



DR KAMIL MOHAMED ARIFF BIN SHAIK MOHAMED (1947-2006)

Editor's note: We thank Kamil's family for providing information for this obituary: wife (Chempawan Sulaiman), twin daughters (Anis Farhana and Anis Maziah, 24), sons (Mohd Zulhlimi, 20 and Mohd Zuhairi, 11), sisters (Amir Fatimah, Faridah), brother (Eusof Izzudin) and sister-in-law (Yasmin). A list of Kamil's publications and scientific presentations is given on page 47

Teng CL. Obituary: Dr Kamil Mohamed Ariff bin Shaik Mohamed (1947-2006). Malaysian Family Physician. 2006;1(1):46

"He was such a nice man." When news of his death spread, this was the spontaneous remark of his friends in private conversations or emails. His passing on 26th June 2006 was a total shock to his friends, most of whom were kept in the dark about his illness. It was indeed typical of Kamil (he was called Ariff by his family) that even at the last few months of his life, he tried to shield his friends from the pain of hearing this catastrophic news.

He recalled that the year 2005 was an eventful year. In late December, as the massive flood in the Northern states receded (his clinic was flooded up to 1 metre), he found some time to check up his nagging cough. He accepted the unexpected diagnosis of advanced adenocarcinoma of the lung with surprising calm, even though two months earlier his older brother was diagnosed to have the same cancer.

Kamil was born in Sg Pinang, Pulau Pinang, on 8th September 1947. His father, a second-generation Indian Muslim trader, named him after a renowned general practitioner and family friend in Penang, the late Sir Kamil Mohd Ariff. The personality of the kind-hearted doctor could have made a lasting impression on Kamil from young. In 1966, after completing Form Five, his family sent him to the then East Pakistan for further education, initially to pursue veterinary medicine which he later changed to "human" medicine. The East-West civil war in 1969 interrupted his medical training but did not extinguish his determination to become a doctor. He eventually completed his medical studies in Dow College, University of Karachi, Pakistan, in 1976.

On his return to Malaysia, he first worked in Kota Baru General Hospital and then in various health centres in Ulu Kelantan. Although he had MRCP Part I, he did not proceed to Part II probably due to changing priority in his life then – he met a special girl and married her in 1981. After short stints as GP in Kota Baru and Kangar, the local community in Arau persuaded and even helped him set up his Klinik Kamil Ariff in 1983 – the second clinic in Arau. His wife joined him as a full-time clinic nurse a year later. Due largely to his friendly nature, a deep respect for rural culture, and good clinical acumen, his clinic rapidly gained the trust of the local community.

Despite heavy clinical commitment, Kamil was active in teaching and service to the medical community. He accepted medical students and postgraduate trainees (both local and foreign) in his clinic and also taught part-time in Penang Medical College. He helped to organise several important conferences, among others,

the 3rd WONCA Rural Conference in Kuching in 1999, and Teaching Course for General Practitioners in Penang. He wrote and edited several Vocational Training Programme modules. He participated actively in special interest groups and committees, such as Council of Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia, Editorial Board of *The Family Physician*, Malaysian Primary Care Research Group, and Sleep Disorder Society. He gave many CME lectures on his pet topic on sleep medicine and psychological problems. In recognition of his contributions, he was bestowed awards by His Royal Highness the Raja of Perlis (Pingat Jaksu Kebaktian 1999, Pingat Mahkota Perlis 2004), conferred the Fellowship by the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia (2005), admitted as a full member to the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (2005), and presented with the Prestigious GP Award by the Private Medical Practitioners Society of Kedah/Perlis (2005).

Kamil was the first Malaysian GP to obtain the Monash Master of Family Medicine (1997) by distance learning. This was a turning point in his professional life. He took the assignments so seriously that he travelled huge distances to seek help from various people. Even though he had to type and retype his assignments using the good old typewriter, he would be the first to submit them. His exemplary performance, in particular a highly regarded research project on childhood domestic accident, earned him the Neil Carson Postgraduate Award, the first time it was given to an overseas student. The Monash programme also germinated in him a keen interest in research and medical writing, especially on sleep medicine, that eventually led to his completion of an MSc project on the epidemiology of snoring in Malaysia via Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Kamil loved visitors; his home in Arau was a favourite stop-over for many rural doctors and medical students from around the world, as well as local colleagues.

Knowing Kamil, he would be objecting to the above adulation; he was one who preferred conscientious works minus the limelight; he would rather be an anonymous benefactor of charity than public display of his kind-heartedness. For such an unpretentious and unassuming person, this record for the posterity is the least that his friends can offer. We sincerely hope that the grief of Kamil's family can be eased a little by the knowledge that his friends think so highly of him.

