

SCHOMOS Update



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Seated (L-R) : Dr Mohd Fikri, Datuk Dr Rohaizat, Dato' Dr Azman, Dr Ashok Phillip and Mr Vasu Pillai
Standing (L-R) : Dr Azni, Dr Shahrum, Dr Syarifah, Dr Arvind, Dr Ravindran, Dr Julian and Dr Kevin

Meeting with Dato' Dr Hj Azman on 26 January 2016

The SCHOMOS ExCo had a fruitful meeting with Dato' Dr Hj Azman Bin Abu Bakar, *Pengarah Bahagian Perkembangan Perubatan* and his team on 26 January 2016 at Putrajaya. SCHOMOS was well-represented by our Chairman, Mr Vasu Pillai, Vice Chairman, Dr Arvindran Alaga, Secretary, Dr Kevin Ng, and Deputy Secretary Dr Julian Tey. Present were also the MMA President, Dr Ashok Philip and Honorary General Secretary, Dr Ravindran Naidu.

The meeting started with Dato' Dr Azman welcoming the MMA ExCo and SCHOMOS to Putrajaya. He stressed the need for close cooperation between the Doctor's Association and the Ministry of Health (MoH) in these challenging economic times. Dato' Dr Azman also suggested that this meeting be done twice annually to ensure a better working relationship between SCHOMOS and the MoH. He introduced his team in attendance, which were Datuk Dr Haji Rohaizat Bin Haji Yon, Dr Mohd Fikri Bin Ujang, Dr Syarifah Noor Anisah Binti Ahmad, Dr Shahrum Binti Ismail, and Dr Azni Yusliza Binti Yusoff.

The meeting was an excellent platform for an exchange of ideas and information between SCHOMOS and the Ministry. Many issues were discussed, as highlighted below. Dato' Dr Azman shared his views on the challenges that Government Doctors will face in the near future as positions for Medical Officers have been filled and new positions are hard to come by. This was a major topic of discussion as it is worrying to note that approximately 5,000 new medical graduates are

produced yearly with limited amount of Houseman positions available. Dato' Dr Azman allayed our fears and informed that there were plans to expand the number of Hospitals accepting Housemen for training from the current 44 hospitals. Currently, about 30% of House Officers (HOs) do not complete their training for a variety of reasons, with the majority being for administrative reasons like maternity leave or medical leave.

House Officer Issues

1. E-Houseman System

The E-HO system is a computerised system for registration of medical graduates prior to their placement as House Officers. This system was implemented to allow the graduates to apply for their favoured Hospital placements online. The system is open for a week for registration on a first come first serve basis for Hospital Placement.

Amongst the issues discussed was the rigidity of the system itself whereby the form has to be completed in one sitting with a limited time frame to decide on the Hospitals. The team from the Ministry noted this and informed that the system will be reevaluated. They however shared that the applicants should be firm with their decisions and quick to choose their desired placements early. They advised all applicants to discuss everything with their families and have a list of preferred Hospitals ready before filling in the E-HO system. They also suggested the option of deferring from the current intake should the hospital they desire to be placed in be full. Appeals after placements have been given will not be entertained.

The long waiting time for placement was also brought up by SCHOMOS and this was discussed at length. Applicants are advised to submit all the documents correctly and early to ensure that their applications are processed promptly. Much of the delays were attributed to incomplete documentation.

2. Housemanship Training

This was another major issue discussed. SCHOMOS raised the issues of competency and unfair evaluations for extensions. We asked that a SCHOMOS representative be allowed to sit together with the Committee on extensions of House Officers to be the representative of the House Officers. This was well-received and the ExCo was instructed to look into the logistics of the proposal.

The logbooks for House Officers were under review and the new log books will be in use soon. Dato' Dr Azman was glad that the ExCo took up the initiative to hold the "ABCs of Housemanship" Seminar and felt that the medical graduates should attend some form of preparatory course prior to starting housemanship, more so for the foreign graduates to familiarise themselves with the Malaysian System.

