BECOMING A JUNIOR DOCTOR IN SINGAPORE

Richard Lu (MD4)
yrlu@student.unimelb.edu.au
Disclaimer

- The author of this presentation has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in this presentation, however is not responsible for any inadvertent errors.
- In any doubt, check with the official sources first-hand.
- Any opinions expressed are the author’s own and do not represent the views of any agencies or organisations.
Public Healthcare Institutions in Singapore

- Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
- National Neuroscience Institute
- Singapore General Hospital
- National Cancer Centre Singapore
- National Dental Centre
- National Heart Centre
- Singapore National Eye Centre
- Jurong Health Alexandra Hospital
- Jurong Medical Centre
- Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
- Alexandra Health
- INSTITUTE of MENTAL HEALTH
- Changi General Hospital
- NUH National University Hospital
- NUS National University of Singapore
Technical Bits

- The Melbourne MD and MBBS are both recognised by the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) [http://www.smc.gov.sg/](http://www.smc.gov.sg/)
  - This means that as long as you successfully graduate, there are no additional exams you have to take to work as a medical practitioner in Singapore
- Work as a House Officer (HO) under Provisional Registration
- Satisfactory completion of PGY1 required to gain Conditional Registration
  - Completion of internship in Australia is recognised for Conditional Registration
- Conditional Registration requires supervised practice, 2 years for Singaporeans and 4 years for SPRs/foreigners) prior to Full Registration (this is for non-specialists)
- MOH Holdings (MOHH)
  - Holding company of Singapore’s public healthcare assets
  - Common employer of all junior doctors in Singapore
  - Coordinates the posting of house officers and medical officers
  - Coordinates the residency application process
PGY1

- House Officer (HO) roughly equivalent to intern in Australia
- 3 x 4-month rotations
  - 4 months of General Medicine
  - 4 months of General Surgery/Orthopaedic Surgery
  - 4 months of General Medicine/General Surgery/Orthopaedic Surgery/Obstetrics and Gynaecology/Paediatrics
- You can preference your rotation combinations and which hospitals you would like to do each rotation in
What Happens after PGY1

• Become a Medical Officer (MO) with similar responsibilities as HMO2+ in Australia
• If you have decided what specialty you want to do, apply for residency while working as a HO/MO and then enter a program
• If you are still unsure of which residency to go for or fail to match to a program
  - Medical Officer Posting Exercise (MOPEX)
  - 6-month rotations in almost any specialty and institution (by preference and availability)
  - Try out different things and network with potential referees
Applying for a Job as a HO

- Submit application to physician@mohh.com.sg with:
  - CV
  - Academic transcripts
  - Copy of passport
- No official closing date, but please submit before the end of June (the earlier the better) in order to secure an interview spot
- Employment interviews held in Melbourne (05 August 2015 this year)
- Panel interview – mix of general and clinical questions
- Same process for interns/HMOs in Melbourne who wish to apply for a MO position
- Start work around February/March after graduation
- NOTE: While it is not difficult to gain employment as a HO in Singapore, PGY1 positions are starting to become saturated in recent years and you should not treat this as an absolutely fail-safe backup
Residency in Singapore

- Structured specialist training modelled after the US system (with elements from the UK such as exams)
- 3-8 years depending on specialty and sub-specialisation then exit as a specialist (Associate Consultant)
- You **DO NOT** have to enter a residency program to work as a doctor in Singapore
- Residency programs are run under 3 Sponsoring Institutions, each comprising a cluster of healthcare institutions
  - National University Health System (NUHS) [http://www.nuhs.edu.sg/nuhsresidency/](http://www.nuhs.edu.sg/nuhsresidency/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residency Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can apply as a MD4 and enter at PGY1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal Medicine (5-6.5 years)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General Surgery (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emergency Medicine (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Paediatrics (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Preventive Medicine (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Psychiatry (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can apply as a MD4 but enter after PGY1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anaesthesiology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Diagnostic Radiology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family Medicine (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Obstetrics and Gynaecology (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ophthalmology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Orthopaedic Surgery (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Otorhinolaryngology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pathology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can only apply as a HO/MO</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cardiothoracic Surgery (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neurosurgery (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Urology (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plastic Surgery (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hand Surgery (6 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Radiation Oncology (5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Internal Medicine Senior Residency (after 3 years of IM Junior Residency)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advanced Internal Medicine (2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cardiology (3.5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dermatology (3.5 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Endocrinology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gastroenterology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Geriatric Medicine (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Haematology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Infectious Diseases (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Medical Oncology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neurology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nuclear Medicine (2 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Renal Medicine (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rehabilitation Medicine (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Respiratory Medicine (3 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rheumatology (3 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying for Residency

