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SingHealth **DukeNUS**
ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTRE

SURGERY

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Finding the Answer

featuring Prof Narayanan Gopalakrishna Iyer

Surgery can help cure some cancers but not always. When drugs also fail to offer a cure, I want to know why.

While my primary aim is to cure my patients, as an oncologist, I am always confronted with failure. I know I need to accept that and move on. But the question of why some patients respond to a drug and some do not bothers me and drives me to find the answer.

In this sense, I am constantly learning from every patient I treat. I want to find out if I can treat a disease in a more targeted way, or offer alternative treatments. This is why I am passionate about research.

It takes a community

Having Duke-NUS support us in our efforts has been very encouraging. Duke-NUS has slowly and steadily become a recognised name in research. My colleagues and I have been fortunate that our concerted efforts have helped us build a reputation for work to be respected.

To be able to find like-minded colleagues to form a research community is so heartening and inspiring. For instance, for my immunotherapy research on Epstein-Barr Virus-associated nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC), it was Dr Darren Lim, a medical oncologist, who pushed for a clinical trial with a pharmaceutical firm. The Taiwanese team from the National Taiwan University Hospital whom we worked with were great collaborators. The energy of the whole team was incredible!

Outcomes from immunotherapy study

Recently, the research findings from this clinical trial were published in *Nature Communications*. My team had studied the clinical efficacy and biomarker analysis of two immunotherapy drugs in recurrent or metastatic Epstein-Barr Virus-NPC.

While Epstein-Barr Virus-associated NPC is common in Singapore, we have no official drugs registered here to treat this cancer. Most of the studies on this type of NPC have been done in China with China-made drugs that are not available outside of China. The purpose of our trial was to test if a combination of biologically-similar drugs, nivolumab and ipilimumab, can be effective in treating recurrent NPC.

In a nutshell, our study found that about 30% to 40% of the patients who had recurrent NPC, despite undergoing chemotherapy, benefited from a combination of nivolumab and ipilimumab. The next phase of our trial, as agreed with the pharmaceutical company, is to identify the specific biomarkers of the patients who benefited from the treatment, and those who did not. In this way, we can better predict who will respond to our immunotherapy drugs.

Becoming opinion leaders

While my research team and I are very pleased that our hard work and efforts have paid off with significant findings, having a high-impact scientific journal publish our paper has been a fantastic experience. This paper was published on 15 May 2023, making it my second this year—my first paper profiling immunotherapy in head and neck squamous cell cancers was published on 27 March 2023 in *Nature Communications*.

As opinion leaders who have research findings featured in respected publications that attract media interest, more doors are now open to us. For example, we can attract more regulatory support, study grants, collaborations with pharmaceutical firms and global partnerships. All these mean more treatment options for our patients.



Professor Narayanan Gopalakrishna Iyer

Head and Senior Consultant, Head and Neck Surgery, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS)

Senior Consultant, SingHealth Duke-NUS Head and Neck Centre

Head of Division of Medical Sciences, National Cancer Centre Singapore

Director (Clinical-Scientist Development), Allied and Nursing Education, ACP (Oncology)

Adjunct Investigator, Singapore Immunology Network, A*Star



45 Best Medicine Scientists in Singapore for 2023 by Research.com

Congratulations to Prof Pierce Chow!

Congratulations to Prof Pierce Chow from the Department of Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary and Transplant Surgery, SGH-NCCS, who has been ranked among the 45 Best Medicine Scientists in Singapore for 2023 by Research.com!

Research.com's objective is to motivate scientists, businessmen and decision-makers around the world to investigate where leading experts are heading and to provide opportunities for the research community to recognise leading experts in specific fields of research from across research institutions worldwide.



Professor Pierce Chow
Vice Chair (Research), Surgery ACP; NMRC-funded Senior Clinician Scientist; Inaugural Programme Director, PhD Programme in Clinical Science, Duke-NUS Medical School;

Surgical Director, Comprehensive Liver Cancer Clinic, National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS);

Senior Consultant, Department of Hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) and Transplant Surgery, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS)

My Surgeon-Innovator Journey

featuring Dr Rena Dharmawan

Assistant Professor Rena Dharmawan

Co-Director, Surgical Technology & Innovation, Surgery ACP Consultant, Head and Neck Surgery, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) Consultant, SingHealth Duke-NUS Head and Neck Centre

Assistant Professor (Clinical Innovation) and Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Duke-NUS Medical School (Singapore)



Surgeon-Innovator who/what/how?

