## A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN THE APPLICATION OF BOLAM PRINCIPLE IN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE

By

Nurul Atiqah binti Mohd Nor (2005682369) Puteri Iskandariah binti Md Tahir (2005600650)

Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Bachelor in Legal Studies (Hons)

Universiti Teknologi Mara Faculty of Law

September 2007

The students/ authors confirm that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the preparation of this project paper. For her constant guidance, assistance, patience and understanding, we offer our most sincere thanks and appreciation to our supervisor for this project paper, Puan Noraziah Abdul Jabar. Her guidance has kept us on track, her assistance has lessened our burden, her patience has kept us going and her understanding has kept us sane.

Thank you to Puan Norha Abu Hanifah for teaching us the basic of legal research and assisting us in preparing the proposal for this project paper. We are grateful for all that you have taught us.

An acknowledgement of thank you to the staff of Perpustakaan Raja Tun Uda, Shah Alam and Law Library of Universiti Teknologi Mara, Shah Alam for their assistance in using the library facilities and materials.

Gratitude and credit must also be accorded to Professor Madya Puan Sue Valquis for the time in answering in agreeing to have an interview with us. Her contributions had provided us with better information.

To our families and close friends, special thanks to all of you for the continuous encouragement, wise words of advice, financial and emotional support and understanding throughout the process of preparing this project paper. Thank you.

This research project was carried out by a group of two persons, namely; Nurul Atiqah binti Mohd Nor and Puteri Iskandariah binti Md Tahir.

#### **ABSTRACT**

This project paper is regarding the application of Bolam principle in determining breach of duty of care as well as bringing to light the current test decided recently in Malaysia. Besides discussing on the application and rejection, this project paper will also touch on the breach of standard of care of medical practitioners.

This project paper is divided into seven chapters; introduction on the Bolam principle, the law on medical negligence, breach of duty of care of professionals in Malaysia, application of Bolam principle in Singapore, application of Bolam principle in Australia, the pros and cons of Bolam principle and lastly the conclusion as well as recommendation on this topic.

The aim of this project paper is to give an overview on the concept of Bolam test in determining the standard of care required of practitioners in performing their duties. In addition, this project paper attempt to analyse the pros and cons of the Bolam Principle as well as to study whether the rejection of Bolam Principle will reduce the number of medical negligence cases.

Malaysia has rejected the application of Bolam principle recently for the case of Foo Fio Na. However Singapore is still applying the Bolam principle in determining the standard of care of the doctors. The scenario of medical negligence litigation in Malaysia is slowly picking up. As such, this project paper will also provide recommendations on how to reduce the medical negligence litigation.

We hope that this project paper will be beneficial and enlightening to readers as well as able to raise more awareness among doctors and patients towards medical negligence.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement		
Abstract		
Contents		
Table of cases	ix	
CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION		
1.0 Introduction	1	
1.1 Problem statement	4	
1.2 Objective of the study	5	
1.3 Literature review	5	
1.4 Methodology of the study	9	
1.5 Limitations of the study	10	
1.6 Significance of the study	10	
CHAPTER 2 : THE LAW ON MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE		
2.0 Introduction	11	
2.1 The concept of duty of care	12	
2.2 The standard of care expected of a doctor	13	
2.2.1 The Bolam test	14	
2.2.2 A change of attitude	18	
2.2.3 Rejection of Bolam test	21	
2.3 Conclusion	23	

# CHAPTER 3 : BREACH OF DUTY OF CARE OF PRACTITIONERS IN MALAYSIA

	3.0	Introduction	24
	3.1	Medical litigation in Malaysia	24
	3.2	The position of Bolam principle within Malaysian cases	25
	3.3	The application of Roger v Whitaker within Malaysian cases	28
	3.4	Conclusion	33
CI	IAPT	ER 4 : APPLICATION OF BOLAM PRINCIPLE IN SINGAPO	ORE
	4.0	Introduction	34
	4.1	Duty of care	34
	4.2	Application of Bolam principle in Singapore cases	35
	4.3	Conclusion	39
CI	IAPT	ER 5 : APPLICATION OF BOLAM PRINCIPLE IN AUSTRA	LIA
	5.0	Introduction	41
	5.1	Statistic of medical negligence in Australia	42
	5.2	The position of Bolam principle within Australia case	43
	5.3	Conclusion	48
CF	IAPT	ER 6 : PROS AND CONS OF BOLAM PRINCIPLE	
	6.0	Introduction	49
	6.1	Advantages of Bolam principle	49
		6.1.1 Defensive Medicine	50
		6.1.2 Medical litigation	52