3. Foreign Medical Graduates

Another hot topic of discussion was the fate of foreign medical graduates from non-accredited universities. The waiting time for the exams and the passing rate was discussed and the Ministry will look into our concerns.

Medical Officer Issues

1. Medical Officer Positions

As of now, all House Officers who have completed their HO training were absorbed as Medical Officers, despite the positions already being filled. The Ministry is aware of this problem of overcrowding and is working diligently with JPA to increase the number of available positions.

However, the doctors are advised to move immediately to where they are posted to with only one appeal allowed. The issue of perpetual floating medical officers awaiting appeal was brought up by the Ministry and SCHOMOS has been asked to inform the members that this will not be allowed in the near future.

2. Master's Training Programme

Master candidature was discussed, with the Ministry team informing SCHOMOS that the number of available positions are increasing yearly, standing at 1,100 positions currently. The selection criteria was brought up and SCHOMOS was told that it was based on a variety of set criteria which also differed slightly by speciality. Candidates were reminded that should they not complete their course, they would not be guaranteed a placement back to their original hospital.

3. Alternative Pathways

SCHOMOS brought up the issue of doctors with Part 1 qualifications of the College papers which were unable to be posted to their preferred specialities. All doctors with these qualifications were advised to register with their respective Hospital Directors and preference will be given to them for postings. The Ministry is working closely with the Academy of Medicine Malaysia in standardising the training for the various programmes, and amongst the plans for the future includes a formal parallel pathway with Deanery, designated hospitals and paid leave and exam fee reimbursement for candidates. The 'Training of

the Trainers' has been started and remuneration for the trainers was being considered.

Specialist Issues

1. JUSA Promotions and Selection Criteria

This issue has been discussed repeatedly at varying levels. The promotions are limited due to the current economic situation of the country and the Ministry is working hard to obtain more KUP positions for deserving candidates. Candidature is dependent not only on seniority but also on performance. Dato' Dr Azman and team informed SCHOMOS on the importance of maintaining an up-to-date curriculum vitae for all specialists and consultants. This is because the CV would be speaking for you during the Promotion Committee meetings and the "wow" factor would be helpful in obtaining the promotion. It was reiterated again that the promotion is not time-based but need-based. SCHOMOS broached the subject of JUSA positions for subspecialists, and this would be discussed further.

2. Sub-specialist Training

Sub-specialist training is being offered still despite the economic downturn. There are 150 positions available across all specialities. At this moment, sub-specialist training is not greatly encouraged as the need for general specialists is still great and too much sub-specialisation may hinder service to the public instead as many sub-specialists are refusing to see patients outside of their field of interest.

3. Full-Paying Patients

Eight hospitals have been selected to pilot this programme and this will be expanded to 32 hospitals nationwide. Amongst the issues were for a common model of governance and a common fee schedule. The maximum earnings per consultant would be 3X their monthly pay and the medical indemnity would be covered by the Government. There are still many issues to be worked out but this will definitely be implemented in stages nationwide.

Other Matters

1. Majlis Bersama Kebangsaan (MBK) Papers

SCHOMOS had submitted four papers for consideration by the MBK this year and this was discussed with Dato' Dr Azman and team. SCHOMOS has submitted papers for an increase in the medical report rates, a drivers allowance for UD54, a sub-specialist allowance and an incremental specialist allowance according to seniority.

2. Medical Negligence

Medical negligence payouts were on the rise and the Ministry is looking seriously into this matter. Dato' Dr Azman is hoping that MMA and SCHOMOS could play a more active role in ensuring all Doctors are well aware of the dangers of malpractice and he hopes that the number of medical negligence cases can be controlled with proper education of the doctors.

The meeting was truly a fruitful meeting which left me hopeful for the future of medicine in the country. Many of the issues raised were well-received and further discussions will be held between SCHOMOS and the Ministry. SCHOMOS would like to thank Dato' Dr Azman and his team for taking the time to meet with us and for the open discussions held with us. We from the ExCo of SCHOMOS, hope that this spirit of cooperation be maintained in the future for the betterment of all Doctors in our beloved Country.