When I tell people I'm a surgeon-innovator, I'm often asked what exactly I do. That made me reflect on what really is the definition of a surgeon-innovator, or clinician-innovator for that matter? It's a word so loosely used by everyone in our AMC, but everyone seems to have differing opinions and there does not seem to be one clear definition.

I believe that surgeon-innovators are really a spectrum but, in my opinion, here's my definition:

They are surgically trained individuals who bridge the gap between healthcare delivery and emerging technologies by inventing useful and novel solutions to unmet clinical needs. With their knowledge, networks, and experience, they bring these solutions to commercialisation.

Over the years, I've learnt to juggle clinical work with my passion for innovation. And this is not without effort and discipline. Here's how I do it.

1. Master good time management. Decide how much time you are willing to allocate to being a clinician and an innovator/entrepreneur. There is no right answer, really, only what you are comfortable with.
2. Choose your surgical sub-specialty carefully. Pick one that allows you to take time off to innovate and research. There are indeed some very demanding sub-specialties within surgery, which can make balancing both innovation and clinical work a tad more challenging. As such, I suggest if you are serious about incorporating innovation into your surgical career, to consider choosing a sub-specialty that not only you are passionate about, but also allows you time to pursue innovation.
3. Place yourself in a supportive ecosystem and surround yourself with good people—bosses, co-workers, family, and friends who understand, encourage, and respect innovation. This is key, especially if you are a young clinician and part of a department. You need leadership and mentors who understand your interests and want you to be successful in both your clinical and innovation work. On that note, I am fortunate and grateful to have had the support of kind and like-minded people throughout my clinician-innovator career.
4. Finally, ensure that you are a good and safe surgeon first before you pursue other passions, be it in innovation, research, administration, etc. Once you put your mind to taking on passion work on top of your clinical work, be sure to pull all your weight in both aspects and do your best to show good results. No neglecting either of them, and definitely no procrastination.

Of course, no one said it's going to be easy. There are bound to be sacrifices. But with perseverance and courage, the stars shall align in your favour. I'm thankful they've aligned for me, and I hope the same for you too.

SKH Doctors Make Use of AI Tool to Spot Nearly Invisible Colon Cancer Growths

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing an increasing role in our daily lives. In the realm of colorectal surgery, AI-assisted detection and diagnosis have been increasingly used by specialists in colonoscopies as it increases the polyp detection rate. With AI-assisted functionality acting as a second observer and highlighting abnormalities, its screening sensitivity has encouraged doctors to inspect the area more closely. Its image-enhanced capabilities may also aid the differentiation between pre-cancerous and non-precancerous polyps. It is thus a useful tool to augment the detection and removal of pre-cancerous polyps for colorectal cancer prevention.

Sengkang General Hospital (SKH) has adopted the use of AI-assisted colonoscopy since July 2021 and has amassed close to 3,000 cases of AI-assisted colonoscopy to date. Based on a recent year-long study, AI-assisted colonoscopies yielded significantly higher rates of polyp removal (34%) as compared to non-AI-assisted colonoscopies (28%), based on 2,433 AI-assisted colonoscopies and 1,770 non-AI-assisted colonoscopies performed. These findings were recently

presented in a major scientific congress (SAGES 2023) and published in a prestigious peer-reviewed journal, Surgical Endoscopy.

To build on the existing momentum, SKH and Medtronic International have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish SKH as a Centre of Excellence for artificial intelligence (AI) assisted colonoscopy. The Centre of Excellence aims to establish SKH as a regional training institute and global reference centre to advance research and education, enabling the advancement of AI-assisted colonoscopy.

