

MIND
your
BODY

The Pro

MYB speaks to health professionals in this weekly column

Fairy godmother



Professor Lim is also the director of the Centre for Hearing Intervention & Language Development and an associate editor of the Singapore Medical Journal.

Associate Professor Lynne Lim, 39, is a consultant at the department of Otolaryngology at the National University Hospital. The ear specialist tells **SAMANTHA ENG** she would like to answer all her patients' prayers

ST PHOTO: SAMUEL HE

I decided to specialise in the ear because...

I thought it was amazing that this very small organ can receive sound and transmit it to the brain in the form of signals so that the brain can understand it.

The ear is a fascinating organ because...

The inner ear cochlea is shaped like a snail. It is only pea-size yet it's already fully developed at birth, so it doesn't change in size as you grow. This small area controls all your hearing. It's extremely complex and sophisticated and it's amazing how you can do so much surgery through such a tiny hole.

A typical day for me would be...

To wake up at 6am, go to work till 7.30pm. When I get home, I'd try to spend about 2 1/2 hours with my seven-year-old daughter. When she goes to bed at 10pm, I continue my paper work.

On weekends, I usually just spend time with my daughter and husband (he's a lawyer). We read, talk, go to parks and museums. We really enjoy going to museums and looking at buildings. In fact, at one time I wanted to be an architect. It's the simple things that keep us sane.

If I were to give an analogy for what I do, I'd be a...

Fairy godmother.

I try very hard to answer my patients' prayers and to make someone well again. But that said, it's not always possible. Like a fairy godmother, when the clock strikes twelve, all my powers are gone.

The one fear people have about treatment is...

That they don't come for treatment early enough. Most don't even realise that they have hearing loss problems.

And when they do consult us, there's this stigma that a hearing aid will make them look old. So many patients are reluctant to use one. There are also those who are not willing to undergo surgery because they are afraid and feel that they can live with the hearing loss.

I love patients who...

Remain optimistic and do the best they can in difficult circumstances. There are some patients with many problems but they never give up. They make the best effort to work on their problems. I think that's remarkable. I believe in miracles. I believe that if you want something badly enough, it will work out. So, my advice to patients is: Don't give up.

Patients who get my goat are...

Those who are rude to the counter staff and the

nurses because they are impatient.

If I could tell them what's on my mind, I'd say...

In an ENT (ear nose throat) clinic, it's hard for us to determine how long each consultation will last. One day it may be you who takes up a lot of the doctor's time while others have to wait. So be patient.

It breaks my heart when...

Patients cannot afford treatment. At one point I even wanted to be a full-time fund raiser. But my husband told me I'd probably be bored.

Things that put a smile on my face...

Family and chocolates. But a lot of other things make me happy too. Mountains, waterfalls, trees and of course, when I've done good work and made a patient happy.

I wouldn't trade places for the world because...

God has given me a lot more than I deserve. I've been given a good family, good friends and most of all, good hands that I can use to help others.

My best tip...

Remain young at heart, never give up and be happy.

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