

Section 1: Family Medicine

Synopsis by Professor Dr EM Khoo

In the first eleven papers of this book, Dr Rajakumar described the history of general practice and the implication of the changing socio-economic scene in the Asia Pacific region on the discipline. He discussed the need a 'new' general practice in Malaysia and the region, outlined the postgraduate training programme of family medicine, proposed the establishment of departments of family medicine in the country, stressed the necessity of research and quality assurance in general practice and expressed his views on rural health as well as health care movement in the region and ultimately, "Health for ALL".

His *Put Not New Wine Into Old Bottles* outlined his vision for general practice in Malaysia. In *The Importance Of Primary Care* and *The Evolution Of General Practice* he addressed the problem of fragmentation brought about by the specialization of medical disciplines, and the advances of medical technologies and therapeutics that had called for the development of family practice as a new specialty in place of the 'old general practice'.

He identified several areas that needed concerted action: 1) Training of general practitioners (GPs), which should start with acquiring a sound scientific basis in the undergraduate years from medical schools followed by comprehensive clinical skills training in graduate years and professional training, coupled with independent thinking and socialization into the role of a physician. 2) Continuing medical education which is integral to GPs and the role of the Academy of Family Physicians to provide for this. 3) Research, which is not merely desirable but essential. 4) Community involvement, to further improve care for the needy and the special groups. 5) Recognition of the discipline. Primary care provides the most cost effective health care and it should be made the foundation of our health care system.

In the *Future Of Family Medicine In Developing Countries* and other publications, he addressed the problems of primary care in the region, the need for the formation of colleges of general practice and the credentialing of the training programme. He further suggested the establishment of departments of general practice in

medical schools and the grade of general practice in health services. He outlined the responsibilities of the 'College of GP' (now Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia) to determine the appropriate training of GPs and the establishment of quality assurance programme for general practice.

In several papers, he highlighted the enduring values of family medicine, and exhorted family physicians to serve the patient, the family and the community. This "new and rejuvenated general practice" must provide continuing care, comprehensiveness care, emphasise patient advocacy and preventive care, capitalising on the availability of the rapid advancement in medical technology and knowledge.

In *Quality In Family Practice*, he emphasised the importance of quality assurance to improve care and suggested all general practices to have an age-sex register, disease register, risk behaviour registers and records of quality indicators such as consultation time, patient satisfaction, compliance to clinical practice guidelines and adopting an evidence-based approach.

He called for physician to serve in rural area to enable majority of the rural population to have access to health care. He addressed the leadership role of WONCA to disseminate family practice globally, and urged family physicians and professional bodies to support this effort, so that meaningful 'Health for all' can be achieved for all people.

His philosophy on family medicine has relevance that go beyond Malaysia and the Asia-Pacific region. These writings deserve to be given the highest of recognition.

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