With this, SKH is the first centre outside Italy (Where this was first developed) to utilise this technology for clinical evaluation. All endoscopy suites in the hospital have already been equipped with AI-assisted technology, with the diagnostic capability (Computer-aided diagnosis device-CaDx) of the AI technology currently being evaluated. Research efforts and currently ongoing and we hope to share our results with the wider AMC in the near future.



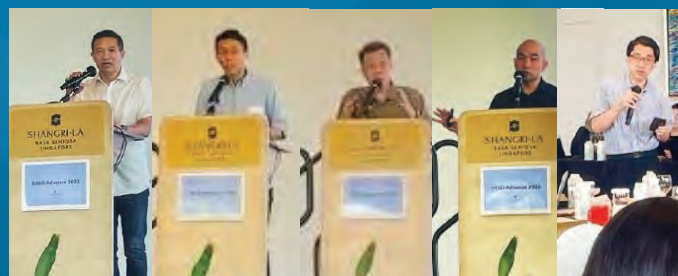
DSSO Advance 2023

The Division of Surgery and Surgical Oncology (DSSO) Advance 2023 was held on 22 July 2023, Saturday at the Horizon Pavilion of Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa. Prof Kenneth Kwek, Chief Executive Officer, SGH and Assoc Prof Ruban Poopalalingam, Chairman, Medical Board, SGH, kicked off the event with their addresses and offered valuable insights during the event. Esteemed invited speakers and guests such as Prof Lee Chien Earn, Assoc Prof Low Lian Leng, Assoc Prof Hairil Rizal, Dr Lim Eng Kok and Mr Ivan Tan delivered presentations and provided insightful viewpoints during the panellist discussions.

A lively debate took place exploring the topic of whether capitation equates to healthcare rationing. Dr Jolene Wong, Dr Isaac Seow and Dr Edwin Aslim represented the proposition team, "Capitation Equals Healthcare Rationing" while Dr Neville Teo, Dr Tan Ek Khoon and Dr Lim Chin Hong represented the opposition team. Assoc Prof Ruban concluded the debate by commenting on the topics deliberated. The debate ended in a tie, and both Dr Jolene Wong and Dr Neville Teo were co-recipients of the Best Debater Award.

During the group breakout discussions and presentations, the various departments in DSSO collaborated in teams with the guidance of facilitators from the SGH Office of Value-Based Healthcare (OVBH) to exchange perspectives on subjects such as Value-Driven Care (VDC), capitated funding, the related difficulties encountered and priorities for the upcoming year. It was determined that VDC should be approached with multiple viewpoints and collaborations with SGH Office of Value-Based Healthcare are encouraged.

To end off the event, Assoc Prof Henry Ho, Chairman of DSSO, shared his closing remarks and expressed his gratitude to all attendees for their active participation and valuable contributions. He encouraged the division to transition from achieving one level of excellence to the next, fostering a culture of constant improvement and ongoing learning. He expressed his aspiration that the VDC journey, led by DSSO designated champions Assoc Prof Emile Tan, Dr Shalini Arulanandam and Dr Jolene Wong, would serve as a unifying force for learning and working together as a division.



*Invited speakers and guests
From left to right: Prof Kenneth Kwek, A/Prof Low Lian Leng, Prof Lee Chien Earn, A/Prof Hairil Rizal and Dr Lim Eng Kok*



Debate closing and commentary by Assoc Prof Ruban Poopalalingam



DSSO Advance 2023 breakout groups



Group photo of invited speakers, guests, DSSO faculty, SGH OBVH facilitators and DSSO admin support



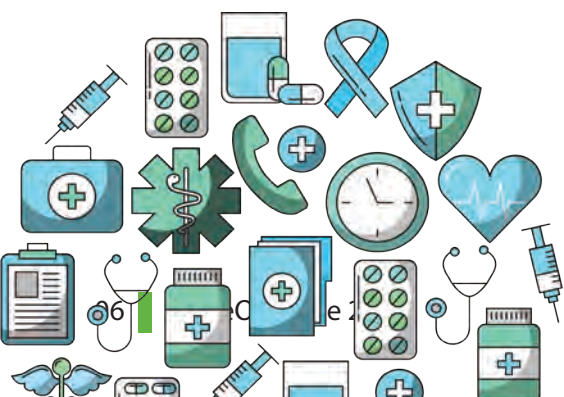
Clinical Director, Office of Value Based Healthcare,
Singapore General Hospital
Senior Consultant, Department of Anaesthesiology,
Singapore General Hospital

Value-based healthcare is a patient-centric model that emphasises the improvement of health outcomes relative to the cost of care. Instead of focusing on volume and frequency of services, it prioritises the quality of patient outcomes, aiming to maximise value for patients by achieving the best health results at the lowest cost. This transformative approach encourages healthcare providers to optimise efficiency, reduce unnecessary expenditure, and, most importantly, enhance patient well-being and satisfaction.

