

MALAYSIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

N.K.S. THARMASEELAN*¹



Objectives of the Malaysian Medical Association

- To promote and maintain the honour and interest of the profession of medicine in all its branches and in every one of its segments and help to sustain the professional standards of medical ethics.
- To serve as the vehicle of the integrated voice of the whole profession and all or each of its segments both in relation to its own special problems and in relation to educating and directing public opinion on the problems of public health as affecting the community at large.
- To participate in the conduct of medical education, as may be appropriate.
- To promote social, cultural and charitable activities in building a united Malaysian nation.

Executive Committee 2013/2014

Dato Dr. N.K.S. Tharmaseelan – President
Dr. S.R. Manalan – Immediate Past President
Dr. H. Krishna Kumar – President-Elect
Datuk Dr. Kuljit Singh – Honorary General Secretary
Dr. Azizan Abdul Aziz – Honorary General Treasurer
Dr. Koh Kar Chai – Honorary Deputy Secretary
Dr. Rajan John – Honorary Deputy Secretary
Dr. Azhar Amir Hamzah – SCHOMOS Chairman
Dr. Ganabaskaran Nadason – PPS Chairman

MMA Council 2013/2014

The MMA Council comprising of 31 members includes the key office-bearers who are also members of the Executive Committee; as well as 21 branch representatives from the 14 states in Malaysia.

We Have Two Sections in Our Association, Namely:

Section Concerning House Officers, Medical Officers & Specialists (SCHOMOS)

Its objective is to identify, address and seek the cooperation of the government to resolve issues relating to the welfare, pay, and allowances and working conditions of all grades of doctors in government service.

SCHOMOS over the years has evolved into a powerful Section of the MMA which conducts periodic meetings with the Director General and other top Ministry of Health officers and has achieved many notable successes in its ventures.

The issues discussed periodically includes: clinical allowance for medical officers, review of specialist allowance, overtime pay, promotion prospects for medical officers and specialists, housemen issues, etc.

The Private Practitioners Section (PPS)

Private Practitioners Section of MMA was established to look after the needs of the private practitioners.

PPS continues to be the negotiating arm of the Association in all matters relating to private practitioners. Currently, the PPS Section is concerned on issues related to:

- Pharmacy Bill – Dispensing rights to pharmacist worrying the GPs because many GPs who are dependent on the consultation fees fear losing their income to Pharmacists who are prescribing medicines;
- FOMEMA – (Examination of Foreign Workers)
- Managed Care Organisations – Low consultation fees paid to GPs;
- National Health Financing Scheme;
- 1Care – restructuring of the Malaysian Health System: worrying the GPs as its going to affect their income also.

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This article is based on a presentation made as the Report of Activities by each MMA at the 28th CMAAO General Assembly and 49th Council Meeting, New Delhi, India, on September 13, 2013.

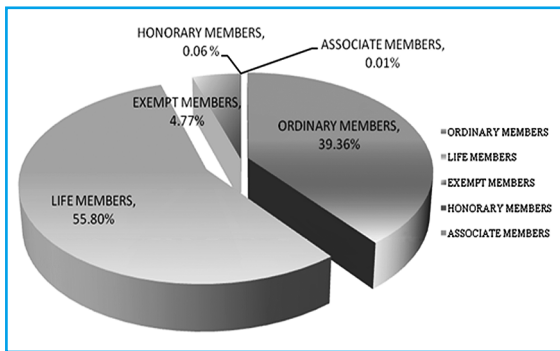


Fig. 1 Membership category

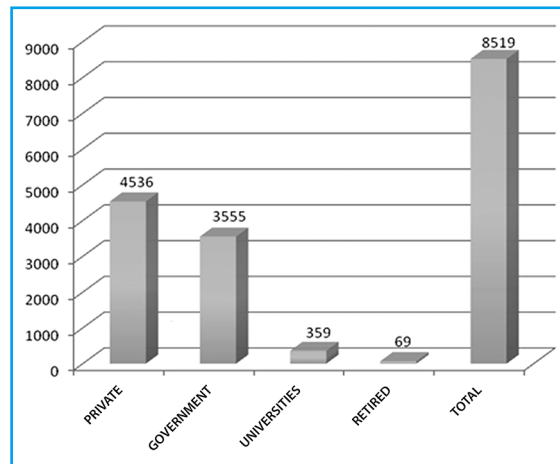


Fig. 2 Membership by employment

The 4 Societies Under the Umbrella of MMA Are:

- Public Health Society
- Society of Sports Medicine
- Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
- MMA Society of Medical Students

We also have 26 Committees and MMA is represented on 36 External Bodies, Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

MMA Membership

Currently there are over 42,778 registered medical practitioners in Malaysia but only about 8,519 are active MMA members.

