



## ACMAV asked to help East Timor

East Timor is not only the newest sovereign nation, but also in terms of per capita GDP, industry and infrastructure, also one of the world's most disadvantaged. Australia continues to play an important role in the affairs of this country (beyond just the issue of security) and Melbourne is home to the largest population of East Timorese immigrants.

The ACMAV recently met with some representatives from East Timor who are seeking assistance from Australian individuals and organizations to help in the development of local and governmental health services. In August last year, the Committee met with the remarkable Dr Dan Murphy, for years the only Western doctor in East Timor, who single-handedly established a clinic for the poor and displaced, called the Bairo Pite Clinic, which continues to provide free health services to some of the most needy in the local community (see p. 9). In November, the Committee hosted Mr Nelson Martins, the East Timorese Health Minister, who was visiting Melbourne at the time. An invitation was extended by the Minister for an ACMAV delegation to visit East Timor to observe first hand the current state of health services.

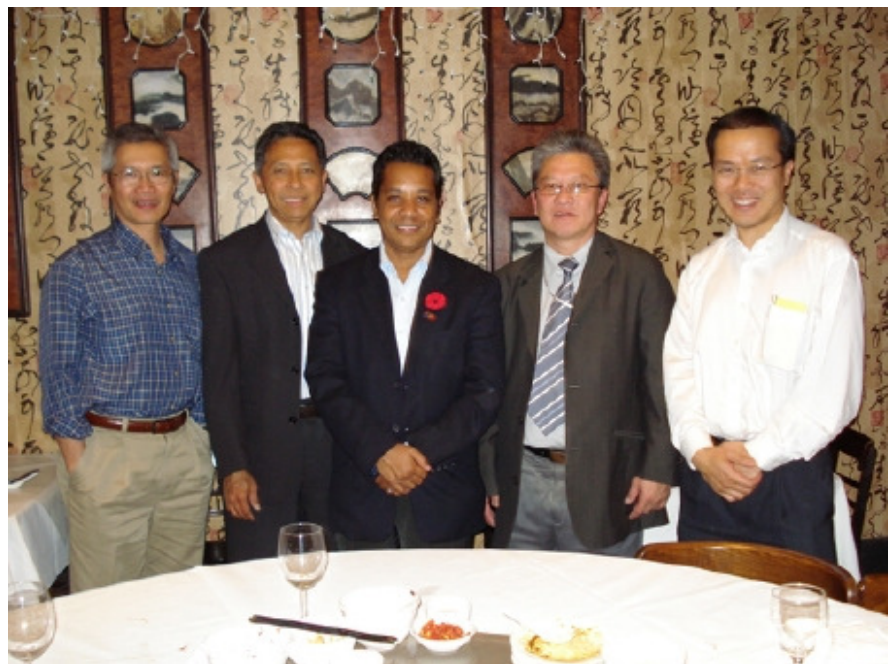
It was made clear from these meetings that there is an acute need for medical expertise to firstly provide an adequate standard of health for the people of East Timor, and secondly to build the workforce and infrastructure needed to support the health sector into the future. The large majority of doctors working in Dili's main hospital are "visiting" specialists

who will one day return to their home countries, and while the training of local medical students has begun with the help of Cuban doctors, it will be many years before the medical workforce is self-sustaining.

Although only preliminary discussions have taken place, the ACMAV has the rare opportunity to play a part in helping to build a country's health system from the ground up. In doing so it could join organizations such as the College of Surgeons in offering assistance to the East Timorese Government. Alternatively direct assistance could be provided to support the valuable work of Dr Murphy at the Bairo Pite Clinic. Either way, much collaborative work and creative thinking will be required.

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The Hon. Mr Nelson Martins MD PhD MHM, the East Timorese Minister of Health (centre) with (from left): Mr Andrew Bui, Mr Joao Jong (East Timorese Consulate General), Dr Theong Low and Dr Adrian Mar



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All ACMAV Inc. members are welcome to contribute to this newsletter. Please direct all newsletter items to The Editor or to ACMA House.

