

FOREWORD



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This year marks the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners and the Founding Fellows and Members are to be congratulated on their foresight, labour and dedication to the profession. The College is the oldest of all specialty colleges in Hong Kong and much progress has been made since its early days. With the rapid advances in medical knowledge and technology, the five years or so in medical school are insufficient preparation for independent medical practice. The introduction of the mandatory internship year marked the beginning of formal vocational training but for specialists, including those in general practice or family medicine, more of the latter is needed. Postgraduate medical education and training should be formally organized and supervised and are necessary for all who wish to specialize. An examination may be held at an intermediate stage or upon completion of training. The former has the advantage of allowing candidates to change to another specialty at a relatively early stage. The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine has recommended 6 years as the minimal period of training for a specialist, and the College has agreed to this, thus bringing it in line with the other specialties. Training of course does not cease with specialist qualification for medical education is, in Sir William Osler's words, a life-long process. Hence continuing medical education.

The Hong Kong College of General Practitioners has long recognized the importance of postgraduate and continuing medical education and has successfully conducted formal and informal courses since 1978. The first College Fellowship examination was held in 1984 and the first Conjoint Fellowship Examination with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners took place 3 years later, in 1987.

Both Medical Schools in Hong Kong are devoting more curricular time to general practice and the College has contributed significantly to its instruction through the many Honorary Clinical Lecturers it recommends, as well as the College's generous donations to establish Visiting Professors in General Practice at both Universities. The recent Sun Yat-Sen Professor of General Practice at the University of Hong Kong, made possible by a generous endowment obtained through the kind offices of Dr. Peter CY Lee, marks a new milestone in undergraduate education in this specialty. The institutions, I am sure, are most grateful for the College's support.

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International acclaim for the College has led to Hong Kong hosting the World Organization of Family Doctor's Asian-Pacific Regional Conference in 1987; the appointment of Dr. Peter CY Lee, Founding President of the College, in 1992 as President of WONCA, and the choice of Hong Kong as the venue for the 14th WONCA World Conference.

It is apparent that the College is going from strength to strength, I am grateful to have been invited to write this foreword and sincerely congratulate the College on its many achievements over the past 15 years. May it meet with continuing and even greater success in future years.