

**NATIONAL MEDICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2009
THE AWARDEES**

**NATIONAL OUTSTANDING CLINICIAN MENTOR AWARD 2009
PROFESSOR LOW POH SIM**

**Chair, University Children's Medical Institute, National University Hospital, National University Health System
Associate Dean, National University Hospital
Head and Senior Consultant, Division of Paediatric Neurology and Developmental Paediatrics, Department of Paediatrics, NUH**

Throughout her career, Prof Low has taken on leadership roles as a clinician and dedicated her life and work to helping children with special needs.

"It has always been heartbreaking for me to see children with neurology and developmental problems. There is a need for greater public awareness and acceptance of these children. Although there may not be a cure for all such conditions, everyone can play a role in making the lives of these children better and more meaningful by treating them as any other normal kid," urged Professor Low.

"For instance, epilepsy occurs in 0.5 to 1.0% of the population and 60% of epilepsy cases begins in childhood. With proper care and adherence to treatment, these children can move on into adulthood, strive to build their dream careers and families like everyone of us," commented Professor Low.

Driven by her desire and passion to help children with neurological and developmental problems, Professor Low has spearheaded the development of new and essential clinical services and programmes in this area during her 35-year career. As Head of the NUH Division of Paediatric Neurology and Development Paediatrics, she has also led the paediatric neurology team to develop greater capabilities in clinical services. The Division now has greater ability to investigate and diagnose a larger spectrum of genetic neuromuscular and neurodegenerative disorders.

"The first encounter I had with Professor Low was at the age of 3½. Since young, I have been fond of her as I feel that she is a wise and dedicated doctor who is genuinely concerned about her patients. She secures a special place in my heart and I take comfort that I could always confide in her as I cope with challenging stages of my life with my deteriorating illness. Professor Low always ensured that my needs are being catered to. For instance, after my family related the problems and agony that we faced as I went through the initial weeks in kindergarten, Professor Low introduced us to the Asian Women's Welfare Association Therapy and Educational Assistance for Children in Mainstream Education programme. This has benefited me immensely as I continue my journey in mainstream education. On another occasion when she discovered that I have developed scoliosis in early 2006, she immediately referred me to Associate Professor James Hui, a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon at NUH whom she felt could resolve my problems with the best means. Professor Low is truly an empathetic doctor who shares our pains and joys as she partners us in our rollercoaster journey. She was involved in all the endeavors I have undertaken and these were made possible with her guidance and unwavering support," shared Ms Loh Jia Wei, 14 years old patient who suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

A passionate, dedicated teacher and mentor who has taught many young paediatricians who went on to lead illustrious careers, Prof Low continues to play an important role in the development of the curriculum for both under-graduate and post-graduate studies at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

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Lauding Professor Low for her excellent mentorship, Professor Quak Seng Hock, Senior Consultant, University Children's Medical Institute, National University Hospital, National University Health System said, "Professor Low is a very meticulous mentor and she demands high standard from her mentees. She would always ensure that her students get the best training and teaching."

"Professor Low is a very unassuming and meticulous leader as well as an excellent clinician. She sets the pace, never procrastinates and is always ahead of us in getting things done. As a mentor, she never micro-manages but by her own work and excellent management skills, she is a role model for junior staff like us who aspires to be the great clinician and teacher she is. Professor Low is also a consultative and humble leader who does not hesitate to ask for advice about patients from fellow colleagues of all ranks. Underlying all this is her desire to do her best for all patients and I am constantly inspired by her desire for excellence in clinical management of patients!" asserted Associate Professor Stacey Tay, Consultant, Department of Paediatrics, University Children's Medical Institute, National University Hospital, National University Health System.

The Department of Paediatrics is well known for its post-graduate training programmes. As Chairman, Committee of Paediatrics, Division of Graduate Medical Studies, National University of Singapore for 14 years and Chairperson of the Specialist Training Committee for Paediatric Medicine for a period of 8 years, Prof Low exercised a major role in the training and assessment of a new generation of young paediatricians for Singapore.

Beyond the professional training of paediatricians, Prof Low has, during her leadership of the Department of Paediatrics, built a capable and competent team of paediatric sub-specialists at the University Children's Medical Institute. In mentoring, nurturing and inspiring many young doctors, she has challenged, encouraged and helped her charges to achieve their potential to meet the health needs of children in Singapore and the region. Her efforts will leave a lasting legacy to Paediatric medical care in the country.

Prof Low's sustained involvement in and commitment to the area of clinical care and student development are all the more remarkable because they are maintained even as she participates in intensive clinical research. Her work in the area of paediatric neurology has resulted in the publication of several scientific papers in high-impact peer-reviewed journals.