The total number of doctors in Malaysia about two-thirds are in government sector and one third in the private sector.

The MMA has been in the forefront in promoting and looking after the welfare of doctors including non-members who reap the benefits;

The MMA believes that we can play an even greater and more meaningful role because we continue to have within our means, very interested members and experts who sacrifice huge personal time and effort to study, research and understand healthcare issues, which we believe we can share with the regulatory authorities.

Membership by Category (Fig. 1)

- Ordinary members 39.36%
- Life members 55.80%
- Honorary members 0.06%

- Associate members 0.01%
- Exempt members 4.77%

Membership by Employment (Fig. 2)

- Private 4,536
- Government 3,555
- Universities 359
- Retired 69
- Total 8,519 members

Membership by State (Fig. 3)

- Johor 834
- Kedah 463
- Kelantan 186
- Melaka 314
- Negeri Sembilan 385
- Penang 677
- Pahang 266
- Perak 1,039
- Perlis 97
- Sabah 408
- Sarawak 713
- Selangor 1,461
- Terengganu 87
- Wilayah Persekutuan 1,589
- Total 8,519 members

Student Membership

The total number of Student members in benefit is 2,478. The Students have a Society under the MMA. Unfortunately, many students do not continue as MMA members after graduation.

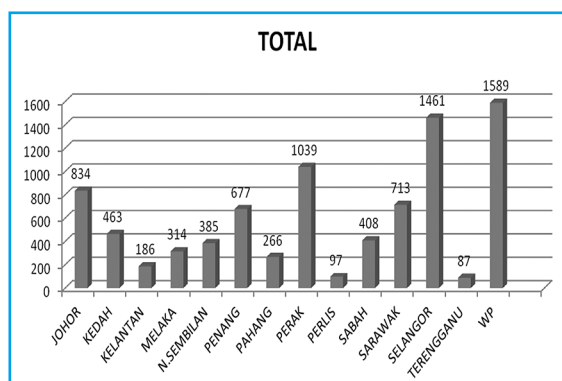


Fig. 3 Membership by state

We Have Two Publications

Medical Journal of Malaysia (MJM)

The first medical journal publication in the country originated in 1890 as the Journal of the Straits Medical Association and it is stated that it could be found in the archives of medical libraries in many parts of the world.

Soon after the founding of the Malayan Medical Association 1960, the Medical Journal of Malaya was recognised as an official publication of the Association.

The MJM is listed in Index Medicus.

Is a multi-specialty journal with established international recognition, providing a publication medium for Malaysian doctors as well as for contributors from all over the world.

Members can submit articles for publication in the MJM free of charge; non members are charged a fee. All articles are accepted online and the published articles made available online.

Berita MMA

The Berita MMA began as a Newsletter in 1960.

Since 1969, the Berita MMA made its regular monthly appearance and developed into an important medium to keep members informed of activities of the Association and its various committees, developments in the healthcare services in the country and general news and feature article of professional interest.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Committee

- The continuing education of doctors is a vital

component in the ultimate delivery of quality healthcare to our people and in recognition of this adage, the MMA launched the CME Committee and in 1994, MMA was appointed by the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) to administer the MMC-CME Grading System and the accruing of annual credit points by doctors leading to the issuance of a certificate by the President of MMC.

- MMA dedicated itself with enthusiasm on this project and spared no expenses in making it a nation-wide success through purchasing of computer hardware for all state Branches and engaging secretariat staff.
- This service is provided free for all MMA members.

Next MMA Annual General Meeting

53rd Annual General Meeting on 23–26 May 2013

- Dato' Dr. N.K.S. Tharmaseelan — President
- Dr. H. Krishna Kumar — President-Elect

International Affairs

MMA were participating the International Affair:

- CMAAO — Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania
- MASEAN — Medical Associations of South East Asian Nations
- CMA — Commonwealth Medical Associations
- WMA — World Medical Associations

The 27th CMAAO General Meeting & 47th Council Meeting

Held in Taipei, Taiwan from 10–12 November 2011, at the Grand Hyatt Taipei, Taiwan.

MMA was represented by eight (8) Exco members:

President: Dr. Mary Suma Cardosa,
 President-Elect: Dr. S.R. Manalan,
 Immediate Past President: Dr. David K.L. Quek,
 Honorary General Secretary: Dato' Dr. N.K.S.

