



Yong Loo Lin <u>School</u> of Medicine

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## **Dean's Message**



#### Dear Friends,

Warmest greetings! As we approach the end of 2014, allow me to share with you some exciting highlights of our School's events.

On 11 August 2014, we welcomed the Class of 2019 with the symbolic

White Coat Ceremony, which was held at the University Cultural Centre. Proud parents and friends watched on as 300 freshmen donned their white coats for the first time. I would also like to congratulate our Class of 2014 graduates, who had their Commencement Ceremony on 12 July 2014. May you all find fulfilment and success in your medical career.

We hosted the 3rd ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit 2014, which took place for the very first time in Singapore from 11 to 13 September. 24 Presidents, Deans and other representatives of 11 ASEAN Medical Schools gathered to discuss the advancement of our medical education and health systems as an ASEAN community, as well as to anticipate and plan for future trends.

Our students have done us proud with their numerous outstanding initiatives, such as the 10th Student Medical Nursing Education Conference and ActivAID 2014. The ActivAID is an annual conference that aims to gather students and organisations involved in Overseas Community Involvement Projects (OCIPs) to share their experiences and challenges faced in planning OCIPs. In addition, our Phase I Medical students put up a spectacular performance titled "Life is a Carnival: Magic in Me" for this year's Rag Day and received the much deserved Gold award for their effort. I am also pleased to share that Team Medicine was crowned the overall NUS Inter-Faculty Games Champions, retaining the Trophy won last year. This is yet another demonstration of the talent, strong spirit, and teamwork among our students.

In this issue's Science of Life, we are very privileged to have Associate Professor Chng Wee Joo, Director of Research at the National University Cancer Institute Singapore, and Deputy Director of the Cancer Science Institute of Singapore to share with us insights on his current research on Multiple Myeloma (MM). The School will also be collaborating with the Sylvia McCully School of Dancing to raise funds for MM Cancer Research. All net proceeds from the dance school's performance "The Power of Dance, Music and Hope" in December will be donated to the National University of Singapore in aid of Multiple Myeloma Cancer Research at Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

Our alumni team organised a recent Art & Wine Series for our alumni to mingle and catch up with old friends. I would also like to thank the Class of 1981 for their generosity in supporting our students with the cost of medical education through the setting up of a class bursary. Fundraising for the class bursary was initiated in 2010 and is still going strong today. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and best wishes for a fulfilling 2015. Enjoy the read!

#### Yeoh Khay Guan

Dean Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

# 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit 2014

The 3rd ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit, held in conjunction with the 3rd ASEAN Medical Research Network Meeting, and organised by the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, took place in Singapore for the first time from 11 to 13 September 2014. First held in 2012 at the Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University in Thailand, the Summit was hosted the following year by the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya in Malaysia.

Formed in 2012, the ASEAN Medical Schools Network was set up with the intention to promote collaboration among leading medical schools in the ASEAN region and to advance our medical education and health systems as a community by 2015 while predicting and analysing possible future challenges.

This year, 24 Presidents, Deans and other representatives of 11 ASEAN Medical Schools from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam made their way to Singapore to participate in the Summit, hosted by our Dean, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan. Among them was Clinical Professor Udom Kachintorn, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Thailand, who had been elected as the first Chairman of the Board of Committee in 2013.

The Summit provided a platform for the representatives of the various ASEAN universities to discuss updates on the ASEAN Network Organisation, Accreditation Planning, Medical Education Curriculum and Medical Electives Exchanges at length. Delegates also enjoyed a tour of the Centre for Healthcare Simulation (CHS) in the Centre for Translational Medicine (CeTM) building to observe the immersive, simulation-based learning environment in which our students are taught and trained.

The agenda of the Medical Research Network Meeting on 13 September 2014 included Communicable Diseases (HIV, Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF), TB and Malaria) and Non-Communicable Diseases (Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular and Ageing). Representatives of the various schools shared the Medical Education Research topics they were involved in and took the opportunity to identify possible future collaborations.

The 4th ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit in 2015 will be organised in Manila by the University of Philippines College of Medicine.



