

Foreword

For the first time in the history of medical research in Singapore, an area of research has attracted numerous indications that it has reached a high international standard. Ophthalmic research in Singapore is now world-class, competing effectively with the research at the top ophthalmic research centres of the world.

The Association of Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), the most important and largest American ophthalmic research group, held its first meeting outside the USA in Singapore in 2003, together with the Singapore Eye Research Institute (SERI). The meeting made such a strong impression that a decision was made to hold the second ARVO-SERI meeting in Singapore again. Following this, ARVO decided to hold annual meetings in Asia as many important research papers come from the region. The meeting was renamed Asia-ARVO; the first meeting was held in Singapore in 2007.

Looking at the reports from both 2001 and 2005, not only were there more scientific papers submitted, but there were also more papers on basic research and epidemiology. The impact factor of the papers from Singaporean researchers has gone up two levels from one to three plus. If you look at some of the Western journals and publications, their impact levels are usually below or around three. This is a reflection of the quality of research by our Singapore doctors.

Numerous researchers and ophthalmologists from both the developed and developing nations have requested to visit SERI, and many doctors have asked to work on a short- or long-term basis at SERI.

I am very delighted with the success of SERI. I would like to, in this publication, recognise the people who supported our goal to achieve world-class standards in research.

Fifteen years ago, I expressed the view that Singapore may do well in the service, teaching, and training industries, and reach a very high standard in these fields. However, I did not think it was possible for Singapore to produce world-class ophthalmic research.

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Besides Donald Tan and the late Chew Sek Jin, my congratulations go to Wallace Foulds, Roger Beuerman, Aung Tin, Wong Tien Yin, and Saw Seang Mei, not forgetting Cheng Hong Ming, Bill Lam, Deborah Chee, Valerie Cornilleau-Peres, Maurice Yap, Lim Kuang Hui, and Vivian Balakrishnan.

In the beginning, there were three key people who supported SERI. In my paper “In Praise of Bureaucrats,” I emphasised that Dr SB Kwa, former Vice-Chancellor of NUS Lim Pin, and Khaw Boon Wan were three important persons who strongly supported SERI. I would also like to thank the following individuals for their support: John Wong and Tan Chorh Chuan. And special thanks to Dr Khoo Chong Yew for promoting medical ethics; as well as Dr Ang Beng Chong, Dr Adrian Koh, Charity Wai, Chiam Soo Lee, and Julie Yeong — although they did not play an active role in SERI, they gave very good strong support to me in many ways.

SERI has to attract and retain the best researchers. SERI has to provide researchers with adequate facilities and support staff to continue with quality research.

I am delighted that Professor Donald Tan has put together an excellent team. I am confident that he will generate more fascinating research in the coming years.

We are proud of you, Donald. I will strongly support your wonderful work as we move into the future.

Professor Arthur Lim

Founding Chairman, SERI