

Transforming **PRIMARY & CARE**

From
to **STRENGTH**
STRENGTH

+
ISSUE
01
2018



Tossing to a
Prosperous Start
Together

Spreading Lunar
New Year Cheers

Making Smarter
Food Choices



Editor's Note

Welcome to the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics' (NHGP) inaugural edition of our quarterly newsletter - *Transforming Primary Care*. This new newsletter is designed to share NHGP's journey in transforming primary care. With an evolving healthcare system, polyclinics now play a key role in moving beyond hospital to community. The focus for primary care is on how we can bring patient-centric care closer to home, serve as a platform to educate and promote health, and bring about better health outcomes to the wider community.

For us to continue transforming primary care to meet the growing healthcare demands, we need to scale up our efforts in advancing Family Medicine. This includes upskilling our family physicians to prepare them to deliver enhanced patient care. In fact, many of them have started to take the lead in nurturing the next generation of family physicians and to prepare them for the healthcare challenges ahead. In this first issue, Dr Tang Wern Ee shares how NHGP is advancing Family Medicine through changes in its care delivery model, innovation, research and medical education. You will also get to hear from Dr Richard Lee as he talks about what motivates him to mentor the junior doctors, and how NHG's Family Medicine Residency Programme has prepared Dr Jeremy Koh for his role today.

This month also marks World Family Doctor Day, which recognises our doctors' contributions to our healthcare system. We would therefore like to say a big 'Thank You' to all doctors for the exceptional care shown to patients, and for not just being a doctor, but also a friend and motivator.

Happy reading!

The Editorial Team

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Making Smarter Food Choices



Participants learning about food labels from NHGP Dietitian Ms Liow Hui Shi at the supermarket.

In conjunction with Dietitian's Day, NHGP Dietetic Services and Yishun Health Campus organised a community event themed 'Be a Smart Shopper' on 10 March 2018. Forty participants discovered how to make healthier food choices by going on a supermarket tour and learning about nutritional values of commonly purchased food items. They also took part in quizzes and food tastings at activity booths.

Scan the QR code now to learn all about reading food labels on the HealthHub portal.



3rd Prize (Poster Category) for NHGP

Titled 'Diabetic Foot Screening Course – A Blended Learning Approach to Reduce Out-of-Clinic Time for Healthcare Professionals in Primary Care', the poster presented by Ms Yeoh Hui Ling, Trainer, PCA, and her team clinched the 3rd prize in the poster category at the SingHealth Nursing Conference 2018.

The proposed approach allows both nurses and trainers to spend more time on patient care, and has significantly improved outcomes in the prevention of diabetic foot complications.

Tossing to a Prosperous Start with Partners



A lunchtime Continuing Medical Education (CME) programme hosted by Professor Phillip Choo, Group Chief Executive Officer, National Healthcare Group (NHG) (third from right) and A/Professor Chong Phui-Nah, Chief Executive Officer, NHG Polyclinics and Primary Care (second from right).

Together with members of the Central-North Primary Care Network (CN-PCN), NHGP welcomed the Lunar New Year with a big 'Lo Hei' on 10 February 2018. This programme is the first event organised for General Practitioners in the CN-PCN since the network's inauguration in January 2018.

Three specialists were invited by NHGP's Primary Care Academy (PCA) to share their expertise on the management

of diabetes including diabetic eye complications and renal complications. The sharing was informative and interactive with the use of electronic live polling where attendees voted for the best care management plan in various scenario-based case studies using their mobile devices. Various booths were also set up by NHGP's Nursing Services department for attendees to learn more about the effect diabetes has on patients, such as diabetic foot ulcer.

Celebrating Lunar New Year with Ang Mo Kio Residents

On 24 February 2018, a group of NHGP staff from Ang Mo Kio (AMK) Polyclinic gathered to spread festive cheer by visiting and distributing goodie bags to close to 80 households in the area. This home-visit was NHGP's way of thanking the residents for their patience and understanding during the construction of the new AMK Polyclinic facility. The new AMK Polyclinic has since opened its doors on 29 January 2018.