Delegates on a tour of the Centre for Healthcare Simulation (CHS).



Professor John Wong, Chief Executive of the National University Health System (first from left), stressed in his welcome address that the partnerships between leading medical schools in the ASEAN region were critical to the success of ASEAN as a healthy population is required to build a strong and healthy economy for a better future.

# 10<sup>th</sup> Student Medical-Nursing Education Conference



A student delivering his research presentation.

**400** Medical and Nursing students from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School and NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine gathered together for the 10th Student Medical-Nursing Education Conference (SMEC) on 16 August 2014. With the theme 'From Patients to Professionals: 10 Years Forward', the conference aimed to reiterate the importance of patient-centred care and its role in holistic, quality healthcare, with the hope that participants will be able to appreciate their change in role and perspective as they progress to become full-fledged healthcare professionals. With the congregation of Medical and Nursing students from the various institutions, the SMEC also served as a platform for inter-professional collaboration and education.



A sharing session in progress.

Clinical Professor Low Cheng Hock, Emeritus Consultant at the Department of General Surgery, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, started the conference on a perfect note with an inspirational address that plucked the heartstrings of both students and professionals alike. First-year students then engaged in 20 small-group sharing sessions, gathering first-hand accounts from patients themselves, doctors and nurses. Senior students were concurrently involved in a scientific research poster competition, in which they displayed their research works and underwent rigorous appraisal by distinguished judges.

All in all, it was an enriching and enjoyable morning for all and the SMEC committee looks forward to having everyone again next year!

# Multiple Myeloma: Advances and New Frontiers in Prognosis and Treatment

Multiple Myeloma (MM) is a cancer of plasma cells. While normal plasma cells produce antibodies, MM plasma cells produce abnormal monoclonal immunoglobulin ("M protein"). In Singapore, over 100 new MM cases are diagnosed annually.<sup>1</sup>

Associate Professor Chng Wee Joo, Director of Research at the National University Cancer Institute Singapore and Deputy Director of the Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, first became interested in MM research as a postdoctoral researcher at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona, United States. One of his main research areas involves the use of genetic abnormalities to determine prognosis in MM. The 17p13 deletion, the best marker to date, and the t(4;14) translocation reliably predict poor outcomes. Evidence supporting other markers, including 1q21 amplification and 1p deletion, is more limited or mixed. A/Prof Chng has helped to characterise another genetic abnormality, hyperdiploidy, in which cells have more than the usual number of chromosomes. MM with hyperdiploidy is associated with an improved risk profile as compared to MM without it. Risk improvement is lower if the immunoglobulin heavy chain gene is rearranged.

A/Prof Chng uses Gene Expression Profiling (GEP) to identify new gene "signatures" or patterns of genes that are associated with a poor prognosis. His team is presently developing software that allows users to input a GEP dataset and obtain prognostic information. The software is being validated using global patient cohorts, encompassing different races and MM stages.

Besides prognostic markers, A/Prof Chng is also interested in MM treatment. Current treatment regimens include stem-cell transplants and/or a combination of bortezomib, steroids, and either thalidomide or cyclophosphamide. Treatment advances have already increased average survival from 3-4 years to almost 10 years. Newer drugs such as Carfilzomib and Pomalidomide have shown promising results in patients who respond poorly to current therapies and cause fewer side effects than older drugs. However, as A/Prof Chng points out, "We have essentially only two new classes of drugs emerging, and we're not curing anyone. When we start combining different classes of drugs effectively, we could eventually begin talking about curing some patients." To broaden the pharmaceutical arsenal, new classes such as antibodies and epigenetic modifiers are currently being developed.



Because 85% to 90% of MM patients relapse after an initial response, monitoring a patient's treatment response helps to identify patients who are likely to relapse

earlier. These patients could then be considered for a change in treatment. Patients who have a complete response (CR) or very good partial response to treatment tend to have better survival. However, these responses are assessed using conventional measures such as percentage of plasma cells and M protein levels. Even patients with a CR may have remaining cancer cells [minimal residual disease (MRD)] that could eventually cause relapse. MRD is now often measured using more sensitive methods such as flow cytometry and PCR.

