

Novel intersession courses

In September 2011, Perdana University Graduate School of Medicine (PUGSOM) collaborated with the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHUSOM) to offer the graduate-entry Doctor of Medicine (MD) programme.

The Genes to Society curriculum offered at PUGSOM provides for innovative teaching and learning approaches.

One of these novel approaches includes having three-day intersession courses throughout the four-year MD programme.

These courses are conducted between modules or clinical postings to allow students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and to fill the gaps in the core curriculum of PUGSOM.

The courses include Leadership and Teamwork, Malaysian Health Care System, Global Health, History of Medicine, Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Art in Medicine, Disaster Medicine, Translational (Genetic Medicine), Cultural Medicine, Pain and Patient Safety and Quality Assurance.

Prof Dr Krishna Gopal Rampal, who joined PUGSOM after 28 years at the Medical Faculty Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), is Director of Intersessions.

In addition to his many contributions to the field of occupational health, Prof Rampal is an ardent art collector. His unique ability to combine cultural and medical themes is best reflected in the Art in Medicine Intersession.

This course, based on similar programmes at Yale University and Harvard University Medical Schools, is not conducted in any other medical school in Malaysia.

The course involves art practitioners and art academics and is aimed at enhancing observational and listening skills of students. In addition to visual arts, the roles of poetry and music in medicine are also incorporated.

Exposure to the visual arts includes lectures on the history of art, how medicine and health have been depicted in works of art and how to look and translate what is seen in works of art.



PUGSOM students and faculty with curators at the National Visual Arts Gallery in Kuala Lumpur.

Students also create their own art works. A day-long visit to the National Visual Arts Gallery in Kuala Lumpur includes a briefing by a curator who also takes the students on a tour to see works on display in the various gallery spaces. Selected works on display in the art gallery are identified by the course director and curator for students to discuss with the actual artists.

The students are also exposed to the effects of sound on health and the role of music therapy in the management of patients.

They read poems related to medi-

cine, including *The Morning Visit* and *The Stethoscope Song: A Professional Ballad* by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

Students are also asked to reflect and write on their experiences in the various modules in their first year of medical school in the form of a short poem.

Attending a musical or play has been an integral part of the course and a completely new experience for many of the students.

The intersession courses are essential and intrinsic components of PUGSOM's goal to develop a medical student as a "scholar and

scientist, practitioner, communicator, teacher, manager and as a professional".

Perdana University was established as a project under the Public-Private Partnership Unit (UKAS) in the Prime Minister's Department. It is in line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan on the development of first-class human capital.

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