

PERSONALITY FOCUS



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1. Tell us about your education background.

I completed my studies at University Malaya (UM) in 1991 and then obtained my master's degree from University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1998 and acquired my fellowship in Medical Retina and Uveitis in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2003.

I am now the National Head of Ophthalmology Services and also the Head of Ophthalmology in Hospital Shah Alam. I have been an MSO member since 1998.

2. Where is your hometown?

Terengganu.

3. What do you do during your free time/weekend?

I enjoy gardening during my free time. I have plants and flowers all around my house. My favorite is orchids and I would spend hours watching them when they bloom.



4. When did you first start practicing as an ophthalmologist?

I started practicing in 1999 and have been practicing medical retinal since 2004.

5. Why did you choose this field?

To be honest, I first chose this field because I thought the working hours would be more stable, compared to other fields but my passion for the field just grew stronger and stronger as I learnt more about it.

6. How do you juggle between work and family?

I believe that work and family should never be mixed up. When my children were younger, I ensured that work stopped as soon as I left office.

Now that my children have grown up and more independent, they understand that I sometimes have to work late, because of the different roles that I now play at work.



7. How many children do you have? How old are they?

Three and they are 23, 20 and 17 years old.

8. What is your definition of work-life balance?

Enjoy what you do and don't overstress yourself about your job or life. Money is not everything but family is.

I want to be able to empower others while working in a happy environment and have a happy family.

9. How many countries have you visited?

Growing up, I had never imagined myself visiting foreign countries. However, my job has allowed me to visit many countries and cities, such as Barcelona, Milan, Sydney, Hong Kong, Scotland, Germany and many others.

I will be making a trip to Japan with my family for my eldest son's graduation.

10. What do you enjoy the most about being an ophthalmologist?

As an ophthalmologist, the one thing that I really enjoy is to see my junior doctors succeed – to be a successful ophthalmologist, especially my trainees.

11. What are the challenges of being an ophthalmologist in Malaysia?

Ophthalmology was once seen as a minor discipline. Not much attention was given, from the public to policy makers. However, things have improved now where experts from the field are given opportunities to

from the field are given opportunities to present plans to improve eye care to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and some of their recommendations have been taken into consideration.

In fact, the MOH has been very supportive in improving eye care in the country. Various projects or initiatives conducted were supported by the ministry.

On a personal level, it has never been easy to tell patients that they have to live with an eye condition, especially when the disease has advanced to a late stage and there is nothing much that I can do to help.

12. What are the top three challenges when it comes to treating eye conditions?

- The awareness level of eye conditions is low in the country. Most of the people do not pay attention to their eyes until something happens to their vision.
- Diabetes patients downplay the importance of disease control and they are unaware that it could cause vision loss.
- The public doesn't recognize the importance of annual eye screening.

13. Where are we now, compared to other countries?

I am proud to say that compared to other countries, Malaysia is ahead with our own training module and workshops on diabetic retinopathy to educate healthcare professionals who are not in the field.



I had the opportunity to present on cataract in Manila last year and the attendees from the region, if not from around the world, were impressed with the programs that we have here. In addition, we have also developed a few guidelines and standard of care for our ophthalmologists as reference.

Overall, I am very proud of the ophthalmology field and the eye care standard in the country.

14. As the leader in this field, what do you aim to achieve or see in the next five years?

I would like to see more diabetic retinopathy screening programs implemented. I hope that there would be more funding from the government to improve eye care in the country.

15. What are your short-term plans for the field?

More students and ophthalmologists in the field. We need more ophthalmologists.

16. In your opinion, how can we encourage more medical students to specialize in this field

Improve the awareness level of ophthalmology among medical students. Some of them are unaware of it. We need to talk about it more.

17. What can we do to improve the awareness of this field?

Work with societies, such as MSO, to educate the public about the importance of eye care and hence, more awareness on the field and eye diseases.

18. What is your advice to those who are new to the field?

Enjoy what you do and be passionate.