AMK clinic team paying a home-visit to resident (centre).

Are You Planning a Health Talk?

Apart from being a one-stop, regional training centre catering to the training needs and skills upgrading of primary care doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and ancillary staff in primary care, NHGP's PCA also conducts courses for the community to enhance their knowledge in health and wellness. PCA is also frequently approached by public organisations and government agencies to conduct customised, informative and interactive health talks and workshops. One such customised

workshop PCA organised was for Singapore Police Force staff to learn about the common cancers in Singapore, the different types of chronic diseases, and stress and depression management on 13 March 2018.



Keen to plan such sessions for your organisation? Write in to secretariat@pca.sg or call them at 6496 6127.



Advancing Family Medicine

Author

Dr Tang Wern Ee

Family Physician, Senior Consultant,
Education Director, Family Medicine Development
and Head, Clinical Research Unit
National Healthcare Group Polyclinics

Family Medicine centres on providing personal, comprehensive and seamless healthcare for patients and their families. In this issue, Dr Tang Wern Ee shares how NHGP is advancing Family Medicine through innovations in its care delivery model, as well as research and medical education.

The Importance of Family Medicine in Singapore's Primary Care Ecosystem

Family Physicians play a key role in the health of the population and are the first point of contact with the healthcare system for many patients. With a rapidly ageing population, longer life expectancies and an increasing number of patients with multiple and complex medical conditions, the role of a Family Physician to anchor and coordinate care for the patients as well as partner patients and their families as they navigate the healthcare system becomes increasingly important. This has resulted in an expansion of the roles

of Family Physicians, as well as the need for more Family Physicians.

NHGP's Approach to Advancing Family Medicine

NHGP is committed to the vision of adding years to life and life to years for patients through innovative solutions to transform the primary care landscape. One example is the holistic team-oriented care model which pairs patients with a designated team comprising two Family Physicians, a Care Manager, a Care Coordinator and Allied Health Professionals. Additionally, the Central-North Primary Care Network with 30 General Practitioners established early this

year will see NHGP expand primary care capacity to meet the growing healthcare needs of an ageing population. NHGP is also implementing quality improvement initiatives to promote patient safety and improve care delivery. Under a National Medical Research Council Centre Grant, NHGP is partnering the Institute of Mental Health and NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) in building up core research capabilities in the area of multi-morbidity, understanding and improving treatment related behaviours of patients and the physical health needs of patients with mental health issues, thus expanding our research capacity and capabilities in the field of primary care.

ADVANCING FAMILY MEDICINE AND TRANSFORMING PRIMARY CARE AT NHGP

Anticipating the future needs of patients and the community and developing new care delivery models

Advocating relevant changes in primary care resourcing and infrastructure

Equipping medical, nursing and allied health professionals with the necessary skills required to meet current and future primary care needs

Improving existing practice, translating research to practice and creating new knowledge to improve patient outcomes and care experiences



All these efforts are aimed at one goal – more comprehensive, coordinated and continuous care for patients.

Nurturing the Next Generation

At NHGP, grooming the new generation of doctors begins with the introduction of Family Medicine principles and skills to medical students in their formative years in medical school. NHGP Family Physicians are actively involved in teaching medical undergraduates from both NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUSMedicine) and LKCMedicine. NHGP was recently the training site for LKCMedicine's first Student Assistantship Programme (SAP) in Family Medicine – a first in Singapore. In this experiential learning programme aimed at improving the transition of medical students to doctors, Year 5 students who had passed their final clinical and written examinations were embedded into clinic teams and closely supervised by their clinical teachers.

Whilst not all medical students will become Family Physicians, the undergraduate Family Medicine training received will not only help to prepare medical students for work in an outpatient primary care setting, but will also provide them with a good foundation in a person-focused approach to patient

care that is applicable to all medical specialties.

Upon graduation, medical graduates can apply for the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme where they will undergo a 3-year structured, competency-based training programme to gain a comprehensive foundation in clinical knowledge and skills essential to the practice of Family Medicine. Under this programme, they run full-day continuity clinics at NHGP with fellow residents under the tutelage of family physician supervisors to see patients.