As treatment options and methods for assessing treatment response keep improving, the outlook for MM patients will continue to brighten.

## Facts box

#### Going Forward: Key Research Areas

- Personalised treatment: using predictive drug responses to tailor treatment
- Developing better drug combinations to reduce MRD
- Understanding causes and management of high-risk MM
- Predicting which patients will relapse earlier

#### **Reference**

1. General Information on Multiple Myeloma. National University Cancer Institute, Singapore. http://www.ncis.com.sg/cancerinformation/types-of-cancers/multiple-myeloma/generalinformation.html. Accessed August 29, 2014.

# **Dancing for a Cause**

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is proud to announce that they will be collaborating with the Sylvia McCully School of Dancing in an effort to raise funds for Multiple Myeloma Cancer Research. Multiple Myeloma (MM) is a cancer of the plasma cells which may cause bone damage, and/or kidney failure and eventual bone marrow failure.

MM accounts for over 1% of all new cancer cases and causes 2% of cancer deaths in the United States. In Singapore, more than 100 new MM cases are diagnosed each year. Recently, research advances have resulted in new treatments that have improved outcomes for MM patients.

Despite these new treatments, the vast majority of patients with MM relapse after initial treatment. Average overall survival for MM is less than 10 years, and there is no cure. As such, continued research efforts are vital to discovering new types of treatments and more effective ways to manage the disease.

Held in conjunction with the dance school's 35th anniversary, the performance "The Power of Dance, Music and Hope" will take place this December and has pledged to donate all net proceeds to NUS in aid of MM Research at NUS Medicine.

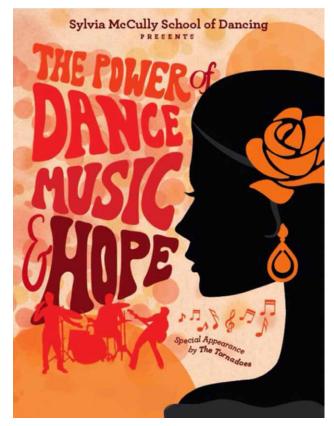
Over the years, the dance school has staged several performances to benefit non-profits for various causes. This year, more than 300 dancers will star in various traditional ballet and modern dance performances including works from well-known ballet acts such as 'Paquita', 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Coppelia' and 'Sylvia', a Spanish item and foot tapping performances featuring songs such as 'Hawaii Five O', 'In the Mood' and Gwen Stefani's 'Wind it up' and 'Sweet Escape'.

Following the dance acts, there will be a guest appearance by The Tornadoes playing a collection of Cliff Richard and the Shadows' rock music from the 60's and 70's, featuring numbers 'Apache', 'FBI', 'Atlantis' and 'Foot Tapper'.

We invite you to support this cause by purchasing tickets to "The Power of Dance, Music and Hope" and spreading the word!



"Sleeping Beauty", a past performance held in support of the Children's Charities Association (CCA), the Chong Boon CCC Welfare Fund, Dover Park Hospice and Rainbow Centre Margaret Drive Special School.



### **Details**

Event:	The Power of Dance, Music and Hope
Location:	Republic Cultural Centre, Republic Polytechnic
Dates:	12 December 2014, Friday & 13 December 2014,
	Saturday
Time:	8pm
Tickets:	Priced at \$15, \$25, \$35 & \$50.

- Swing by the Dance School at 301 Upper Thomson Rd, #03-21/22 Thomson Plaza S574408, or (Opening hours: Tues-Fri: 10am-6pm, Sat: 8.30am-1.30pm, Sun: 11am-5pm)
- 2) Call Ms Chan at 8376 2643, or (Operating hours: Mon-Sun: 10am-6pm)
- Email dance.music.hope@gmail.com to purchase your tickets.
- 4) All tickets must be collected directly from the Dance School at Thomson Plaza
- Donate: For more information, please contact Ms Mathilda Lim at 8168 7751 or email fundraising\_med@nuhs.edu.sg.

