



PRESS RELEASE

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MEDICAL TEXTBOOK BY NUS PROFESSORS IS AN UNEXPECTED HIT

Singapore, 20 January 2017 – A textbook on Emergency Medicine techniques by two professors at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine has become an international bestseller.

Titled ‘Guide to the Essentials in Emergency Medicine’, the textbook is the work of Drs Shirley Ooi and Peter Manning, both senior doctors at the NUH Emergency Medicine Department (EMD) and also associate professors at the NUS medical school. The Guide contains practical instructions that help emergency physicians tackle the most life-threatening and common conditions. Besides hospitals, the textbook is also used by general practitioners to diagnose and treat patients in their clinics, and medical students to learn about illnesses. The NUH is the primary teaching hospital of the School.

All the chapters in the book were put together by the two doctors and a team of NUH emergency physicians together with a few guest authors. The multi-disciplinary content includes practices and approaches adopted in various medical disciplines and applied under trauma conditions.

“Each chapter has got one, two, or even three authors and we would ask them for various redrafts. Then both of us would proof read and edit the chapters. But time is the issue, because all of us wear three hats – clinicians, teachers and administrators as well,” said Associate Professor Manning.

The first edition was released in 2004. It sold more than 15,000 copies and enjoyed multiple reprints. The second, current edition, which was released in 2014, has sold close to 10,000 copies so far, and reached the shores of countries such as Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

The Guide’s popularity was a surprise to both doctors, who said they produced the textbook to help colleagues.

In the late 90s, Associate Professor Ooi noticed that the standard of care in the EMD at NUH was not uniform, with doctors adopting varying practices and approaches. She and Assoc Prof Manning felt a common or universal approach that was in keeping with the best practices in Emergency Medicine was important.

This also applied to staffing arrangements, added Assoc Prof Manning. “In the early days, there might have been shifts with just medical officers running the show,” he said.

Assoc Prof Ooi got the ball rolling, producing a list of common conditions. She then got her colleagues to pen down the best methods to treat them. After rounds of peer review, they circulated multiple copies of these guidelines in yellow and red files placed throughout the EMD.

“I found that it was quite popular, sometimes the whole file got missing, or portions of it. Or descriptions of conditions got missing. So because of that, around early 2000s, I thought maybe why not come up with a book?” she recalled.

Neither she nor Assoc Prof Manning expected the Guide to become a best seller and she was surprised to learn about its popularity during a medical conference in Malaysia, where some participants stopped her for a photograph and autograph.

She also recalled a remark by NUS Medicine Dean, Associate Professor Yeoh Khay Guan, who wrote the foreword for the second edition. “I remember when the book first came out and after it sold a significant number of copies, Khay Guan told me that no textbook in Singapore had ever sold so many copies other than math textbooks.”

While the book was produced to meet local needs, Dean Yeoh noted the relevance it held for international practice and patient care. “The high-quality instruction and practical information in this excellent text book will in turn lead to improved care of emergency patients all over the world,” he said.

On another occasion, an emergency physician practising in Indonesia told Assoc Prof Ooi that the techniques taught in the textbook had helped doctors to bring about a drop in maternal mortality numbers in hospitals in his province, a rate that is one of the lowest in Indonesia.

“I was glad that the information helped to save lives,” she said.

If the editors could improve on the textbook’s contents, it would be adding a section on the end-of-life care of patients. This is in face of the increasing number of ageing societies around the world.

“One area of Emergency Medicine that has really blossomed is end-of-life care. Ten years ago, nobody ever talked about that. Now, end-of-life issues will have to be quite a big section in the next edition,” Assoc Prof Manning said.

This section would reiterate current thinking on the subject, added Assoc Prof Ooi. “A lot of patients come in breathless, so we take measures like putting in that tube and committing them into an ICU bed. But now, we believe it’s more important for them to feel comfortable, so we give them morphine for example, then we bring them to a private room where the family members can be with them.”

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 17 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 38,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives.

NUS has three Research Centres of Excellence (RCE) and 30 university-level research institutes and centres. It is also a partner in Singapore's fifth RCE. The University has established many research partnerships and joint laboratories with academic institutions, industry leaders and government agencies. Research activities are strategic and robust, and NUS is well-known for its research strengths in engineering, life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences and natural sciences. The University also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.

About NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of the National University of Singapore.

The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programmes in the Asia Pacific region and commands international recognition and respect. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016 by subject and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2016 list NUS Medicine as Asia's leading medical school.

It admits 300 students to the MBBS degree programme annually and its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to advance the practice of medicine.

The 18 NUS Medicine departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education, the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, the Centre for Healthcare Simulation as well as the restructured public hospitals to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs. The School is a founding institutional member of the National University Health System.

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <http://nusmedicine.nus.edu.sg>