East Asian Medical Students Conference – Men’s Health

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The theme of the EAMSC 2010 was “Men’s Health: Defining the Past, Refining the Future”. The health of men is particularly important in medicine given that men are traditionally identified as non-seekers of healthcare. These attitudes and behaviours are related to the roles of men in society and reflected in countries from all over the world. This conference allowed Australian students to explore different aspects of men’s health and equip us with skills to improve men’s engagement in health services and combat unique risky masculine behaviour.

The conference brought the health issues of men to an international level, opening our eyes to the influencing of differing cultures, economies and philosophies, on men’s health issues.

The EAMSC 2010 provided a forum for keynote speakers to address delegates on the emerging field of men’s health. This enhanced the delegates’ awareness regarding certain issues in Men’s health and to ensure that all EAMSC delegates would use their positions to promote awareness and understanding in men’s health, the Regional Chairperson from 15 nations in the Asia-pacific signed a pledge at the closing ceremony. This signified the passion and commitment that Australian delegates had in continuing the legacy that keynote speakers have passed on to us.

The topic “Men’s health” provided much scope for the Australian delegates to develop creative and informative paper and poster presentations. In both public poster and paper presentation, the authors outlined the importance of impotence and the status of prostate cancer in Australian’s health care system which aim to impart Australia’s strategies on improving public knowledge in this area and to promote future strategies and initiatives which can be employed to boost the confidence of men to proactively taking charge of their own health.

In addition, on the third day of the conference, delegates travelled 40 minutes by bus to areas on the outskirts of KL city (such as Ulu Kelang) to carry out the community service component of the conference. This involved undertaking preventative health checks for men and their families and residents living in these areas with a lower socioeconomic index. This, once again, enhanced our knowledge regarding Men’s health and provided a hands-on approach to learning.

Ultimately, as an Australian delegate and Regional Chairperson to the 23rd EAMSC in Malaysia, I returned with a deepened understanding of Men’s health, its global impact and burden on those surrounding men, such as women and children. Most importantly, I have learnt that the key to closing the gap between men’s health and women’s and children’s health is through education and support for the men in our lives. I aim to bring this message back to peers, so I can help our local communities “define and refine men’s health”.