# **Commencement Ceremony 2014**



Congratulations 2014 Class of 2014

**Commencement** 2014 was held on 12 July at the NUS University Cultural Centre. On that day, 300 graduates donned their graduation gowns and received their certificates of completion as proud family members and friends looked on. The joyous occasion was marked by a special MedBear graduation edition, which was distributed to the graduates.



Congratulations to all graduates of the Class of 2014. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours as you take your first steps as doctors!

# White Coat Ceremony 2014





On 11 August 2014, 300 students of the Class of 2019 and their 700 guests filled the NUS University Cultural Centre auditorium for the 2014 White Coat Ceremony. The ceremony kicked off with choir and cello performances by Medical students from Phases II and III, followed by inspirational speeches by the Dean, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan, and Guest of Honour, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, President of the NUS and Chairman of the Board of the NUHS.

Students proceeded on stage in batches of 20 to receive their coats personally from members of the medical fraternity and were later led by Mr Wilnard Tan, the 65th President of NUS Medical Society, in the recital of the Medical Students' Pledge.

# Farewell to Macik Sapiah



All smiles from Macik Sapiah as she shows off her token of appreciation.

**Mdm** Sapiah Binte Saban, also fondly known as "Macik" to her colleagues in the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine Dean's Office, retired on 30 September 2014. Having served in the Dean's Office for more than fourteen years, Macik Sapiah had just celebrated her 65th birthday. She retired to look after her aged father and take life at a more leisurely pace. With more time on her hands, she will be able to travel more often to Malaysia to visit her family. Aside from her admin duties, Macik Sapiah is known for her motherly warmth which never fails to brighten up everyone's day. Her contribution to the smooth running of the Dean's Office was recognised with gifts of appreciation and a farewell card personally presented by the Dean, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan.

We will definitely miss Macik Sapiah and wish her a happy retirement, good health and much happiness.



A farewell tea party organised by the Admin Division for Macik Sapiah (centre, in green) on 18 September 2014.

# Magic in Me

The NUS Rag Day was held on Friday, 8 August 2014. Phase I Medical students put up a breath-taking performance titled "Life is a Carnival: Magic in Me" and received the Gold award for their efforts. Caleb Foo and Lauren Fu (Phase I Medical students), Rag Heads 2014, shared with MediCine their journey.

**For** seven whole minutes, time seemed to come to a standstill. As anticipation gripped us, the sights and sounds unfolding in front of us filled our hearts with pride and joy with every passing second. In that moment, we were infinite.

It has been such an amazing and heart-warming experience for us to watch this project grow; from unpolished ideas and rough sketches into the magical performance that we presented to the rest of NUS on Rag Day. This journey has not been easy in the least. Ragging is gruelling work, full of long hours and daily obstacles. From having to revise and rethink ideas over and over again so as to achieve the best effect, to rehearsing at low volumes and odd hours just to accommodate sound-sensitive experiments in the vicinity, we have certainly faced our fair share of frustration and roadblocks.

With determination and unity, our performance managed to convey our hopes and dreams as intended while achieving a resounding victory. The magic and beauty of Ragging lies not in what we can achieve individually, but in what unfurls as we combine our efforts and strengths together. Our satisfaction comes not just from the colour of the accolade we received, but more importantly, from witnessing the passion our Raggers had displayed during this demanding adventure. This success would not have been possible without the efforts of our dedicated committee members, as well as each and every single Ragger. It has been our privilege to work with such a phenomenally talented and devoted team. We are also indebted towards our seniors for setting such high standards for us to follow and for showing us what true commitment is. Their encouragement, support and invaluable feedback have spurred us on to greater heights, and we are proud to be able to join the ranks of Rag alumni. We are also very grateful for the support from the Dean's Office, without which many things would not have been possible.

When our committee started planning for Rag, we had set out in hopes of creating a performance that everyone could be proud of – a magical experience for all involved. Seven months, over a hundred happy Raggers, and a Gold award later, I think we can safely say... WE DID IT!

Medicine Rag 2014: We've got the magic in us!

Click here to catch their performance.



