

Transforming PRIMARY & CARE

Investing In
**RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION**

+
ISSUE
04
2018



| INNOVATING HEALTHCARE
FOR TOMORROW

| KNOW YOUR
MEDICATION

| LET'S FIGHT
DIABETES!

Hello

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first issue of *Transforming Primary Care* in 2019. At the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP), we continue our journey towards building a sustainable healthcare system by actively looking into ways of enhancing our primary care capacity to better serve our patients.

With this goal in mind, NHGP has been strengthening its primary healthcare capabilities through collaboration and innovation. In October 2018, we held our 11th Primary Care Forum themed 'Primary Care: Integration and Innovation for the Future'. The Forum brought healthcare professionals and industry experts together to discuss how healthcare can be delivered effectively and seamlessly in the future. By looking ahead and innovating for the future, Singapore's primary care sector will be better prepared to meet challenges down the road.

Within NHGP, building research capacity and capability is key to driving innovation and improvements in primary care. This issue's cover story features our journey in primary care research – from improving the care delivery model, to developing the clinical team's capabilities.

As the population ages, the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes becomes a concern. All the more it is important to empower patients with chronic conditions towards better management of their health. In November 2018, NHGP also took the opportunity to showcase our initiatives to empower patients with diabetes at the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Diabetes.

NHGP's progress in primary care transformation thus far is made possible through close collaboration with many supportive partners. This year, we hope to work even more closely with them to shape the future of healthcare and guide our patients to wellness.

Thank you for reading!

The Editorial Team



CONTENTS



03

Transforming Primary Care

NHGP's Journey in Primary Care Research



05

Up Close With Lifelong Learner



06

In and Around

Innovating Healthcare for Tomorrow
Know Your Medication
Let's Fight Diabetes!



08

What's Up

Making an Appointment at NHGP
Guiding Hands Volunteer Programme

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NHGP'S JOURNEY

in Primary Care Research

For more than a decade, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) has endeavoured to transform the primary care landscape in Singapore in order to meet the long-term needs of an ageing population. In this issue, we highlight NHGP's ongoing efforts to build its research capability and its past research achievements.



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The Importance of Primary Care Research

Research is not a word often associated with primary care. Indeed, most primary care research does not involve the use of cutting-edge technology or life-saving cancer drugs that capture the public's imagination. Primary care research involves the translation of scientific knowledge into the day-to-day clinical practice of caring for patients in the community. Such research plays a crucial role in providing the evidence base to support health decision-making in the population.

Engaging Clinicians in Research

NHGP recognises the importance of and the need to support primary care research in Singapore. In 2007, NHGP's Clinical Research Unit (CRU) was formally set up to facilitate and support in-house research activities and increase research capability and capacity.

Since the launch of the CRU, NHGP clinicians have collaborated widely with established researchers from national institutions including the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Duke-NUS, the Institute of Mental Health, Communicable Disease Centre, Singapore Eye Research Institute and the National Skin Centre. NHGP has also participated in large population studies and clinical trials involving vaccines and chronic disease medications.

In addition to collaborations with academic partners, research by NHGP clinicians have been supported by intramural research grant funding and research training programmes. These have enabled studies that contributed to improved care delivery, including the teamlet care model and the implementation of Medication Reconciliation Services in polyclinics. More recently, the prestigious National Medical Research Centre (NMRC) Grant was awarded to the study titled, 'Primary Health Care Research in Multi-morbidity and Mental Health in a Multi-Ethnic Population' (PRIME).

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Primary care research involves the translation of scientific knowledge into the day-to-day clinical practice of caring for patients in the community.

