I attended the 51st AMSA National Convention in Hobart this winter. AMSA is the representative body of all medical students within Australia. The convention's academic program had several memorable highlights, some of which I will further explain.

Dr Alison Wray was one of the leading neurosurgeons who separated the craniopagus twins Trishna and Krishna at the Royal Children's Hospital. Titled "The Road Less Travelled", her talk was exceptional, and was very much in the spirit of AMSA Convention - many of the plenary sessions there are aimed at inspiring future doctors. Dr Wray highlighted the importance of teamwork in patient care - and how teamwork was particularly important in such a massive surgery. Also she encouraged us to think about what we can achieve, and not to think that harder surgeries are impossible.

Dr Charlie Teo is a neurosurgeon who gave a speech titled "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger". He told the audience about he became to be disliked by other neurosurgeons in Australia and how he believes in the way he operates (he completed some training in the USA where neurosurgery is different). It gave the audience an insight into the darker side of our profession - how colleagues can have conflicting opinions, and it was also a fine example of how the "standard treatment" is not necessarily the best treatment. I particularly liked it because he stands up for what he does.

Glenn McGrath is a retired cricketer who led the bowling attack for Australia, and he gave the last plenary talk (other than the debating final). His story was very inspirational and touching, first talking about his career and going on to tell us about his wife's (the late Jane McGrath) battle with breast cancer and the McGrath Foundation. The McGrath Foundation has raised millions for breast cancer awareness and the audience was captured by Glenn's emotional and inspirational story. Next year's Convention is in Sydney, set to be the biggest ever with 1000 delegates. I look forward to more inspirirational speeches and experiences.

Thanks for the faculty's ongoing support of students attendance at conventions.

Cheers,
Rob Evans