



Star Education Fair

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Sacrifice and reward

By RICHARD LIM

MISCONCEPTIONS were shattered at The Star Education Fair 2009 as the realities of the medical practice were discussed during the medicine and dentistry session.

"A lot of young people think that being a doctor will make them rich," said Malaysian Medical Association deputy secretary Dr Kuljit Singh. "If you really want to be rich, be a businessman, set up your own hospital and hire the doctors.



DR KULJIT: There's stability in being a doctor.

The seven-time fair speaker connected with the 1100-strong audience with wit and candour.

"Before you practise, you'll have to undergo tough study at medical school for four-and-a-half to six years and pass about 30 exams and daily assessments. And if you want to specialise, it means another four years of study."

However, not all was doom and gloom as Dr Kuljit talked about the benefits as well.

"Being a doctor gives you a lot of stability. You won't be dependent on the economic climate and your business might soar during a stock market crash when businessmen start suffering from various ailments.

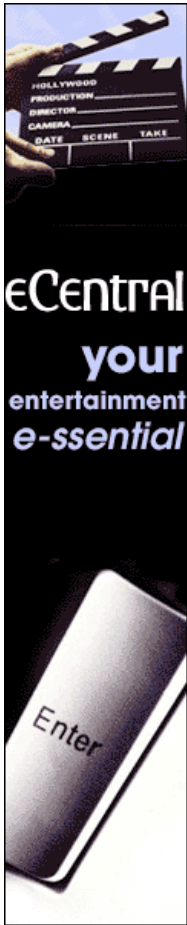
"It is also a noble profession and you'll derive great satisfaction from making a difference in people's lives," he said.

Doctors are not confined to working in a clinic or hospital, Dr Kuljit said. One could opt for a career as a sports doctor or even an army doctor.

To the amusement of the crowd, he proceeded to show a slide of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir and Tan Sri Datuk Dr Ling Liong Sik, as proof that a foray into politics was also possible.

Earlier, Dr Sean Paul, the director of cosmetic and general dentistry at the Studio for Cosmetic Dentistry and Facial Aesthetic, had warmed up the crowd with his talk on what it takes to be a dentist.

Employing a James Bond theme called 'Licence to drill', Dr Paul



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introduced the profession and its evolution.

"Dentistry now involves a lot of empathy - soft touch dentistry requires the doctor to communicate with the client," he said. "Dentists are also empowered by technology and this keeps the job fresh and fun."

Pointing out that there is a shortage of 10,000 dentists in Malaysia, Dr Paul proceeded to explain the various branches of dentistry, such as periodontology, orthodontics, paediatric dentistry and animal dentistry. He also highlighted forensic odontology or CSI dentistry, which was used to help solve crimes before the days of DNA identification.

Prof Datuk Dr Lokman Saim, dean of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's medical faculty, cautioned potential medical students about studying at unrecognised schools.

"There are 330 recognised medical schools locally and abroad, yet students still go to unrecognised institutions. Although these institutions may accept students with a lower SPM result, offer cheaper fees and even take in non-Science stream students, graduates must note that the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) does not recognise them.

"Always check the status of a school, Dr Lokman advised.

"Do not to be taken in by promises of pending recognition and transfers to recognised medicine schools in the final year," he said.

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