

## ASSOCIATION NOTES

## SEMINAR IN HYPERTENSION

A "SEMINAR IN HYPERTENSION" will be held on 6th and 7th March 1976 at the Regional English Language Centre, Orange Grove Road, Singapore. The Scientific Programme consists of 4 symposia and 4 sessions for free communication.

Topics for the symposia are—

1. Hypertension and the Community.
2. Hypertension and the Kidney.
3. Neuroendocrine Aspects of Hypertension.
4. Present Day Concepts in the Treatment of Hypertension.

Eminent doctors from U.S. U.K. Europe and Australia have been invited to speak at the Seminar. The results of the Singapore Hypertension Survey will be presented in Symposium No. 1.

Admission to Scientific Sessions is FREE to all doctors and senior medical students. For details please write to:

Dr. P.H. Feng,  
Chairman, Organising Committee,  
Seminar in Hypertension,  
c/o Academy of Medicine,  
4A College Road,  
Singapore 3

This Seminar is sponsored by—

Ministry of Health,  
Academy of Medicine,  
Singapore National Heart Association,  
Singapore National Kidney Founda-  
tion.

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## OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY CONGRESS

The First Inter-Congress of the Asian Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology will be held at Singapore Hilton from 27 to 30 April 1976. Main topics in the Scientific Programme include Prostaglandins, Tropho-

blastic Disease and Control of Fertility. For further information, please contact the Executive Secretary, 1st A.F.O.G. Inter-Congress, Kangang Kerbau Hospital, Singapore 8.

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## MINISTRY OF HEALTH — PRESS RELEASE

Name of Practitioner—Dr. Tan Hean See

The Singapore Medical Council held a Disciplinary Inquiry on Dr. Tan Hean See on 18th June 1975.

The charge against Dr. Tan arose from a previous inquiry against Dr. Ho Soon Lye held on 26th February 1975 when evidence came to light that Dr. Tan had been party to the misdemeanour.

The charge against Dr. Tan was as follows:—

"You, Dr. Tan Hean See, are charged that you, on or about the 18th December 1974, did in collusion with one Dr. Ho Soon Lye, obtain from the said Dr. Ho Soon Lye a false medical certificate for yourself certifying you to be sick and unable to attend work for two (2) days, which you know to be false, and you have thereby been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect."

Dr. Tan Hean See was represented by Mrs. A. Selva of Rodyk & Davidson.

The Solicitor to the Council, Mr. Harry Elias presented the facts of the case.

In brief, the case against Dr. Tan was that she had accepted a medical certificate from Dr. Ho Soon Lye stating that she was sick and unable to work for two days when in fact she was well. The purpose of the sick certificate was that she could continue work as a locum for Dr. Ho in his clinic. Dr. Tan pleaded guilty to the charge.

The Medical Council accepted her plea of guilty. A lay person could present a false certificate and plead ignorance. But this would not be the case of a doctor. The Council in judgement decided that she should be censured and give an undertaking not to repeat the offence.

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## Name of Practitioner—Dr. Soh Seng Hwee

The Singapore Medical Council held a Disciplinary Inquiry on Dr. Soh Seng Hwee on 19th June 1975.

The charge against Dr. Soh was read out by the President as follows:—

“You, Dr. Soh Seng Hwee, are charged that you, on or about the 23rd October 1974, did issue a false medical certificate to one Foo Lai Whatt backdated to the 18th October 1974 certifying the said Foo Lai Whatt to be sick and unfit for duty for one (1) day and you have thereby been guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect.”

Dr. Soh Seng Hwee was present and represented by Mr. S. Vellupillai of Donaldson & Burkinshaw.

The Solicitor to the Council, Mr. Harry Elias presented a summary of facts of the case. These facts were accepted by the Counsel to the Practitioner who admitted to the charge.

The Council, however, did not accept the plea of guilt by the practitioner as it did not appear that he had understood the implications of the charge and his exculpatory statement seemed to contradict the main element of the charge, i.e. on the issue of a false certificate.

The Council accordingly directed that the inquiry should proceed. The Solicitor to the Council then withdrew the statement of facts and adduced evidence by the examination of three witnesses: Dr. Humphrey Pong, a general practitioner maintained by Oberoi Imperial Hotel; Mr. Lincoln Tan, Front Manager of Oberoi Imperial; and Mr. Foo Lai Whatt, a bell-hop of Oberoi Imperial. Mr. Vellupillai called on the practitioner, Dr. Soh as his only witness for the defence.

At the conclusion of the examination of witnesses, Mr. Vellupillai was invited by the President to submit his case for the practitioner.

Mr. Vellupillai submitted that there was no dispute on the date Dr. Soh Seng Hwee saw Foo Lye Whatt i.e. the 23rd of October 1974. He had admitted backdating the certificate to the 18th of October 1974. There was evidence that when Dr. Soh saw Mr. Foo there was a lacerated wound and he treated the wound and gave certain medication. Mr. Foo had asked for a medical certificate for the 18th stating that he injured himself on that day and did not

go to work and needed a medical certificate to cover himself and as the wound looked 5 days old Dr. Soh gave Mr. Foo the medical certificate dating the 18th.

Dr. Soh had seen and examined the patient and came to the conclusion after diagnosis that the person was sick and gave a medical certificate. In this case it is the question of backdating that is false. Dr. Soh had honestly felt when he gave Mr. Foo the medical certificate it was in order to backdate and that at the time it was done in good faith and he did not have any intention to mislead.

The Council's Solicitor replied that Dr. Humphrey Pong, Mr. Lincoln Tan and Mr. Foo Lai Whatt's evidence should be preferred to Dr. Soh Seng Hwee's as there was no motivation for all three parties lying. Dr. Soh did not ask details of the alleged accident relating to the wound vis. where it happened, when did it happen and how did it happen. This lack of enquiry showed total carelessness and that the medical certificate was deliberately backdated without reason.

Dr. Pong did not see any pus nor a wound of the nature that Dr. Soh claimed i.e. even though he examined Foo less than 24 hours after Dr. Soh.

Mr. Foo clearly said he fell on the 19th but Dr. Soh backdated to the 18th.

The Council deliberated in camera and decided by a majority vote that the facts had been proven in the charge against Dr. Soh.

In mitigation Mr. Vellupillai said that Dr. Soh is 41 years of age and he is married with 5 children—two of them are in pre-university and two in primary school and the youngest is only aged four. Dr. Soh has been in private practice for about 6 years and has had an unblemished record except for this case against him. Dr. Soh is also a sick man suffering from a heart ailment. He has gone through a great deal of strain over this case against him and hope Council will take a lenient view against him.

The Medical Council took the view that Dr. Soh Seng Hwee's medical certificate was false because it gave the impression that:—

- (I) the date of issue was the 18th October, when it was not; and
- (II) the patient was ill on the 18th October, when he was not.