## Signing off as Editor ...

This edition of *Meridian*, the first for 2008, will be my last as Editor. Mr Jason Chuen, who is introduced on page 7, will be taking over the role of publishing the quarterly ACMAV newsletter, and the readership will undoubtedly benefit from his talents and fresh ideas.

For a member-based organisation such as the ACMAV, the newsletter plays a vital role in keeping its members informed of upcoming events. But in addition, it promotes networking by profiling the interests and

achievements of its members, and it introduces the activities of the ACMAV to new or potential members. It also provides a **free classifieds section** to ACMAV members and creates a forum for discussion. On this last point, I would encourage you to write to the Editor to express any views or

comments you may wish to share with the wider readership.

In this edition, the Committee can report on a number of contacts made with representatives of the East Timorese administration. We congratulate Dr Benny Foo on his recent Australia Day award — an achievement which is well deserved. Also, the successful medical-student based Apollo Health Music Society is introduced on page 8. The talent and enthusiasm displayed by this group of junior colleagues bodes well for the future of associations such as ours.

In signing off, I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy Year of the Rat!

*Adrian Mar, Editor*



## Calendar of Events

| Date                 | Event                                   | Venue               |
|----------------------|---|---------------------|
| February 24th (Sun.) | New Year Yum Cha                        | Tai Pan Restaurant  |
| March 26th (Wed.)    | Education Seminar - Lap Banding Surgery | Treasure Restaurant |
| April 23rd (Wed.)    | Annual General Meeting                  | TBA                 |
| August 3rd (Sun.)    | Annual ACMAV Conference                 | TBA                 |



## Reflections on the Year of the Boar

Andrew Bui, President

As a new year has begun, it is timely to look back and reflect on the hard work and achievements of the past year. It is also an opportune time to look forward to the future and take on new challenges facing our Association. The Year of the Boar was a very busy and successful year for the ACMAV.

Our dinner seminar program was as usual very well supported. We had a meeting almost every month and at most venues there were few spare seats to be found. The quality of the educational talks was of the highest calibre in terms of educational value, presentation and relevance to our members. The feedback has been highly positive and some have suggested that these talks be made available for reference on our website. Our Annual Scientific Conference in August was an outstanding success with a record number of registrants both locally and interstate. The theme of Yin and Yang, with a focus on women's and men's health issues was highly relevant and generated a great deal of discussion on the floor between expert speakers and members. The Conference Convenor, Jun Yang and her committee are to be congratulated for their expert organisational skills.

In relation to the organizational structure and constitutions of the Association and ACMAV Foundation, the Committee has put in a great deal of time and effort into reviewing these matters to ensure that our activities are run smoothly and in compliance with the law. The Committee has met with lawyers to assist in these review processes and progress has already been made to clarify the issues of our charitable status and the development options for ACMA House. More work is to be done and we will keep our members fully informed of the outcome.

Another significant milestone in the life of the Association this year was the appointment of an Administrative Assistant to enable the smooth and efficient running of the ACMAV office. Ms Holly Zhang was appointed to this position and her hard work has already won praise from Committee members. As a part of our effort to improve communication with members, our Website has

been vastly upgraded and improved through the tireless effort of Erwin Loh, our reliable Secretary.

We continue to maintain close contact with our interstate counterparts through our attendance at the annual ACCMA conference. Kevin Siu and I represented ACMAV at the ACCMA conference in the Gold Coast and exchanged views and ideas with the Presidents and committee members from other states.

I have taken up the role of representing the ACMAV on the AMA Council and report to the Committee on any relevant policy development on the national front. We have also maintained contact with the Australian Chinese Association of Biomedical Scientists and the Chinese Health Foundation.

*I am constantly amazed at the calibre of membership we have in our Association ...*

On the charity and medical aid front, Benny Foo and Theong Low continue to be busy and very active in their respective areas to help those in need of medical aid, bringing about benefits to individuals and also to a larger group. In the name of the ACMAV Foundation, Benny and his group of devoted humanitarians were busy with Project Africa, raising funds to build a solar water pump and supporting the Nyegan Hospital in Uganda. The story about transforming the life of burns victim, Ms Hong Hanh Luong from Vietnam has been a major source of inspiration and uplifting news for the ACMAV. From a state of crippling disfigurement she has now obtained an independence and hope, thanks to the dedication and persistent work of Theong, his Plastic Surgeon friend, Ian Holten and the local Vietnamese community.