Professional Development Opportunities

Family Physicians at NHGP are kept up-to-date and upskilled via in-house continuous medical education learning activities such as talks and workshops. They are encouraged to pursue advanced Family Medicine training with the Fellowship Programme of the College of Family Physicians Singapore and develop their clinical skills in focused areas such as geriatrics, paediatrics, and dermatology. In addition to their clinical roles, Family Physicians may take on added roles in healthcare administration, medical education and research. NHGP Family Physicians lead inter-professional teams in quality improvement projects, research projects within NHGP, with

“Nurturing future generations of Family Physicians is an important part of advancing primary care in Singapore. I am grateful for the tremendous effort and commitment put in by my fellow Family Physicians to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment at the polyclinics.”

- Dr Tang Wern Ee

“Dr Low Kang Yih from Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic is a holistic Family Physician who addresses the patient's issue and his warmth towards patients have drawn great praises. I have learnt the ideal model of Family Medicine from him, to be comprehensive in my approach and to always be an advocate for the patient.”

- Ang Wee Kiat, LKCMedicine, Year 5 (2018)

community partners and other healthcare institutions. They are also actively involved in collaborative work involving General Practitioners and specialists.

Family Physicians play an increasingly important role in the healthcare system. At NHGP, we strongly support the advancement of Family Medicine to strengthen the Primary Care Ecosystem in Singapore.

Are you thinking of taking up Family Medicine? Then scan the QR code to find out more about NHG's Family Medicine Residency Programme!



Inspiring a New Generation of Family Doctors

Dr Jeremy Koh,
Family Physician, Hougang Polyclinic

Dr Richard Lee, Family Physician,
Consultant, Woodlands Polyclinic

With Singapore's ageing population, family physicians are increasingly needed to manage more complex medical conditions. Find out how NHGP's Family Physicians have developed from strength to strength and are prepared for the challenges ahead.

Against this challenging backdrop, Family Physicians at NHGP pitch in to mentor medical undergraduates and residents. In turn, young doctors who have benefitted from this training do their part to impart the knowledge and skills they have acquired to nurture the next generation of family physicians, creating a cycle of continuous sharing and learning.

We get up close with Family Physicians Dr Jeremy Koh and Dr Richard Lee, who share with us their experiences as part of this cycle to deliver forward-looking and holistic primary care to patients.

After completing the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme, Dr Jeremy Koh is now a Family Physician at Hougang Polyclinic. Dr Koh is currently teaching LKCMedicine Year 5 SAP students and will join the NHG

Family Medicine Residency Programme core faculty as a tutor in the new academic year. From Academic Year 2018/2019, Dr Koh will be teaching the NUSMedicine students in Hougang Polyclinic.

How did you discover your passion for Family Medicine?

My passion in Family Medicine began in my fourth year in medical school at University College Cork in Ireland, when I was posted to a general practitioner's clinic in a rural area. Over there, the clinic was the nearest medical care facility for patients as there was no hospital for miles around. I saw a wide variety of cases ranging from emergencies like acute heart attacks and strokes to less serious conditions like upper respiratory tract infections and abrasion wounds. Interacting with these cases and patients really sparked my interest.

What then drew you to join the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme?

I was attracted by the fact that the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme provides an all-rounded training programme to prepare residents for primary care practice. This includes being able to rotate through all the relevant departments across both medical and surgical disciplines, ensuring that I would be well-prepared to deal with such cases in primary care after completing the programme.

Over the course of the programme, did you encounter any challenges? How did you overcome them?

Due to the demands of residency training, we were changing departments so frequently that it could be difficult to keep up at times! This, coupled with a steep learning curve, made things challenging. However, with the great support and encouragement I received from my fellow residents and colleagues from the various departments, I was able

to ride through these challenges, which ultimately became valuable learning experiences.

Now that you have completed the programme and started practising, which aspect of the programme do you find most helpful to your current work?


