

Dr Victor Yeo (1964 – 2022)

FRCA, MRCP, FANZCA, FHKCA (Anaes), FFICANZCA, FHKCA (IC), FJFICM

My brother, Victor, passed away on 22nd September 2022, having succumbed to metastatic renal cell carcinoma. He was 57 years old.

Victor was born in Rangoon, Burma (now Myanmar) in 1964. Our family left Burma for Hong Kong when he was 5 years old. He studied at La Salle Primary School and La Salle College, before pursuing his education in United Kingdom. He attended St Joseph College, Ipswich and subsequently gained entrance to study Medicine at Magdalene College, Cambridge and later obtained a scholarship to continue his Clinical Medicine years at Hughes Hall, Cambridge. He began his training in Anaesthesia at Leicester Royal Infirmary UK and rotated among teaching hospitals in Leicester and Sheffield. He side branched into Neonatology and Paediatrics for a year, and also ventured across the Atlantic to work in the USA briefly to challenge himself. After obtaining his Fellowship in Anaesthesia and Membership in Paediatrics in UK, he returned to Hong Kong in 1996 and began working at the Prince of Wales Hospital. On completing his anaesthetic training under the ANZCA and HKCA programmes, he decided to pursue a career in Intensive Care Medicine. He obtained his ICM Fellowship under both Colleges too, and moved on to Queen Mary Hospital Hong Kong in 2000. Besides clinical duties, his other passion was teaching. He was an instructor for the ATLS course and an examiner for the College exams. Victor left the public health sector to work in private practice in 2010. During his career, he treated many patients but the most memorable would be the survivors from the Pak Sin Leng Wildfire in 1996, and also the SARS patients in 2003. I never asked my brother why he chose Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine. It was well known to all his friends that Victor loved reading and indeed enjoyed studying. It was no surprise that he would choose the most demanding field which would cover all specialties in Medicine, and that he would treat the sickest patients in the hospitals.



Having Victor as my brother was a special blessing. He would use the knowledge he learnt from physiology and applied to daily life. When I was sitting for my undergraduate exams, he advised me to avoid heavy meals before exam (to maintain cerebral blood flow), and the advantage of taking candies (the most direct substrate for the neurones). And being a fan of “Star Wars” and the Jedi Order, he would wish me luck saying “May the Force be with you”. When we were both anaesthetic trainees, we could discuss our work and our “dilemmas”. And in scenarios where we had to decide whether to intubate the patients or not, he would say: “if in doubt, put the tube down”, a principle which I still abide. We could discuss our post-operative analgesic regime or how to improve the success rate of our epidural anaesthesia. He would always give you his honest and fair view.

My father told me Victor used to draw pictures of horses all day long when he was young. However, I never saw him draw. In his teen years, his favourite pastimes were making models, playing board games and computer war-gaming. He would make models of tanks, fighters, warships and battlefields which were based on real historic backgrounds and along these activities, he became an expert in world history, especially the World War II. Reading was his favourite hobby and Kindle his best gadget. And he would prefer swimming to any other sports. Regarding his musical talent, one must agree his singing of “Bla Bla Black Sheep”, the only song he would sing every time on requests, was admirable. When he was undergoing cancer treatment, Victor experienced many many side effects. We were distraught and devastated, but Victor was the one to comfort us. He remained his normal calm and intellectual self, balancing the benefits and side effects of all the novel treatments he underwent, and analysing his progress as the disease unfolded. Finally, it was the courage he showed in his fight against the disease, the sufferings he chose to endure silently, and the selfless love he showed to his family, that made him such a remarkable man. Victor was survived by his wife Alice, and his two children, Victoria and Horatio, his parents and three sisters.

Dr Patricia Yeo

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