



# SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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SMC 13.1.5

21 Apr 2008

All Medical Practitioners:

## **RULES ON THE DISPLAY OF TITLES AND DESIGNATIONS BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) notes that an increasing number of doctors are displaying their titles and designations inappropriately, with the potential to mislead patients and members of the public. The SMC would like to remind all registered Medical Practitioners to comply with the standards set in Sections 64 and 65<sup>1</sup> of the Medical Registration Act (MRA) when they display their qualifications, titles and designations for publicity purposes. Attention is also drawn to sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.5.1 of the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

2 Registered medical practitioners must ensure that any qualification, title, addition or designation displayed by a medical practitioner on any card, letter, stationery, nameplate, signboard, placard, circular, handbill or any notice displayed at the premises used by him for the practice of medicine conforms to the following:

<sup>1</sup> **Medical practitioner to use only qualifications entered in register and approved title, etc.**

**64.** —(1) No registered medical practitioner shall —

(a) use or exhibit or publish in any card, letter, stationery, nameplate, signboard, placard, circular, handbill or any notice displayed at the premises used by him for the practice of medicine any qualification other than the qualifications which are entered in any register kept under this Act or which has been approved by the Medical Council; or

(b) use any title, addition or designation other than the title, addition or designation which has been approved by the Medical Council.

(2) Any registered medical practitioner who contravenes subsection (1) may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under this Act.

### **False assumption of title of specialist**

**65.** —(1) A registered medical practitioner who is not registered under section 22 as a specialist in a branch of medicine shall not —

(a) practise medicine or that branch of medicine under the style or title of a specialist in that branch of medicine, or under any name, title, addition or description implying that he is such a specialist or has any degree, qualification or experience in that branch of medicine; or

(b) advertise or hold himself out as a specialist in that branch of medicine.

(2) A registered medical practitioner who contravenes subsection (1) may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under this Act.

### (a) Qualifications

Medical Practitioners will only be allowed to display qualifications (whether medical or otherwise) that:

- (i) Are entered against their name in the "Register of Medical Practitioners" or the "Register of Specialists", and
- (ii) Are listed in SMC's Register of Displayable Qualifications. The Register of Displayable Qualifications can be found at <http://www.smc.gov.sg>. Medical Practitioners can apply to seek approval from the SMC to add other postgraduate qualifications to the Register.

### (b) Titles

Medical Practitioners' titles should generally reflect the register in which they are listed:

- (i) Medical Practitioners listed only in the "Register of Medical Practitioners" may use the title of: *Medical Practitioner*. The SMC will permit medical practitioners pursuing a career as a general practitioner to use the title *General Practitioner*.
- (ii) In addition or as an alternative to the titles listed in paragraph 2(b)(i) (above), doctors who are listed in the "Register of Specialists" can use the title of
  1. *Specialist* followed by the name of their specialty  
E.g. Specialist - Respiratory Medicine or Specialist in General Surgery, or
  2. Use their approved specialist title located in Annex A.

Under section 65 of the MRA, a doctor may not describe himself as a specialist in a branch of medicine unless he is registered as a specialist in that area of practice.

- (iii) Doctors practicing other branches of medicine that are not registered as specialties in Singapore can list these areas under their "*Scope of practice*" or as their "*Clinical interests*".  
For example: Scope of Practice- Spine and Knee Surgery.
- (iv) The addition of a title: Practitioner, Consultant, Expert, Physician, Therapist, or other descriptives (either as a prefix or a suffix) cannot be used in conjunction with a scope of practice or area of

clinical interest, except for those listed in Annex A. For example, the description "Expert in LASIK Surgery" will not be allowed.

- (v) Doctors will be allowed to display titles awarded at the National Day Awards.

**(c) Designations**

Designations used should reflect a doctor's official appointment in a Hospital, Institution or Clinic. For example "Consultant, Dept of Orthopaedic Surgery, Singapore General Hospital", or "Professor, Dept of Medical Oncology, National University of Singapore". (Designations used must also conform to the standards set in paragraph 2(b) (iv).

3 Apart from the requirements set out in the MRA, section 4.4.2 of the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines requires doctors who provide information about their qualifications and areas of practice to do so in accordance with the following standards:

- a. Factual
- b. Accurate
- c. Verifiable
- d. No extravagant claims
- e. Not misleading
- f. Not sensational
- g. Not persuasive
- h. Not laudatory
- i. Not comparative
- j. Not disparaging

4 This standard applies to information that doctors put on the World Wide Web, for instance, on their websites (see section 4.4.5.1 of the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines).

5 Notice is hereby given to all registered medical practitioners to comply with the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines, as well as with Sections 64 and 65 of the Medical Registration Act when displaying or using any qualification, title, or designation for publicity purposes. Full compliance should be met by 31 Oct 2008. Medical practitioners found contravening these rules will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.



PROF K SATKU  
REGISTRAR  
SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

**35 Official Specialties & their specialist Titles**

1.	Anaesthesiology	Anaesthesiologist
2.	Cardiology	Cardiologist
3.	Cardiothoracic Surgery	Cardiothoracic Surgeon
4.	Dermatology	Dermatologist
5.	Diagnostic Radiology	Diagnostic Radiologist
6.	Emergency Medicine	Emergency Physician
7.	Endocrinology	Endocrinologist
8.	Gastroenterology	Gastroenterologist
9.	General Surgery	General Surgeon
10.	Geriatric Medicine	Geriatrician
11.	Haematology	Haematologist
12.	Hand Surgery	Hand Surgeon
13.	Infectious Diseases	Infectious Disease Physician
14.	Internal Medicine	General Physician
15.	Medical Oncology	Medical Oncologist
16.	Neurology	Neurologist
17.	Neurosurgery	Neurosurgeon
18.	Nuclear Medicine	Nuclear Medicine Physician
19.	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
20.	Occupational Medicine	Occupational Physician
21.	Ophthalmology	Ophthalmologist
22.	Orthopaedic Surgery	Orthopaedic Surgeon
23.	Otorhinolaryngology/ Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) Surgery	Otorhinolaryngologist/ Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) Surgeon
24.	Paediatric Medicine	Paediatrician
25.	Paediatric Surgery	Paediatric Surgeon
26.	Pathology	Pathologist
27.	Plastic Surgery	Plastic Surgeon
28.	Psychiatry	Psychiatrist
29.	Public Health	Public Health Physician
30.	Radiation Oncology	Radiation Oncologist
31.	Rehabilitation Medicine	Rehabilitation Physician
32.	Renal Medicine	Renal Physician
33.	Respiratory Medicine	Respiratory Physician
34.	Rheumatology	Rheumatologist
35.	Urology	Urologist



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SMC Ref. 13.1.5

9 May 2008

All Medical Practitioners:

### **CLARIFICATION ON THE RULES ON THE DISPLAY OF TITLES AND DESIGNATIONS BY MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

We received a request for clarification on whether General Practitioners can use the title "Family Physician".

2 Currently the title "Family Physician" has not been designated by the Singapore Medical Council to a specific group of qualified doctors. This title will therefore be approved for use by General Practitioners for the time being, *until such time as this approval is specifically removed.*

3 The Singapore Medical Council will list the titles approved under section 64(1)(b) of the Medical Registration Act for doctors' use on its website and update this list at <http://www.smc.gov.sg/> whenever necessary. Medical Practitioners are therefore asked to check this website from time to time for updates and FAQs. The Singapore Medical Council will also update registered Medical Practitioners regarding any significant changes through other usual channels of communications.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Satku', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**PROF K SATKU  
REGISTRAR  
SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL**