

Expanding the scope of Brunei International Medical Journal

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INTRODUCTION

Expansion is a natural process as a journal develops and matures with time. As the volume and type of submitted materials increases, a journal has to evolve to cope with these changes. At the same time, a journal has to maintain what is relevant and interesting. Beginning with this issue, the Brunei International Medical Journal (BIMJ) will introduce various new sections and it is hoped that this will further enhance the journal. The sections to be introduced include historical perspectives, conference or symposium reports and also a touch of humour to brighten up the days of our busy healthcare providers.

Historical perspectives

Among the three new sections to be introduced, historical perspective was the most popular among the healthcare workers surveyed.

In life, like everything else, it is very

important to remember where we came from so we that can plan where we should be heading. Events that have occurred, whether memorable or not, especially the important ones, need to be carefully documented so that they are not forgotten and can passed on to our future generations. As the saying goes, *'those who forget history are doomed to repeat it.'*

The healthcare perspective series will chart the milestones of healthcare in Brunei Darussalam and look at the people who have contributed to its development. It is divided into 'Healthcare in Brunei Darussalam' and 'Healthcare pioneers'.^{1, 2} The Healthcare in Brunei Darussalam section will look at the state of healthcare in Brunei from the early twentieth century (when healthcare infrastructure still did not exist) through to the time when the first government hospital in Pekan Brunei was built, to the present time (Figure 1). This section will also look at some of the important events such as infectious diseases-outbreaks and introduction of services such as the 'Flying Doctors'. The Health care Pioneers section will look at the people

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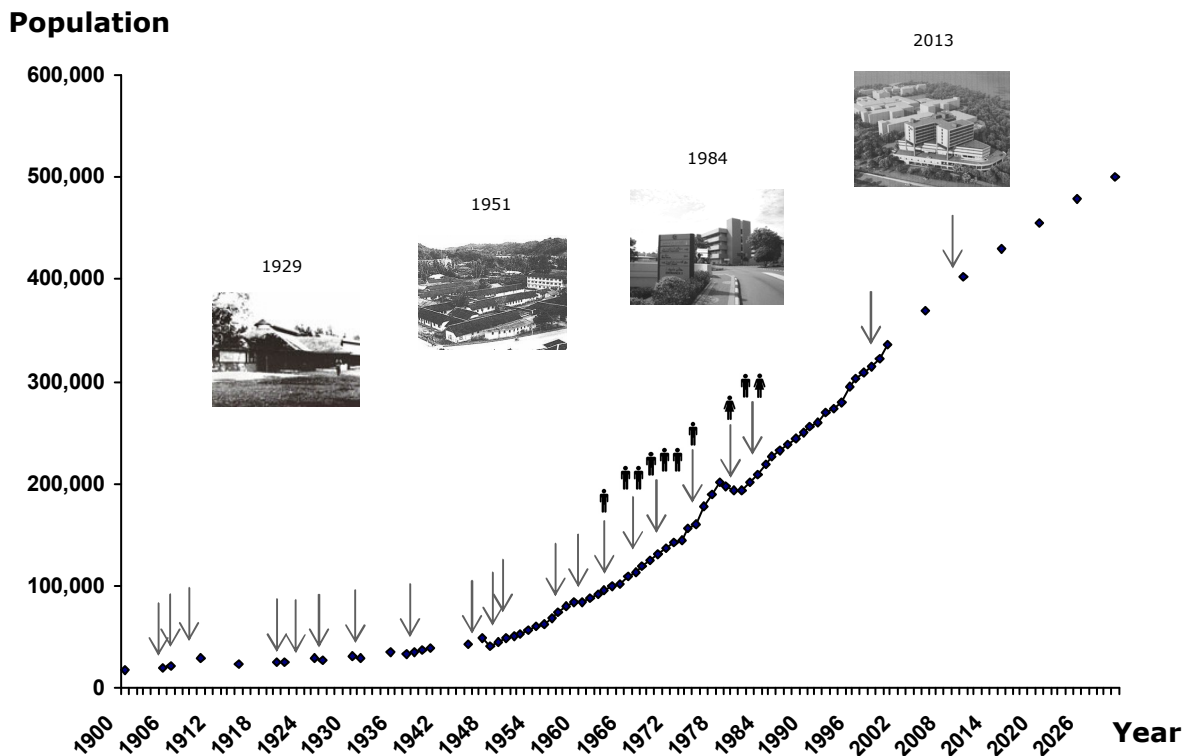


Fig. 1: Development of healthcare services and infrastructure in Brunei Darussalam against population growth (Grey arrows indicate important events and human figures indicate the early local clinician pioneers).

(clinicians, nurses, allied healthcare workers to administrative officers) who were involved with the development of healthcare services in Brunei Darussalam.

Why are these important, one might ask. First, it is very important to know the history of any organisation that we are work in, in this case, the healthcare service. Second, knowing how the healthcare developed and progressed through the years allows us to appreciate what has happened in the past and to plan for the future. It also allows us to compare our progress with other countries. Third, we should not forget the people who have contributed to the development of the healthcare service. Sadly, most of us, the younger generations would not even know who these people were even if they were standing in front of us or seen us as patients.

Conference/Symposium reports

In recent time, medical progresses has been rapid with novel research findings being reported and published. Given the pace of these developments, it is difficult to keep up with all these scientific findings. Aside from reading the myriad of journals available, one way of keeping updated with these progresses is by attending conferences or symposiums. However, not everyone can attend these meetings due to time constraints, clinical or personal commitments. Conference or symposium reports represent a good way of disseminating this information to a wide readership. BIMJ has already published a symposium report which marked this year's World Health Day 'Combat Drug Resistance'.³

BIMJ will be reporting the conferences or symposiums in summarised format with

the full version available as supplementary text from the journal website.

Humour

Humour is an important aspect of life and one only needs to look at the entertainment industry to know that comedies are among the most popular programmes. It would be good to never have a day go by without laughing either after seeing, thinking or hearing something we thought was funny. Almost universally, we will feel cheered up. Even in medicine, humour is important. If one has watched '*Patch Adam*', one would realise that humour can be therapeutic. However, we may have to be cautious in this section and there is a limit to how far humour should be taken to. Beyond a certain limit, it may become inappropriate even if the intentions are good. Nevertheless there are now many publications showing the therapeutic effects of humours for both patients and healthcare workers.⁴⁻⁸ So, smile!.

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