CL Teng, on behalf of his friends
July 2006

Kamil Mohd Ariff – publications and scientific presentations

Editor's note: Kamil used two different short forms for his name: Ariff KM and Kamil MA

Publications

1. Ariff KM. General practice in a rural setting. *The Family Physician*. 1994;6(1):12-14
2. Ariff KM, Schattner P. Domestic accidental injuries to children presenting at a rural general practice. *Med J Malaysia*. 1998 Mar;53(1):82-6.
3. Ariff KM. Critical appraisal of the medical research literature. *Med J Malaysia*. 1998 Sep;53(3):313-8
4. Ariff KM. Preferential utilization of healthcare systems by a Malaysian rural community for the treatment of musculoskeletal injuries. *Med J Malaysia*. 2000 Dec;55(4):451-8.
5. Ariff KM. Understanding insomnia and its management. *Med J Malaysia*. 2001 Sep;56(3):386-94.
6. Ariff KM, Teng CL. Rural health care in Malaysia. *Aust J Rural Health*. 2002 Apr;10(2):99-103.
7. Teng CL, Kamil MA, Zailinawati AH. Pain and culture: a brief review. *The Family Physician*. 2005;13: 2-4
8. Ariff KM, Beng KS. Cultural health beliefs in a rural family practice: a Malaysian perspective. *Aust J Rural Health*. 2006 Feb;14(1):2-8.
9. Kamil MA, Zailinawati AH. Insomnia: case studies in family practice. *Malaysian Family Physician*. 2006;1(1):11-14
10. Zailinawati AH, Teng CL, Kamil MA, Achike FI, Koh CN. Pain morbidity in primary care - a preliminary observation from two primary care settings in Malaysia. *Med J Malaysia*. 2006 (in press).
11. Kamil MA, Teng CL, Hassan SA. Snoring and breathing pauses during sleep in the Malaysian population. *Respirology*. 2006 (in press).

Scientific presentations

1. Ariff KM. The nature of rural practice: South-east Asian perspective. 14th WONCA World Conference, Hong Kong. June 1995.
2. Ariff KM. Sleep disorders in family practice. 3rd WONCA Conference on Rural Health, Kuching, Sarawak. July 1999.
3. Ariff KM. Stress and illness: an overview. 2nd Annual Teaching Course for Family Physicians, Penang. Sept 2000.
4. Ariff KM. Sleep disorders in primary care. 2nd Annual Teaching Course for Family Physicians, Penang. Sept 2000.
5. Ariff KM. Causes and evaluation of insomnia. Teaching Course in Psychiatry for Primary Care Physicians, Penang. April 2001.
6. Ariff KM. Excessive daytime sleepiness. Teaching Course in Psychiatry for Primary Care Physicians, Penang. April 2001.
7. Ariff KM. Sleep disorders in primary care – an overview. 12th Asia- Pacific WONCA Regional Conference, Kuala Lumpur. April 2002
8. Teng CL, Shajahan Y, Kamil A, Xavier S, Zaid Chelvaraj. Opinion of general practitioners towards continuous medical education. 12th Asia-Pacific WONCA Regional Conference, Kuala Lumpur. April 2002 [Free Paper, Asia Pac J Public Health 2002;Special Issue:77]
9. Rosalind Hooi, Julie Wong, Evelyn Yap, Zailinawati AH, Kamil MA, Wan Hazmy Che Hon, Richard Loh, Teng CL. Sleepiness as a risk factor for road traffic accidents: findings from an on-going cross-sectional study. 5th MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting, Kuala Lumpur. August 2004. [Poster, Med J Malaysia. 2004; 59 (SuppD): 69]
10. Zailinawati AH, Teng CL, Kamil MA, Achike FI, Koh CN. Do Indians have more pain complaints? A preliminary observation from primary care. Conference on Management of Pain in Clinical Practice, Penang. February 2004. [Free paper]
11. Zailinawati AH, Lim AW, Chan JB, Yap SH, Gupta ED, Kamil MA, Hla YY, Teng CL. Pain symptoms and psychological distress among IMU medical students. 5th MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting, Kuala Lumpur. August 2004. [Poster, Med J Malaysia 2004;59(Suppl D):62]
12. Gupta ED, Lim AW, Chan JB, Yap SH, Zailinawati AH, Hla YY, Kamil MA, Teng CL. Ethnic and gender tolerance to induced pain: a further report. 5th MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting, Kuala Lumpur. August 2004. [Poster, Med J Malaysia 2004;59(Suppl D):70]
13. Ariff KM. Insomnia case presentations. Kuala Lumpur Mental Health Conference 2004, Kuala Lumpur. September 2004.
14. Ariff KM. Normal sleep and sleep disorders. Kuala Lumpur Mental Health Conference 2004, Kuala Lumpur. September 2004.
15. Zailinawati AH, Kamil MA, Nurjahan NI, Teng CL. How common is insomnia in Malaysian adults? A population-based survey. 6th MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting, Kuala Lumpur. September 2005.
16. Kamil MA, Teng CL, Hassan SA. Snoring and breathing pauses during sleep in the Malaysian population. 6th MOH-AMM Scientific Meeting, Kuala Lumpur. September 2005.