– Dr Tang Wern Ee, Family Physician,
Senior Consultant, Education Director,
Family Medicine Development, and
Head, Clinical Research Unit

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Nurturing the Next Generation of Healthcare Researchers

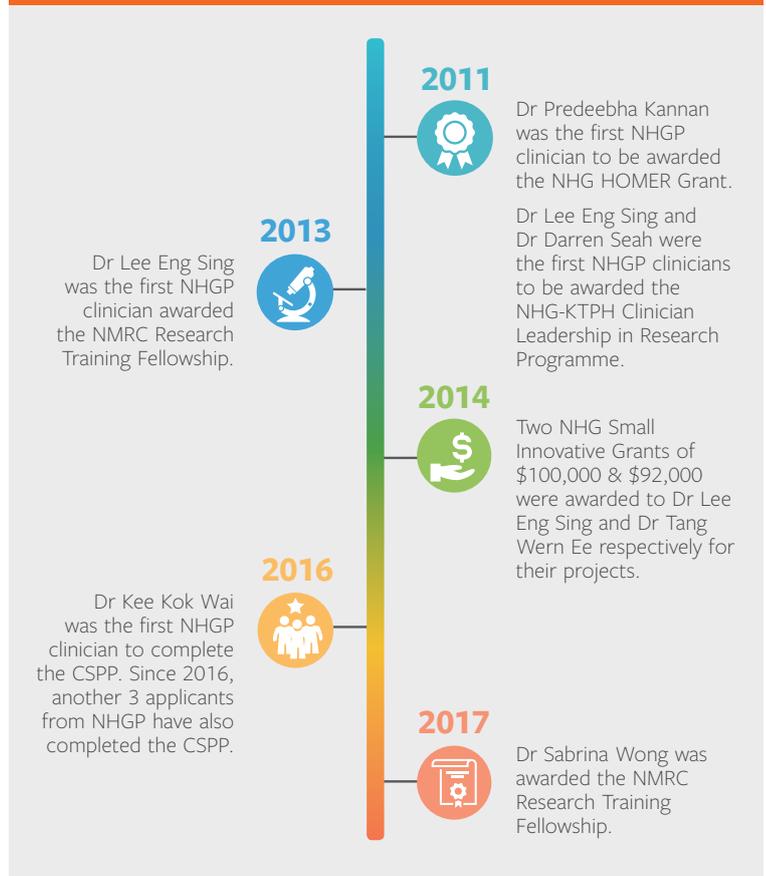
NHGP aims to contribute to effective clinical practice by conducting research that is relevant to patients and primary care clinicians, and to create an environment where good quality research can be designed and delivered. To this end, NHGP is grooming primary care researchers and equipping them with the skills to drive innovation.

For instance, the seed funding component of the NMRC Grant awarded to PRIME aims to support early career researchers by allowing them to generate preliminary data necessary to apply for high-level national grants. Junior researchers involved in these pilot projects also benefit from the guidance and mentorship of senior researchers.

Apart from involvement in seed funding projects, the competitive two-year NHG-LKCMedicine Clinician-Scientist Preparatory Programme (CSPP) is also open to selected clinicians in NHGP. Its goal is to provide clinicians with exposure to research early in their career through training and project experience. Successful applicants are awarded research training and project funding, as well as research mentorship.

Through these efforts, NHGP is steadily growing a pool of well-trained clinical research investigators and developing a rich research culture, both of which are essential in advancing family medicine and transforming primary healthcare.

CULTIVATING RESEARCH TALENT IN NHGP



RESEARCH IN NHGP

Primary Health Care Research in Multi-morbidity and Mental Health

NHGP, together with the Institute of Mental Health and NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, is conducting research in the areas of multi-morbidity*, understanding and improving treatment adherence in patients, and mental illness in the local primary care setting. In 2017, NHGP's efforts to build research capability and capacity in primary care received a \$5 million NMRC Grant to fund this research.



Multi-morbidity is commonly defined as the presence of multiple long-term health conditions in one person.

Enhancing the Transition of Care Through Medication Reconciliation Services

Between March 2016 and February 2017, Dr Kee Kok Wai, Family Physician, NHGP, conducted a study of the implementation of Medication Reconciliation Services (MRS) on patients discharged from a hospital to a primary care setting. The MRS which ensures all information is shared with family physician in primary care, was proven to have the dual benefits of enhancing the continuity of care as well as being a time-saving initiative. With positive feedback from doctors, MRS has now been implemented across all NHG Polyclinics.



Lifelong LEARNER

▲ Dr Vivek Bansal believes that research experience has helped him become a better Family Physician.

