



Dr. Moojin Choo  
President  
Korean Medical Association

By e-mail

March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### **Letter in support of the Korean Medical Association**

Dear Dr. Choo,

The practice of medicine usually requires a university study of at least five usually six years as a medical undergraduate or four further years of medical studies after a degree as a postgraduate student.

Education to become an independent Surgeon, Pathologist Radiologist or other speciality takes at least four years for family medicine and about 6 years on average to be competent, credentialed highly specialised Medical Practitioner.

This long period of education is necessary because the knowledge base of medicine is huge, growing, is complex and treating patients brings with it significant discipline and multiple aspects of treating human beings. This professional work can require Physicians to bare high risks, in the front line making decisions for the patient as an advocate for the health of the population the Physician takes on a public risk as well.

On commercial motivated advice of the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business, the Korean government now wishes to allow the same medical technology, mastered by Physicians over many years based on science and under-pinned with an ethical code, to practitioners of Traditional Oriental Medicine.

The high levels of quality, safety and effective and personal care Koreans enjoy today is at risk with these suggested changes – driven more by commerce than scientific and medical reasoning. The high levels of expertise and experience derived after over century proven and rigorous clinical and

scientific method cannot translate to other disciplines without the same rigour and standards being demanded.

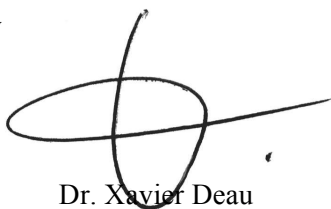
This is an awkward idea and incongruous with a modern, scientific and technological knowledgeable society demanding highest levels of care from competent, well trained highly specialised medical people. This is also an absurd conceptual mismatch: the TOM is based on oriental philosophical principles which are completely different from the foundation of modern medicine emphasizing evidence-based scientific methods. The Oriental Medical Practitioners have never had to use or indeed actually used by these technologies. The years of traditional Oriental training does not see this technology used. Further they are neither able to find proper indications to use this technology, (as indications for an x-ray or a CT-Scan doesn't exist in TOM), nor they are not educated to safely apply radiation for nor have they had any education to interpret the results of such applications (every Physician using and working with radiation has some training).

It is very clear that this move by the Korean government is nothing else but an attempt to de-value the health system and diminish the quality care enjoyed by Koreans today. These actions will not only commercialize health care but debase it with a longer term expense to Koreans and government as such short sighted reduction of standards, in the name of commercialization or competition, will diminish the service experienced by people with increased morbidity and mortality as proven therapies and skilled professionals are by-passed and the notion of compatibility of the science and the TOM basis and deemed erroneously as equivalent.

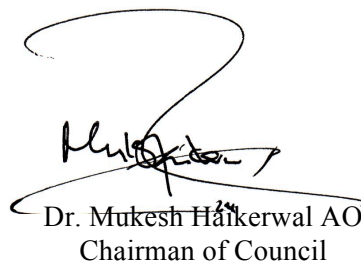
The economic fate of this attempt is also very predictable: It will lead to a massive increase of use of costly technology, many of which are wrongly or not at all indicated and by that to a massive increase in health care spending. As a number of those technologies are potentially dangerous in their application, injuries, suffering and damages are likely to occur. As incompetent interpretation of results will lead to wrong conclusions, futile further diagnostics and futile therapeutic attempts further cost and potential suffering will happen.

Should such a legal opening be coupled to financial caps, that will limit the financial resource by physicians, it will reduce access to evidence-based health care, thus increasing the damage to the Korean patients even further. It is also foreseeable that it will lead to an exodus of medical doctors from Korea as there are shortages in many parts of the world and Korean physicians will be more than welcomed.

Sincerely



Dr. Xavier Deau  
President



Dr. Mukesh Halkerwal AO  
Chairman of Council