Tharmaseelan,
 Honorary General Treasurer: Dr. Ravindran R. Naidu,

Honorary Deputy Secretaries: Dato' Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu, Dr. Harvinder Singh and
 SCHOMOS Chairperson: Dr. Rosalind Simon.

The Theme of the Scientific Meeting was “The Role of Physicians in Suicide Prevention.”



Fig. 4 Datuk Dr. S. Subramaniam, Minister of Health Malaysia



Fig. 5 1Malaysia clinics

The 14th MASEAN Mid Term Council Meeting

The 14th MASEAN Mid Term Council Meeting was held at the Savoy Homann Hotel, Bandung, Indonesia on 14–16 June 2011.

The theme for this meeting was “The Role of Primary Healthcare Towards Population Health in ASEAN.”

MMA was represented by the President: Dr. Mary Suma Cardosa, President-Elect: Dr. S.R. Manalan, Honorary General Secretary: Dato’ Dr. N.K.S. Tharmaseelan and Honorary General Treasurer: Dr. Ravindran R. Naidu.

The “Dr. M.K. Rajakumar Oration” is sponsored by the Malaysian Medical Association.

WMA Instead Leadership Development Programme

WMA Caring Physicians of the World Leadership Course was held in Instead, Singapore from the 21–25 November 2011.

MMA, Dr. Ravindran R. Naidu, Honorary General Treasurer, Dr. Rosalind Simon, SCHOMOS Chairperson and Dr. Selasawati, MMA Kelantan Chairperson attended leadership course.

The MMA hopes to conduct the same leadership course for its Council members and other members interested in June 2012.

Current National Problems

MMA has been working with the Ministry of Health (Fig. 4) so that the views, concerns and

welfare of all sectors of doctors are represented and taken into consideration in the implementation of new laws, policies and practices.

The Ministry of Health is encouraging:

- Doctors to specialize in order to raise the quality of healthcare;
- GPs to become Family Medicine specialists to enhance primary care services in the country.

1Malaysia Clinics to include/utilise GP Clinics

The setting up of 1Malaysia clinics manned by Medical Assistants and Nurses by the Government in aid of the urban poor in the country. MMA had opposed because of our fear of subtle task-shifting and a possible reduction of standards or quality of medical care for the most indigent and marginalised in the urban areas (Fig. 5).

General Practitioners’ Woes Mounting

1Care for 1Malaysia is the name given to the transformed healthcare system of the future, which is going to be based on a social health insurance scheme (SHI) i.e. a compulsory health insurance scheme which every contributes to with primary care physicians as “gatekeepers.”

The Ministry of Health will play a more regulatory and policy making role while health services will be run by both public and private sector healthcare providers.

Care for 1 Malaysia health reform plans were the main concern of General Practitioners;

Every GP was annoyed and felt that they were the target of every new Medical Act and

Regulations, being unfairly micromanaged, their livelihood and professional status being put under the microscope.

GPs feel policies are made with disregard for their welfare.

Glut of Medical Doctors

By 2020, we expect that we might have as many as 87,000 doctors, which would mean that we cannot sustain their training even for their houseman ship years or retaining them in the public sector.

Too many local medical colleges with too few experienced clinical teachers, training material or clinical experience.

Too many graduates also are returning from poorly monitored foreign medical schools.

The private sector could also be very crowded and doctors could become unemployed, under-employed, and unemployable even.

This would be a sad scenario because Malaysian parents and the government would have spent so much money sponsoring these students, at huge costs!

We are urging the government to quickly establish a moratorium on medical schools and programmes and enforce more stringent quality

assessment of these schools and beyond.

The Ministry of Health has set a target ratio of one doctor to every 400 people by 2020.

Lynas Rare Earth Plant

A company by the name of Lynas is currently building up the world's largest rare earth refining factory in Gebeng about 25km from Kuantan, Pahang.

The plant will import raw rare earth from Western Australia to be processed here before exporting to other countries.

Lynas's explanation on why they are bringing the rare earth plant to Malaysia instead of processing it in Australia, claims that the skills and engineering requirement cannot be met by the human resource in Australia.

- The long-term management of the enormous quantity of radioactive waste is the major factor concerning environmental and public safety;
- The MMA in its role to defend the people's health has made several press statements to stop the operation.
- The government and Ministry of Health is also probing into this issue for the safety of the nation.