Global Health Conference 2010
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Global health is a depressing topic that has been increasingly publicised through many channels in the current media. From a medical student’s point of view, global health issues are not only interesting but deserve a comprehensive solution to achieve equity in health for every people worldwide. Despite my great inspiration to make a difference to global health, I knew little about ways to contribute except for donating money through organisations, such as World Vision. This year, I decided to take the initiative and pursued my interests in global health by attending the annual Global Health Conference (GHC), which was organised by the Australian Medical Student Association (AMSA).

Overall, the GHC was exceptional in many ways. There were several inspiring speakers that really motivated and enthused me to take actions, with the notable one being Dr Helen Caldicott, who talked about the medical hazards of nuclear power. I found it fascinating and yet absolutely terrifying at the potential disastrous impact that nuclear power could have when used inappropriately. I realised that there is an incredible amount of politics involved in this issue, as well as many other related issues, in our hugely economically-driven world. For example, Australia is one of the world’s most abundant sources of uranium, it would therefore be extremely difficult to advocate for the Australian government to reduce its reliance on nuclear energy. Due to such conflict of interest, the world’s consumption of nuclear energy has in fact increased dramatically despite Dr Caldicott and many other advocates’ international anti-nuclear campaigns. This type of profit-driven model also applied to other pressing issues, such as global warming and climate change, which were also the major topics discussed at the GHC. Four years ago, my colleague and I were very interested in the issues of global warming, leading to our production of a research report. Interestingly, the information I gained from the GHC suggested that over the past four years, almost nothing has been done to reduce the impacts of the dreadful man-made global warming. This is rather discouraging to see because global warming also has many severe negative consequences on health of most people on Earth, especially the poor who cannot afford to adapt to the future’s increasingly hostile environment. This type of issues would only worsen the already deprived state of global health.

At the GHC, we were educated about the ways we could get involved in making a difference in global health, such as working for Médecins Sans Frontières, becoming a member of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and spreading the knowledge learnt from the conference to our friends. I was inspired by a doctor who talked to us about his amazing experiences working for Médecins Sans Frontières. He was sent to many countries that were in desperate need of healthcare in both Africa and Asia. In many instances, he worked in the middle of the warzone saving lives of thousands of wounded soldiers. I value his bravery act and regard him as a great doctor.