



## SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR ANG WEI LENG BERTRAND

- 1) A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") Inquiry was held for Dr Ang Wei Leng Bertrand ("Dr Ang") on 7 to 8 September 2010 and 3 December 2010 (the "Inquiry"). The proceedings arose out of a complaint to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC") by the Ministry of Health ("MOH").
- 2) The DC convicted Dr Ang on 1 charge of professional misconduct for departing from standards observed or approved by members of the medical profession in that Dr Ang had failed to diagnose serious orbital and/or facial fracture(s) of a patient.
- 3) In arriving at its decision, the DC considered the expert evidence provided. The DC also had the opportunity to examine the radiology image in question. Upon considering the evidence, the DC was of the view that:
  - a) Even taking into account the possibility of hindsight bias, the DC would have concluded that the right superior orbital fracture was indeed an obvious fracture.
  - b) Taking into account Dr Ang's own evidence that he had viewed the radiograph digitally (whereby using the digital image he could manipulate the digital image for a clearer and sharper view), Dr Ang should have clearly noted the fracture.
  - c) Even if Dr Ang was misled by wrong clinical notes, the acceptable standard of a radiologist would be for a reasonable radiologist to look at a radiograph systematically rather than just relying on the notes given to him.
  - d) If what a radiologist has observed does not gel with the clinical notes, a reasonable radiologist should then call the requesting doctor for further clarification.
- 4) The DC concluded that Dr Ang had departed from the accepted medical practice. In deciding whether Dr Ang's departure from the accepted medical practice amounted to

professional misconduct, the DC was of the view that if the negligence was of the type that suggests that the departure was caused by indifference on the part of the doctor (or in other words, a lack for concern for accepted standards), this would be sufficient to make out a charge for professional misconduct.

- 5) Having concluded that Dr Ang did not do a systematic review and heavily relied on the clinical notes, the DC was of the view that Dr Ang had committed a fundamental error in his duty as a radiologist. The failure to carry out a systematic review by Dr Ang also portrayed indifference as Dr Ang could have done a systematic review, he could have (if he had any doubts) asked for the assistance of someone senior or sought clarification from the A & E doctor, he could have asked for additional views or for a CT scan, but he chose to do none of those. The DC was of the view that Dr Ang's mistake was one committed out of indifference and of such a fundamental nature and thus fell grossly short of the standard observed or approved by members of this profession. Accordingly, the DC found that Dr Ang was guilty of the charge preferred against him.
  
- 6) In making its decision with regard to sentencing, the DC considered several mitigating factors including:
  - a) The error was made in the earlier part of Dr Ang's career for which he has expressed remorse;
  - b) Dr Ang had no previous record in his otherwise blemish-free career of 12 years; and
  - c) The error was committed 5 years ago and he has since proven himself to be a competent radiologist and has received professional accolades from his colleagues and peers.
  
- 7) In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Ang:
  - a) be fined a sum of \$3,000.00;
  - b) be censured; and
  - c) pays the cost and expenses of and incidental to these proceedings, including the costs of the solicitors to the SMC and the Legal Assessor.

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