The Annual Golf Tournament was played at the Dunes Golf Links in Rye, in April. It was an outstanding success, through the expert organisational skills of Karen Lee. All the participants greatly enjoyed the day, which was blessed with perfect weather and playing conditions. There were plenty of

awards and prizes given out through our generous sponsors, Dorevitch and Mercedes of Melbourne. The Tennis Tournament was played on 21 October at Melbourne Park. It was organised by Trevor Gin and sponsored by Symbion Health. It too was well attended and keenly contested.

Life is full of surprises, and we all have to take the good with the bad. In June, we celebrated with one of our esteemed past-Presidents on receiving his Queen's Birthday Honour Award of the Order of Australia for his service to medicine and for contributions to various professional associations. It was indeed a great honour to Kevin and also to the Association. Sadly in July, we commiserated the premature passing of Associate Professor Joe Tjandra, a prominent Colorectal Surgeon in Melbourne and overseas. On reflection, I am constantly amazed at the calibre of membership we have in our Association, and as a member and the President, it makes me feel very proud. Our members are surely our greatest asset.

What are we looking forward to in 2008? No doubt the year of the Rat will be even busier and just as successful. The Committee is already in full swing in an effort to organise the educational programme, the dinner venues, the Annual Conference among many other projects to improve and expand the various activities in our Association. There will be more challenges ahead – expansion of membership, administration and governance, charity and medical aid projects to name just a few. I am confident that with the help and support of the members, we can all rise to meet the challenges of the year ahead.

Finally, it is my pleasure to acknowledge the dedication and great work of the Committee members for 2007, Adrian Mar, Frank Thien, Erwin Loh, Jun Yang, Theong Low, Nicole Yap, Leona Yip, Jason Oh, Michelle Mok, Alby Leung and Ferry Rusli. I wish to thank each and everyone sincerely for the help and support given to me to enable me to run the affairs of the Association smoothly. I have enjoyed working with them and I do look forward to our future endeavours together.



The ACMAV cordially invites members & their families to this year's



# Chinese New Year Yum Cha



**Date:** Sunday, 24th February 2008

**Time:** 1.30pm

**Venue:** **Taipan Restaurant**  
239 Blackburn Road  
Doncaster East

**Menu:** Set banquet

Please **RSVP** by **Wednesday 20th February** via:

**Website:** [www.acmav.org](http://www.acmav.org)

**Email:** [office@acmav.org](mailto:office@acmav.org)

**Fax:** 9899 6389

**Mail:** ACMA House, 862A Canterbury Rd, Box Hill South 3128

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

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Full name on Credit Card  
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Child (4-12 yo)      \$15      \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date    \_\_\_/\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed      \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle: Mastercard / Visa

\* Numbers are limited, so please **RSVP** early to reserve your seats



# March Dinner Seminar

**Speaker:** Mr Ernest Lim

**Topic:** How to Lose Weight Lying Down!  
- an update on gastric banding

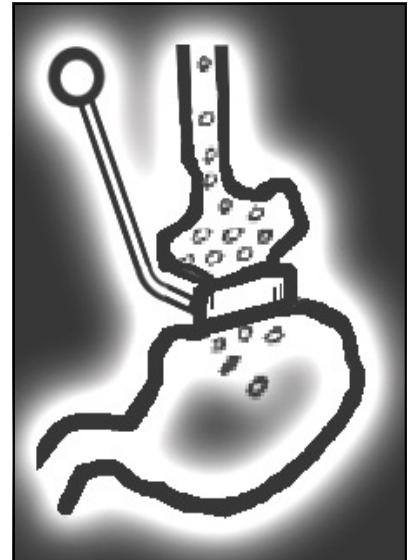
**Sponsors:** Johnson & Johnson



**Date:** Wednesday, 26th March 2008

**Time:** 7pm for 7.30pm start

**Venue:** Treasure Restaurant  
482 Springvale Road, Forest Hill



## RSVP is *essential* due to LIMITED PLACES

Please **RSVP** by **Wednesday 18th March** via:

**Website:** [www.acmav.org](http://www.acmav.org)

**Email:** [office@acmav.org](mailto:office@acmav.org)

**Fax:** 9899 6389 (please dial carefully)

**Mail:** ACMA House, 862A Canterbury Rd, Box Hill South 3128

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

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Members Free \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card No.

Associate member \$30 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Non-member \$60 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Total amount enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle: Mastercard / Visa

*For budgeting purposes, please inform ACAMAV office if you are unable to attend after RSVP. Thank you.*





## Pencil this into your diary ...

**Event:** ACMAV 2008 Annual Conference  
**Theme:** Pediatric and Geriatric Health Issues  
**Venue:** Manningham Function Centre  
**Date:** Sunday 3rd August 2008



*More details to follow in the next newsletter!*

## And for a trip to the Blue Mountains ...

**Event:** Combined ACCMA and ACMA(NSW) Conference  
**Theme:** "Where's the Evidence?"  
**Venue:** Fairmont Resort, Leura, NSW  
**Date:** Queen's Birthday Weekend 7th-9th June 2008

*Experience the beauty of the Blue Mountains at the joint ACMA(NSW) Conference, which is this year hosting the Australian Council of CMAs (ACCMA). The Fairmont Resort offers 18 holes of golf, tennis, an indoor pool, and plenty of other activities nearby including bushwalking, shopping and art galleries!*

For further details contact the  
ACMA(NSW) Secretary:

**02 9873 6222** or  
office@acma.org.au

Or contact the Conference  
Convenor, Dr Ida Soo:

**0412 510 088**  
yeeg@optusnet.com.au

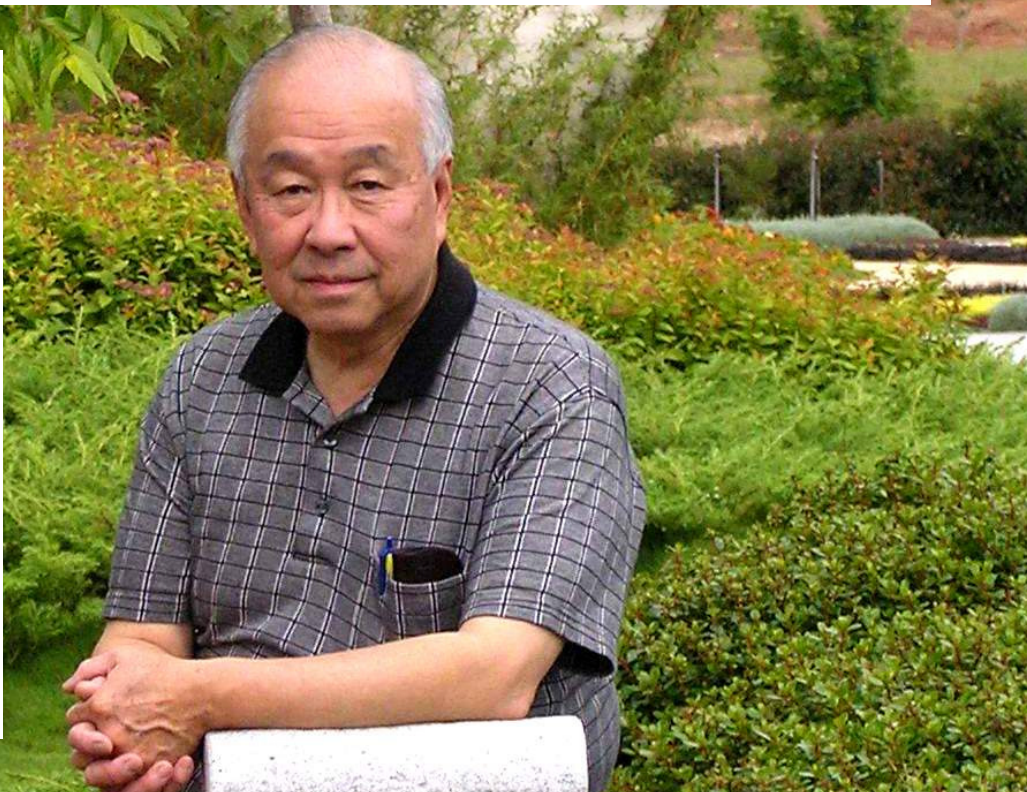


# Congratulations Dr Benny Choong Khean Foo OAM!

The ACMAV congratulates Past President Dr Benny Foo on receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), awarded on Australia Day “for service to medicine as a general practitioner, educator and advocate of traditional Chinese medicine, and to the community”.