Starting from the first year of residency, I was able to run my own resident continuity clinic under the supervision of senior Family Physicians. This aspect of the programme allowed me to follow-up with my patients over the course of three years, and helped me to learn how best to manage patients with multiple conditions in a holistic way. Most importantly, I was able to learn and develop the art of building a relationship of trust with my patients over time.

“All my fellow residents and tutors have played important roles in shaping my current practice by helping and encouraging me, so kudos to them all!”

- Dr Jeremy Koh


THREE THINGS ABOUT DR JEREMY KOH


 He looks forward to consultation time with his patients, where he can help to effect a change in their medical conditions.


 As he enjoys watching soccer, his dream job as a child was to be a soccer match commentator.

 On days off, he cycles and explores new dining outlets.

GET TO KNOW DR RICHARD LEE

 Dr Lee enjoys eating ice cream and desserts with his two teenage daughters. After eating, he hits the gym to work off the excess calories!

 Every morning, Dr Lee arrives at Woodlands Polyclinic and spends about half an hour to reflect and clear his mind before starting a new day.

 His professional hero is Ian McWhinney, a Canadian GP also known as the 'Father of Family Medicine'.

Dr Richard Lee is a Family Physician, Consultant at Woodlands Polyclinic and Assistant Director of Family Medicine Development. He is currently the Principal Lead of LKCMedicine Year 4 Family Medicine Posting and core tutor of NUSMedicine Year 3 Family Medicine Posting.

Tell us more about your role as a Principal Lead of LKCMedicine Year 4 Family Medicine Posting.

I oversee the Family Medicine Teaching Block across all LKCMedicine Clinical Partners of the Year 4, and work closely with the LKCMedicine Academic Affairs Curriculum Team and LKCMedicine Clinical Partners' Education Offices to ensure effective engagement of the learning sessions in Family Medicine posting. I am also the co-Lead in Year 4 Exams and Assessment committee.

What is your role as a mentor to the young doctors at your clinic?

Being a mentor to the young doctors at the clinic includes guiding them through the day-to-day clinic activities. We hold regular feedback sessions to allow them to reflect and grow at their own pace. Being there for them in the clinic allows the younger doctors to clarify doubts and build on their learning gaps.

How can experienced family physicians in the community do more to help in training the next generation?

Family physicians can work with different community partners to bring Family Medicine into the heartlands and collaborate with like-minded health professionals to do primary care research in the community. Results from such research projects will transform Family Medicine and improve the training of the next generation of family physicians.

What is the most important leadership lesson you have learnt, and how is it valuable?

The most important leadership lesson I have learnt is that one needs to inspire trust and cooperation from all stakeholders, while at the same time look for opportunities to innovate and do better.

“Family Medicine is rewarding for me as I can make a difference and be a companion to my patients on their journey of recovery.”

- Dr Richard Lee



Care of the Elderly Workshop*

The Primary Care Academy offers a training programme conducted by experienced registered nurses to equip you and your caregiver with the basic skills in caring for the elderly. If you are a caregiver or employer of a caregiver, this training programme will enhance your ability and improve your caregiver's skills in providing excellent care to your loved ones.

Date	29 August 2018, Wednesday
Time	9.00am – 6.00pm
Venue	Primary Care Academy Learning Centre, 2 Teck Whye Crescent, Singapore 688846
Course Fee	\$110 (excluding GST) \$10 (with CTG)

The course covers:



Hygiene and Grooming



Feeding



Waste Handling



Safety



Communication



To register, please call
6496 6683



Or email us at
secretariat@pca.sg

* Approved under the Caregivers Training Grant (CTG), by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

Why Queue?

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Download the App
or visit www.healthhub.sg/appointment



NHGP Online Appointment System
www.nhgp.com.sg



NHGP Contact Centre
6355 3000

Operating Hours

Mon to Fri (am) : 8:00am to 1:00pm
 Mon to Fri (pm) : 2:00pm to 4:30pm
 Sat : 8:00am to 2:30pm
 Sun & PH : Closed

Registration

Mon to Fri : 7:30am to 4:00pm
 Sat : 7:30am to 12:00pm



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