• You need to secure employment with MOHH first (i.e. submit job application and attend the employment interview in Melbourne)
• Have a good read through the residency website at http://physician.mohh.com.sg/residency/index.html and keep an eye out for online application and portfolio submission (around September)
• 4-station multi-mini-interview (MMI, non-clinical scenarios, 10 minutes each) **IN SINGAPORE** in November
• Those who pass the MMI stage – ranking and matching process
• If matched, enter program in July the following year for direct entry programs
• Difficult but not impossible for IMGs to successfully match as a medical student. It becomes easier after you have worked in the system for a while and people know who you are
• Only apply if you know which specialty you want and only apply for the specialties you want – if you back out you will be barred from applying for one year
Find out More: MOHH Info Sessions

- MOHH usually comes down to Melbourne twice a year to hold career information sessions (March and July/August)
- Topics covered
  - Medical career in Singapore
  - Remuneration and benefits
  - Residency and application process
- Employment interviews are usually held in Melbourne around July/August
My Perspective

• Arguably one of the most advanced medical hubs in the region
• High job security (you don’t have to apply for a job every year)
• High patient volume therefore amazing variety of cases and very rigorous training
• Many opportunities to train in highly specialised tertiary centres and also with the expanding public healthcare system in the next few years
• Relatively low cost of living (unless you wish to own a car)
• Fantastic CHEAP food (no more Zouki thank goodness)
My Perspective

- Long hours, heavy workload and very fast pace
  - Normal day is 0700-1700 but can be longer in surgical units
  - HOs work from 7am to 12+pm the next day (30 hours straight) when on call about 4 times a month and you can be clerking 10-20 admissions on a busy call. Some hospitals are slowly moving away from this to a “night float” system.
  - Adds up to 70+ hours per week for medical rotations and longer for surgical rotations
- Lower pay compared to Australia (but taxes are much lower)
- Potential language barriers (most patients speak English but some elderly patients only speak Mandarin, various Chinese dialects, Malay or Tamil)
- Local culture and slang can take a while to get used to, plus unique terms (hypocount/plug/NPU/AMS/TCU???)
- Perennial hot and humid weather (some wards don’t have air-conditioning)
To find out what it is really like

• Do an elective in Singapore
  • Guaranteed to be an unique experience 😊
  • Also helps with networking and finding referees for residency application if you are really keen

• Ask your Singaporean classmates
  • Hopefully you know who we are by now 😊
  • Many of us have done electives in Singapore and have some experience with the system
Clinical Electives in Singapore

• The following hospitals accept direct applications
  • Singapore General Hospital (SGH)
  • National University Hospital (NUH)
    http://www.nuhs.edu.sg/education/medical-education/medical-students/electives.html
  • Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)
  • KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH)
    http://www.kkh.com.sg/educationandtraining/overseaselective/Pages/Paediatrics.aspx
  • Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (YLLSoM, NUS) coordinates electives for other hospitals as well as the above
    https://itumed.nus.edu.sg/scep/default.aspx
Thank You

- For all information regarding a medical career in Singapore, visit [http://physician.mohh.com.sg/](http://physician.mohh.com.sg/) or contact [physician@mohh.com.sg](mailto:physician@mohh.com.sg)
- Singapore Medical Council (medical registration) [http://www.smc.gov.sg/](http://www.smc.gov.sg/)
- Residency Sponsoring Institutions
  - National University Health System (NUHS) [http://www.nuhs.edu.sg/nuhsresidency/](http://www.nuhs.edu.sg/nuhsresidency/)