Dr Foo has been recognized for being a local pioneer in the practice of acupuncture and holistic medicine, and is well known to members for his charity work, which has extended to projects in Africa. The ACMAV has benefited from his vision and guidance in establishing the ACMAV Foundation, and we continue to enjoy his ongoing contribution to our Association.

Well done Benny!



## Meet ACMAV Committee Member: Jason Oh

**Dr Jason Oh** graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2000. He undertook 3 years of training at the Austin Hospital before completing a diploma of obstetrics at the Mercy Hospital for Women and entering general practice. He completed the FRACGP in early 2007 and has been nominated to the RACGP Panel of Examiners for 2008. He works as a general practitioner in central Melbourne.

Medically, he is committed to all facets of general practice, with special interests in men’s health, antenatal care and occupational medicine. He spent a brief period in 2006 on a medical mission in China, and one of the reasons he joined the ACMAV is its service to the community and its ongoing support of medical work in developing nations. He has been a committee member of the ACMAV since 2007.

## ... and the next Meridian Editor: Jason Chuen

**Mr Jason Chuen** is a Vascular Surgeon who recently completed his specialist fellowship with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. After an Endovascular Fellowship in Adelaide for the past year he has returned to Melbourne to a public VMO appointment at Box Hill Hospital.

Apart from his professional interests in Open and Endovascular Surgery, he has an avid interest in medical and surgical audit, technology and computer-related advances along with their relationship to medicine, and graphic design. Jason enjoys spending time with his wife Alberta, and two sons Ethan and Liam.

Jason is an Australian-born Chinese who speaks Cantonese.







## Harmonising the Faculties: - introducing the *Apollo Health Music Society*



The ACMAV recently supported a new and exciting venture, an ensemble of university students whose talents were showcased in a musical performance at Federation Square's "BMW Edge" auditorium in October 2007. The Apollo Health Music Society's POPS! Annual Spring Concert was a success for both the musicians and their supporters. As a sponsor of the Society, ACMAV has had a foretaste of the enthusiasm and breadth of talent which these young colleagues may one day bring to organizations such as our own! In fact there are already strong family ties with our own membership: Vanessa Wong, the Society's Publicity Representative is the daughter of Dr Kenneth Wong, and Alexander Gin is the cello-wielding son of Dr Douglas Gin (watch out also for the younger Gin boy playing violin in the wings)!

Here Alex Gin introduces us to the **Apollo Health Music Society**:

Apollo is based in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences (MDHS) at the University of Melbourne. We are a music society run by students, for students, comprising mainly of those who study medicine, dentistry and physiotherapy but also students from all over the University and Victoria.

Founded in 2002, Apollo is still a very young society that has flourished in pursuit of its two aims:

- i) to help and encourage Health Science students to pursue their musical interests in a friendly and relaxed environment
- ii) to bring music to health-disadvantaged members of our community

Our second aim is what sets Apollo apart from all other music societies, and is underlined by our motto:

***Promoting Health through Music***

As future members of the health sector it is important to culture, early on, an understanding of the devotion and compassion involved in fulfilling a career in health. In upholding our motto, we perform free concerts at many of the hospitals around the University of Melbourne, including the Royal Children's, Royal Melbourne, and Royal Women's Hospitals, the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, and we have been invited to perform this year at the Royal Dental Hospital. We also aim to expand our venues to Austin Health/Mercy Hospital for Women and Shepparton Base Hospital in 2008.

Apollo has four major ensembles: Choir, Jazz Band, String Orchestra, and the recently formed Stage Band. We also encourage and support small groups, including a piano trio, string quartet, and rock band. Collectively, all our groups come together to perform the *Recital by Candlelight* in May, and the *POPS Concert* in October. All profits from the end of year *POPS Concert* are donated to charity, and we have strong links with the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Kids, Hands of Help and the Victorian Students' Aid Project.