To foster a strong culture of research, NHGP grooms and exposes clinicians to research in the early phase of their career. This is done through initiatives such as the NHG-LKCMedicine Clinician-Scientist Preparatory Programme (CSPP), a joint programme between NHG and LKCMedicine comprising project funding, sponsored research training and mentorship.

The NHGP recipient for the CSPP in FY2018 was Dr Vivek Bansal, a Family Physician with Woodlands Polyclinic. We speak to Dr Vivek about what drives his passion for research.

Congratulations, Dr Vivek, on your successful CSPP application! Could you share with us the role of research in your capacity as a Family Physician?

As a Family Physician, I feel my job scope goes beyond clinical practice to include finding potential gaps in healthcare so as to improve healthcare practice and delivery. As such, I believe in complementing research with practice. In today's fast changing, evidence-based practice environment, it is important to learn research skills and apply them to solve real-world problems using available health services data. This will benefit both healthcare providers and patients, and in turn make the system more efficient.

Why did you decide to apply to the programme?

After completing my residency in Family Medicine, I got to know of CSPP while undergoing further training in the Fellowship in the College of Family Medicine Course (FCFP). As a firm believer of lifelong learning, pursuing FCFP and CSPP in tandem helped me find synergies across both endeavours. The CSPP, in particular, has been a great opportunity for me to gain hands-on research experience.

What are your core research principles?

I believe in the core principles of conducting research – responsibility, accuracy and translatability.

Responsibility relates to our duty to differentiate good, bad and unnecessary research. Accuracy relates to the constant need for our research skills to be sharpened and honed, for which I attend workshops under the CSPP. Finally, translatability implies the incorporation of our research findings into our clinical practice.

What do you hope to gain from the programme?

I am currently in the initial stages of my research project, and look forward to getting structured guidance from the programme and opportunities for self-growth. After I complete the CSPP, I hope to be able to translate the skills I have learnt into problem-solving at work, and efficiently juggle my duties as a clinician, educator and researcher.



In today's fast changing, evidence-based practice environment, it is important to learn research skills and apply them to solve real-world problems using available health services data.





INNOVATING HEALTHCARE FOR TOMORROW



Participants of the GP symposium on the second day of the Primary Care Forum listening to Dr Young Barnaby Edward, Consultant, National Centre for Infectious Diseases, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, speaking about adult vaccinations in the tropics.

NHGP held the Primary Care Forum (PCF) on 26 and 27 October 2018 themed 'Primary Care: Integration & Innovation for the Future', focusing on innovations and improvements that will transform primary care. In its 11th year, the Forum was held in conjunction with the Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress. Mr Amrin Amin, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health (MOH), graced the event as Guest-of-Honour and delivered the opening address.

The Forum featured a line-up of industry experts from both Singapore and overseas, such as Professor Martin Marshall, Professor of Healthcare Improvement at University College London, as well as Professor James Dunbar, Honorary Professor at the Centre for Population Health Research, Deakin University and Research Advisor at Australian Health Policy. A General Practitioners (GPs) symposium on the second day of the Forum was held for GPs to share how they engage with providers from other sectors to manage patients effectively in the primary care setting.



(From left) Dr Gowri Dorisamy, Director of Care Integration, NHGP, Professor Martin Marshall, Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, CEO of NHGP and Primary Care, Mr Amrin Amin, Dr Simon Lee, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Clinical Informatics Officer, NHGP, Professor James Dunbar, and Dr Darren Seah, Director of Family Medicine Development, NHGP.



KNOW YOUR MEDICATION

To raise awareness of the benefits of a medication list and encourage patients to create their own, the National Healthcare Group launched a 'Know Your Medicines, Get It Right' campaign from 10 to 20 October 2018. Tissue packs customised with related information were distributed to visiting patients at pharmacies across NHG Polyclinics. Educational posters teaching patients how to create their own medication list were also strategically located at the outpatient pharmacies.

With a medication list, patients, especially those with chronic conditions, will be able to better track the medications they are taking, take note of any drug allergies they may have, and communicate this information to the doctor and pharmacist during their medical appointments.

WRITE YOUR OWN MEDICATION LIST!

A medication list helps you and your healthcare provider track your medications and keep you safe.