# ActivAID 2014

## Frontier: Crossing Boundaries, Redefining Mindsets

By Joshua Tanis (Phase II Medical student) Co-Director of ActivAID



**Individuals** today have countless opportunities to serve overseas in various community involvement projects. While we are confined by our individual areas of interest, there exists a common deeper purpose to expand our range of perspectives.

This is best achieved by engaging and interacting with like-minded individuals who serve in various fields. As such, my fellow students from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and I have organised and shaped this year's ActivAID to go beyond a medical focus to offer diverse approaches to overseas community involvement. Participants were provided with the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with different faculties and organisations both within and outside of NUS.

On 23 August 2014, we held a series of workshops, a networking session and a showcase of different Overseas Community Involvement Project (OCIP) booths at the Centre for Translational Medicine. Various OCIPs across different schools and faculties were deliberately engaged, and participants were spoiled for choice with a selection of 10 workshops hosted by seasoned OCIP veterans. The purpose was to help us reflect on past experiences for continual improvement, reconcile our personal ideals with realistic outcomes, and appreciate the dynamic nature of humanitarian work.

My favourite parts of the conference were the little moments of engagement between participants, especially when you know that they had gained takeaways, whether big or small, from such conversations and discussions. These heartening moments have made my role as co-director especially fulfilling.

Such conversations and discussions should not be contained within the group or cease after the trip. Instead, we should continue to debate in order to maximise our capacity for learning, discussion and sharing of good practices. After all, a conference is not an end, but a means to a beginning.

We look forward to continue widening our impact in ActivAID 2015. See you there!



## Alumni Voices



The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine held its very first Art & Wine Series for its Medical Alumni, from August to September 2014. The Series, consisting of three art and three wine-themed events brought together our alumni for a great time of mingling while appreciating arts by Asian and local artists at the art events, and tasting various wine varietals at the wine events.



Alumni learning more about art appreciation and collecting in the first Art Series event, **Art Collecting for Newbies.** 



Alumni enjoying a wine-andcheese tasting session at our first Wine Series event, **Say Cheese!** 



Mr Ho Sou Ping, Local Artist and Gallery Manager of artcommune, sharing an insightful overview of the Singapore art scene in the third Art Series event, **Introduction to 2nd Generation Singaporean Artists.** 



Mr Timothy Goh, Director of Sales of Caveau Wines, and former Head Sommelier of Les Amis (second from right) using his map of France to explain grapes and wines from the various French regions in the third Wine Series event, **Vive La France**.

# Class of 1981 Bursary – Making a Difference

**Class** gifts have been a major tradition of most educational institutions, and the National University of Singapore (NUS) is no exception. There are many causes in the NUS which need support, and one such worthy cause is helping future colleagues with the cost of education.

An alumnus from the Medical Class of 1981 remembers the strong bonds the class forged. "We have a special friendship as we have been through much together. Bonding starts from Day One at Medical School. I remember the fights and the quarrels but also the helping of one another in all matters big and small. We had a class gathering where almost the whole class came together and many from various parts of the world came back to meet up and catch up with each other," shares Dr Francis Seow (Class of 1981).

In 2010, the Medical Class of 1981 felt it was time to make a difference, and active fund-raising for a bursary commenced, with the response still going strong today. Currently, the School administers 140 bursaries annually to students from families with a certain per capita income a month, but it is estimated that up to 300 students are in financial need.

Professor John Wong (Class of 1981) asserts, "We are who we are because of NUS. NUS allowed us to become doctors and have the careers we've enjoyed for more than 30 years. No Government subsidy will ever cover the whole cost of medical education. If we don't help, who will?"

Other class bursaries established at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine include the NUS Medical Society – Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary (Class of 2012) and the Balaji Sadasivan Fund for Medical Undergraduates (Class of 1979). Both were initiated by alumni who wanted to honour the memory of a classmate who had passed on. For the latter, the class believed Dr Sadasivan would have supported the idea of channeling funds to help financially needy students as opposed to spending it on an obituary in the newspapers. Many saw this as an opportunity to help future doctors and gave generously. The donated amount exceeded targets and the Balaji Sadasivan Fund was eventually transformed into an endowment.

Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan, the current Dean of NUS Medicine, expresses great confidence in the School's alumni. He says, "Class bursaries are a very meaningful way of creating a lasting memory of what you and your classmates stand for, and have come together to do. It creates a longterm legacy, which will last forever and each year give young students a helping hand. Each of us is successful today because an opportunity was given to us. Now that we are in a position to do so, let us give back and help a student in need."

> THE POWER OF POTENTIAL REALISING POTENTIAL THROUGH PHILANTHROPY

## Alumni Voices

# CATCHING UP ON GOOD TIMES

CLASS OF 1989







## CLASS OF 2004







# **Calling all alumni!** Steps to Stay Connected





with us via email (alumni. med@nus.edu.sg) and receive the latest news and events around school



to plan your next class gathering!

## Choose your part/role

in shaping the next generation of doctors.

- Admission selection committees
- Career guidance to students
- House mentor
- Mentor for student initiatives

MediCine

Date	Event & Venue
Nov 1	Year-End Alumni Get-together: Jazz Nite Blisshouse Theme Restaurant
Nov 3	<b>Dialogues</b> Auditorium, Level 1, NUHS Tower Block, NUS
Nov 22	WHB Society Symposium & Mentor Appreciation Lunch 2014 Peter & Mary Fu Lecture Theatre (LT35), Centre for Translational Medicine (CeTM), NUS
Nov 28 - 29	<b>LPE Workshop</b> Peter & Mary Fu Lecture Theatre (LT35), Centre for Translational Medicine (CeTM), NUS
Dec 1 - 2	SPSS Basics & Research Methodologies Workshop Computer Lab 2, #08-01G, MD1, NUS
Dec 4 - 5	Basic & Intermediate Biostatistics Workshop Computer Lab 2, #08-01G, MD1, NUS
Dec 13	<b>Playhouse</b> To be confirmed
Jan 16 - 18	MR Imaging @ NUH Auditorium, Level 1, NUHS Tower Block, NUS
Jan 19 - 20	NUS-Kanagawa Joint Symposium NUHS Tower Block, NUS
Jan 19 - 20	Impactful Presentation Skills Workshop for Academics Learning Room 01-01B, Centre for Translational Medicine (CeTM), NUS
Jan 27	NUS Medicine 5th Annual Graduate Scientific Congress 2015 Auditorium & Staff Lounge, Level 1, NUHS Tower Block, NUS

Details may be subject to change at the discretion of the respective departments without prior notice.



# Stay tuned to our new epub version.

## What's in Sight



High-Tea Set for 2 paxs @ S\$25++

Blisshouse is a proud venue sponsor for the NUS Medical Alumni Year-End Get-together – Jazz Nite.

1 for 1 Wine all day long

1 for 1 Cocktail all day long



"Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value." - Albert Einstein

# **White Coat Humour**

Hospital administrator:

Patient: Hospital administrator: Patient:

Do you mind telling me why you ran away from the operating room? Because the nurse said, "Don't be afraid! An appendectomy is quite simple." So... So?! She was talking to the doctor!

# **Picture Quiz**

### The Results are out!

The correct answer for the last issue's Picture Quiz is:



### **Medicine MD7 building**

#### Congratulations to our three winners!

- Chow Ai Lee (PhD student, Department of Biochemistry)
- Fong En Li Norman (Class of 2017)
- Goh En Qi Daniel (Class of 2015)

Winners will be notified by email on prize collection.



### Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

The Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first academic body in Singapore's history dedicated to tertiary education. Established in 1905, it has the honour of being the foundation of what has now evolved into the National University of Singapore. The School is a strong component in the University's Mission to advance knowledge and foster innovation, educate students and nurture talent in service of Singapore and society.



### Which building am I in?

Submit your name, phase/course (for students) and answer to: alumni.med@nus.edu.sg

Contest ends on: 1st December 2014

First 3 correct answers will win a **\$10 Starbucks Card** each!

# MediCine

is brought to you by the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Dean's Office.

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