medical care. Before it was established as a specialty, emergency medicine started as a neglected service and had no champions in promoting the care.

EMERGENCY MEDICINE OF THE PAST

Emergency Medicine in Malaysia started out as a small part of hospital where patients having emergency

medical problems were reviewed and managed in a rather non-systematic manner. The set up used to be a rather small unit with limited space and in many situations not given much attention in terms of importance. It had no triaging system and no separate areas for resuscitation. It was run by Medical Officers and in some hospitals, by only Assistant Medical Officers. It was not a discipline that was recognised as a specialty on its own. There were no dedicated specialists managing the department. The equipment available was limited and in terms of hospital budget, it received rudimentary allocation. Medical Officers working there did not have a career pathway and they usually came there for a temporary stint. In many situations, the unit became a 'dumping' place for problematic doctors or staff. The morale of staff was low and there was not much respect from other specialties towards the services provided by the unit.

EMERGENCY MEDICINE IN 1990s

In 1993, Dr Abu Hassan Asaari Abdullah, then an orthopaedic surgeon who was also trained in trauma surgery and emergency care in the United Kingdom, took the challenge of pioneering the re-organising of Emergency Medicine in Malaysia. He also established the Malaysian Society for Traumatology and Emergency Medicine (MASTEM) to run trainings, organise conferences and scientific meetings. Over the years, numerous programmes were run by the society to develop and strengthen the service. Dr Sabariah Faizah Jamaluddin, a trained anaesthesiologist, joined the

COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

group. Dr Azhar Abdul Aziz who was trained as an Emergency Physician in the United Kingdom, also came back around that time and joined Emergency Department in the University Malaya Medical Centre. He later headed the Emergency Department in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre. From this period of time, a more organised and modern Emergency and Trauma Department in Hospital Kuala Lumpur led by Professor Dato' Sri Dr Abu Hassan, started to take shape. By this time, emergency departments in Malaysia 'adopted' specialists from other departments to be the heads.

In 1998, Associate Professor Dr Kamarudin Ja'alam from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), worked with Professor Dato' Sri Dr Abu Hassan and the Ministry of Health (MOH) to establish the Master of Emergency Medicine Programme at the university. Dr Wan Aasim Wan Adenan, an anaesthesiologist, who headed the Emergency Department at the USM Hospital joined hands to run the programme and from here, there was no turning back and Emergency Medicine became a specialty on its own. All these strong characters were the champions for the establishment of Emergency Medicine in Malaysia.

BEYOND 2000 : LOCALLY TRAINED EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS PRODUCED

In 2002, the first batch of Emergency Physicians graduated from USM. Out of six, two of them stayed in USM as lecturers and ran the post-graduate programme

while the other four went back to the MOH and were sent to head a few Emergency and Trauma Departments in MOH hospitals. Emergency Physicians then started the transformation process of each department with proper triaging and treatment zones. The departments were re-organised, and apart from clinical duties for all medical emergencies and trauma cases, they also helped developed pre-hospital care services, disaster plans and drills, one-stop crisis centres for rape victim and domestic violences. They also organised numerous life support trainings, workshops and conferences at local and international levels. Their value was realised by hospital management that even private hospitals started to open doors for Emergency Physicians. In view of demand for more Emergency Physicians, in 2005, the Master of Emergency Medicine Programme was started in the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Medical School by Professor Dr Ismail Mohd Saiboon and the University of Malaya (UM) Medical School by Professor Dr David Choon Siew Kit to increase the number of specialists. From the successful establishment of the post-graduate programmes in these three universities, a conjoint board was established thereafter. All candidates went through similar examinations and examiners in order to pass as a specialist. In time, interests among young doctors to become Emergency Physicians flourished. Emergency Medicine post-graduate programme has become one of the top choices for specialisation in Malaysia. By 2006, all major MOH hospitals had Emergency Physicians.

COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

BIRTH OF COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

Before 2011, Emergency Medicine exist as a chapter under College of Surgeons. On 10th September 2011, the College of Emergency Physicians was established, having 31 members for a start. Professor Dr Ismail Mohd Saiboon was the Prottem Chairman. Following the first general assembly, Professor Dato' Sri Dr Abu Hassan Asaari Abdullah was elected to become the first College President. Associate Professor Dr Mohd Idzwan Zakaria became the second President in 2013 and, currently, Dr Mahathar Abdul Wahab is taking charge. The College formed special interest groups in the form of Trauma Care, Toxicology, Pre-hospital Care, Disaster, Medical Emergency Simulation, Emergency Critical Care and Paediatrics Emergency. The College collaborates with various societies by either supporting or endorsing programmes that promotes elevation of emergency care standards in the country. The College also enters into collaboration with the International Federation for Emergency Medicine. Its members are actively presenting scientific papers internationally. Currently in 2016, 286 Emergency Physicians had graduated from local post-graduate programmes and more than 126 had

joined as College members. A total of 54 Malaysian hospitals now have Emergency Physicians. A few Emergency Physicians started to join private practice as there was a demand for consultants in this field in private hospitals. Five academicians had been inducted as full Professors in Emergency Medicine currently, in various universities in Malaysia.

THE FUTURE

Through the College of Emergency Physicians, the specialty is expected to grow stronger with time. The College aims to establish a strong culture of research, collaboration, networking and engagement of technology to make this specialty relevant, fresh and dynamic, running in tandem with timely needs and requirements of the public. A lot of work awaits to ensure the science and art of its practice evolves alongside the best practices of the medicine by benchmarking ours to the best international standard of care. The College is determined to play its role to this end and ensure that both the fraternity and the community benefit from the evolution and transformation of good emergency care in Malaysia.

“Humanistic Care When It Matters Most”

Compiled by

DATUK DR ALZAMANI MOHAMMAD IDROSE