

Foreword

It is with great delight that I see the publication of this book, in honor of Dr. M. K. Rajakumar. The Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia should be complimented for their wisdom to bring together in this book Dr. Rajakumar's most important publications. This way, the book achieves a number of objectives in one: it honors the laureate, and at the same it documents the fascinating history of family medicine and it makes again available the scholarly work of an important thinker of the fundamentals of health and medical care of people in the community.

Dr. Rajakumar is one of the icons of international family medicine. He was the president of the World Organization of Family Doctors, Wonca, from 1986–1989 and his leadership directed academic family medicine to the developing world. His hand can still be seen in today's position of Wonca, as this made it possible to gain the truly global representation Wonca currently holds. With it came the observation of equity as a core value of family medicine: family doctors are there, for all health problems and all patients, irrespective of their background.

The papers that have been selected, span the many years, Dr. Rajakumar has given us his intellectual fruits and his passion for high quality medical care. The papers span also the broad field of primary health care: from health policy to the spiritual values of care, encompassing quality issues and human rights. This is, indeed, what it takes to be a medical generalist and reading between the lines is the wisdom, that has to supplement factual knowledge. In the papers is another lesson for us, generalists: the importance of global ideas and local context. Most papers in this book are directed at issues of substantial and lasting importance of the health of people around the world. But often if not always, there is reference to Dr. Rajakumar's experience in Malaysia. It summarizes the approach of 'thinking globally, acting locally'.

I would like to take this opportunity of singling-out one of Dr. Rajakumar's lasting contributions to the discipline of family medicine: the development of generic classification of health problems and other health related data. In an era dominated by information technology, it is crucial to have access to data of the highest quality. At this moment, Wonca through the Wonca International Classification Committee (WICC), is currently building the structure of the 3rd version of the International Classification of Primary Care (ICPC) to deliver such information.

Dr. Rajakumar belonged to the members of WICC of the first hour, and under his Wonca presidency, the first version of the ICPC was published. I could give no better example of global leadership!

I trust the book will keep alive for the future generation of Malaysian family physicians the important thoughts and vision – the proverbial shoulders on which we have the privilege to stand and gain a better overview of the vast domain of primary care. I hope it also keeps us in contact with this founding father of our discipline: Dr. M. K. Rajakumar.

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