All of us at Apollo appreciate the ongoing support of the ACMAV, and look forward to our continuing partnership in 2008.

**Alexander Gin**

**Vice-President  
Apollo Health Music Society**



Alexander Gin

For more information about the Apollo  
Health Music Society,  
including future performances  
visit  
[www.geocities.com/musicapollo](http://www.geocities.com/musicapollo)







## One Man's Medical Mission

Late last year, members of the ACMAV Committee had the privilege of meeting with Dr Dan Murphy, an extraordinary doctor whose work in East Timor over the past 9 years can be regarded in no other way but as a service to humanity of the highest order. We met him at a local Chinese restaurant during a rare visit to Melbourne to raise support for his Bairo Pite Clinic. He was accompanied by Dr Aida, one of the few fully-trained East Timorese doctors working at the Clinic. The tall American towered over his petite colleague, but this gentle and humble man is in fact made large by an enormous reserve of courage, determination and compassion. He had after all borne the weight of being for a while the only Western trained doctor in an impoverished country devastated by violence and social disintegration.

Dr Dan sought the support of the ACMAV for his ongoing work in Dili. The first step is for members of the ACMAV to be made aware of the Bairo Pite Clinic and the desperate need for assistance in helping to improve the immediate and long term health outcomes of the East Timorese people. Tuberculosis and malaria remain highly prevalent and often fatal, and there is an alarming increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS. The following are excerpts from the Bairo Pite Clinic website <http://bairopiteclinic.tripod.com> which paint a picture of the history and current activities of the BPC.

*"The year is 1999. I arrived in Dili and took off through the smoking ruins to find a clinic for those Timorese who had survived the devastating Indonesian exit. So began Bairo Pite Clinic. Scrounging ruins for any remnants of usable equipment or medication, we attended to the thousands of returning refugees, all gaunt, all with diarrhea, many seriously ill, and most with only the shirt on their back...Sixty thousand trickling down from the hills...then the patients with tuberculosis and malaria mixed in with the malnourished children filled with parasites. An enormous challenge yet people were gracious and patient."*

*"...I began my medical mission in earnest. Killing, torture and massacres were a steady diet ... my hands were always in the gaping wounds of suffering." - Dr Dan Murphy*

Bairo Pite Clinic (BPC) is an NGO health clinic, located in Dili, that provides free health care services to those in need. Originally the clinic was set up to serve the immediate needs of a population affected by a humanitarian crisis. As the violence subsided, BPC has adapted and transformed from an emergency medical service to a more comprehensive community health service, offering a variety of services, including childhood immunizations, prenatal care, dental work and emergency care. Today BPC remains one of the most highly visited health clinics in the country. It is served by 32 Timorese staff and three permanent international volunteers. [Ed. Although Dr Dan was originally the only doctor, he is now assisted by a few Indonesian-trained East Timorese doctors, including Dr Aida].

**On average, the clinic sees 300 or more patients per day, with a strict policy that every patient must be seen. The vision of the BPC is "Come work together in Timor-Leste to develop our community's health". This vision has been put into practice through capacity building of the local Timorese and the training of many international medical students who volunteer at the BPC. The work of the BPC would not be possible without the volunteers and the charitable donations from people and organizations around the world.**

From left: Dr Aida, Dr Dan Murphy, Ms Claire Smith (a medical student who has worked at BPC), Dr Andrew Bui and Dr Theong Low

**When East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, East Timorese medical students faced an uncertain future. [There are no tertiary institutions in East Timor, so medical training has been through Indonesian universities] Those that returned to East Timor found a country destroyed by the anger of Indonesian troops and the militias. Some found a place to work at Bairo Pite Clinic alongside Dr Dan. Many still wanted to finish their degrees and with the assistance of BPC and generous others, some have been lucky enough to find places in overseas medical schools. It is hoped upon their return they will be then able to care for their country alongside other East Timorese doctors.**

Points about volunteering for a medical elective at BPC:

- BPC is a primary healthcare clinic run by Dr Dan Murphy.
- Dan works 6 and half days a week, with a teaching round on Sunday mornings.
- Opportunities exist for experience in the following areas: obstetrics, paediatrics, infectious diseases (eg. Malaria, TB, dengue, typhus), dentistry, minor trauma, public health, trauma rehabilitation.
- Indonesian, Tetun and Portuguese are more useful than English.
- There is an expectation of modest dress & polite manner.
- There are some great sites for walking, diving and other tourist activities during respite from clinic work.