Name: Tan Kim Long Updated on: 05/09/2018
 ID No.: S1230000A
 Medical Conditions: High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol
 Drug Allergy: Suction (Lact)

No.	Medication Name & Strength	How to take the medication	Used For
1.	Nifedipine LA 30mg tablet	Take 1 tablet every morning	Blood pressure
2.	Fish Oil evening capsule	Take 1 capsule 3 times a day after food	Health
3.	Paracetamol 500mg tablet	Take 1 tablet 4 times daily when necessary	Pain / Fever

Example of a Medication Label

Nifedipine LA 30mg Tablets
 Take one tablet every morning for blood pressure control.

Tip for Writing a Medication List

- Follow the example on the left to create your medication list.
- Medications may have different formulations e.g. Long-Acting (L.A.) or Sustained Release (SR). Do write these information on your medication list.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you need help to write your medication list.

Bring along your updated medication list and show it to your doctor or pharmacist at every visit.
 Log on to <http://bit.ly/NHGPML> or scan to download a blank medication list.

Scan this QR code to download the medication list





LET'S FIGHT DIABETES!

In conjunction with World Diabetes Day on 14 November 2018, NHGP organised various roadshows, exhibitions and talks in October and November with the aim of raising awareness about the management, care, and prevention of diabetes. Here is a snapshot of the events that took place and tips shared by NHGP experts on how to keep diabetes at bay.

Eating Well

From reading food labels to choosing healthier beverages, patients and their caregivers learnt how to maintain a balanced diet at health education roadshows across all six NHG Polyclinics. They also participated in a simple yet educational game of guessing the sugar content of some common beverages, and walked away with prizes.

'Get up! Get Shoes! Get Fit!'

At Geylang and Yishun Polyclinics, NHGP podiatrists and physiotherapists shared the importance of foot care and physical activity. They also conducted related activities such as an exercise session to encourage patients to lead a healthy lifestyle.

'Get Fit, Be Fit and Stay Fit'

To convey the importance of staying physically active to manage diabetes, NHGP nurses and physiotherapists gave a talk at Toa Payoh Polyclinic, explaining how exercises with varying levels of intensity are suitable for different groups of people, and the importance of fitness as part of diabetes management.



◀ Roadshow and talk organised by NHGP in conjunction with World Diabetes Day 2018 to raise awareness about the management, care, and prevention of diabetes.



'Kiss Insomnia Goodnight'

A talk conducted by an NHGP psychologist for the NHGP Diabetes Support Group highlighted the relationship between insomnia, stress and diabetes, with an emphasis on how sleep problems can negatively affect diabetes management.

Practising Self-Compassion

Extending kindness to others and compassion to one's self can help one better manage depression and diabetes, as well as improve the overall mental and physical well-being of those with chronic conditions. This was the key message shared by NHGP's Clinical Psychologists and a Family Physician at a talk for Ang Mo Kio residents co-organised by NHGP and TOUCH Home Care. The talk was also delivered in Mandarin at Cheng San Community Club.

A Learning Journey

As part of the inaugural Ministerial Conference on Diabetes in November 2018, senior management representatives from MOH and NHGP brought delegates from various countries on a learning journey to Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic. The delegates were shown NHGP's various initiatives to improve patients' overall health, such as the teamlet care model, foot screenings and eye screenings for patients with diabetes.



△ MOH and NHGP senior management representatives hosting international delegates at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic.

WHY QUEUE?

You no longer need to come early just to queue! Book your same-day appointment from the comfort of your home and manage your waiting time via the following methods:



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



NHGP Contact Centre 6355 3000

Clinic 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



GUIDING HANDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

At the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, we believe in shared social responsibility and contributing back to society. The Guiding Hands Programme offers you opportunities to assist and guide patients as they navigate our polyclinics. Volunteers can help fulfill a wide range of support roles, including but not limited to falls prevention, health advocacy, roving guides and more.

JOIN US!

Are you caring and committed? Take the first step and register your interest as a volunteer with us today. Contact us at:

6496 6767

volunteer@nhgp.com.sg

https://www.nhgp.com.sg/Be_A_Volunteer/