## A lucky Year for the Lab Rat?



Andrew Bui addressing the audience, with A/Prof Jun Ping Liu, the president of ACABS, looking on.

The ACMAV has developed links with the Australian Chinese Association of Biomedical Sciences (ACABS). The President of ACABS, A/Prof Jun Ping Liu, invited the ACMAV Committee to its Chinese New Year dinner, held recently at the Box Hill Community Arts Centre for ACABS members and their families. Mr Andrew Bui spoke on behalf of the ACMAV about the interdependence we share with our biomedical counterparts, and encouraged a spirit of collaboration between our two groups.

The audience could sense more than one lab rat trembling at the prospect of the New Year!

## How Smart is Your Right Foot?

Just try this out. It's from an orthopaedic surgeon ... who consulted with a neurologist!



This will boggle your mind and you will keep trying over and over again to see if you can outsmart your foot, but you can't. It's pre-programmed in your brain!

1. WITHOUT anyone watching you (they will think you are MAD.....) and while sitting where you are at your desk in front of your computer, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles.

2. Now, while doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with you right hand.

**Your foot will change direction.** I told you so!!!  
And there's nothing you can do about it!

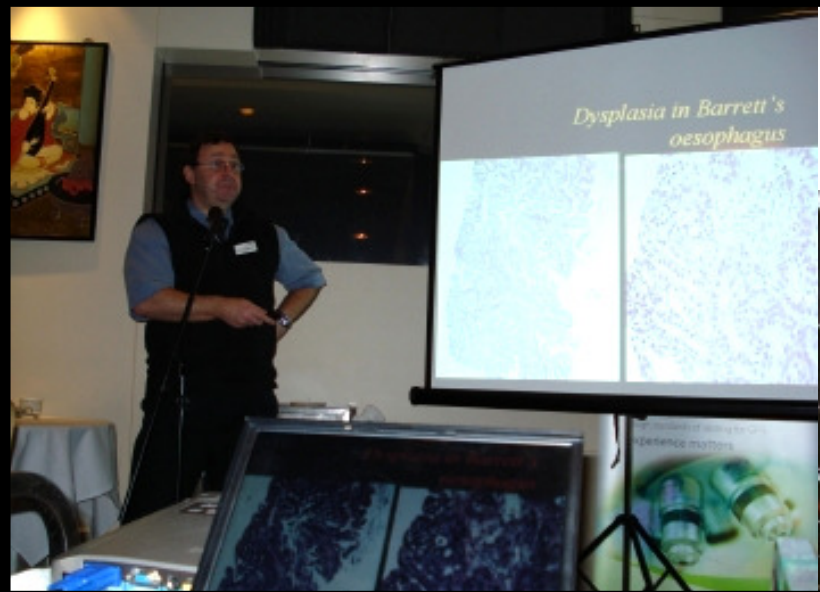
We all know how stupid it is, but before the day is done you are going to try it again, if you've not already done so !!!





## A broad Scope of Discussion: the November Seminar

It was a gastronomic delight, for both stomach and minds at Tai Pan Restaurant on November 21st 2007. Drs May-Ling Wong (left) and Paul Kerdelmidis gave a visually stimulating presentation on gastrointestinal endoscopy and pathology. Indeed a lot of food for thought! Thanks to Dorevitch Pathology and Nycomed for supporting this educational evening.



## Membership Renewal Now Due!

Please renew your membership today by *faxing or sending in the renewal form*. The form can be downloaded from our website at [www.acmav.org/join](http://www.acmav.org/join). Thank you!





# CLASSIFIEDS



## FOR SALE

**Examination Couch** \$150  
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Fax 9329 3200  
(Surgery of Dr TH Goh)



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