In the context of Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC), “value” is defined as the health outcomes achieved per dollar spent. This model emphasises the importance of patient-centered care and measures value based on the health outcomes that matter most to patients.

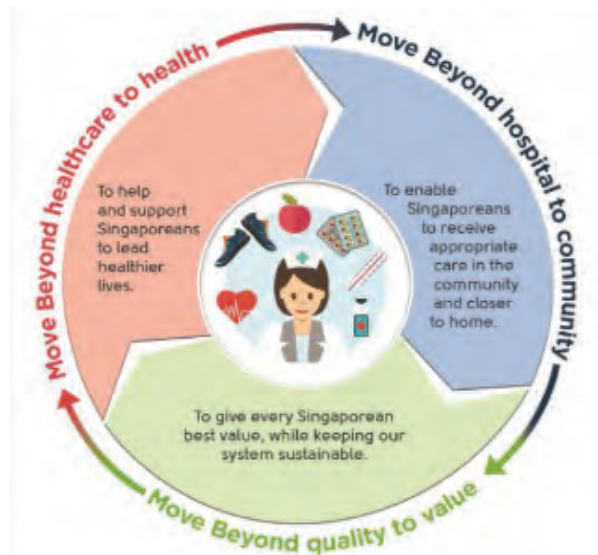
The goal of VBHC is to shift the focus of healthcare from volume (the number of services provided) to value (the quality of health outcomes achieved). It encourages healthcare providers to deliver the best possible care at the lowest cost, thereby maximising the value delivered to patients.

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{Health outcomes that matter to patients}}{\text{Costs of delivering these outcomes}}$$



Yes! The Ministry of Health (MOH) has introduced the War on Diabetes previously, an initiative that emphasises early screening, intervention, and disease management, mirroring the principles of VBHC. The Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) and the Screen for Life (SFL) programme are other examples of efforts aimed at preventive care and early intervention, both of which align with VBHC.

Furthermore, for Public Healthcare Institutions (PHIs), the national Value Driven Care (VDC) initiative was introduced in 2017 as part of MOH's "3 Beyonds". This initiative picks out conditions of priority to our healthcare needs, with a subsequent deep dive of data to understand both our costs and outcomes, and drive healthcare that is best in class.



Most importantly, the HealthierSG initiative (which will be rolled out in July 2023) is a significant healthcare system reform which goes by VBHC principles. One of the main levers for HealthierSG is the introduction of Value Based Capitation funding framework for all PHIs. This is a funding model where providers receive a set amount per patient regardless of how many services are provided. This can be beneficial for surgeons and other healthcare providers as it incentivises high value care and enables us to focus on quality rather than quantity. Value Based Capitation funding also promotes preventive care and management - surgeons can contribute to and benefit from a healthcare system that puts emphasis on preventive care and chronic disease management. For example, optimising pre-surgical health can improve post-surgical outcomes and reduce complications which, in turn, reduces overall costs.

It is important to note that value-based capitation works best when it is paired with strong quality metrics to ensure that the quest for cost-efficiency does not compromise the quality of patient care. This is where the commitment of surgeons and other healthcare providers to high-quality outcomes is essential.



What is the story of VBHC in SGH?

Following the national initiative, a dedicated Value Driven Care committee was set up in SGH in 2020 to analyse identified VDC conditions. We started with conditions that MOH has picked out, but as we grew more familiar with our methodology, we included other conditions that are prioritised at SGH too. Since our inception, our data has led us to implement hospital-level improvement projects that have achieved over S\$8million worth of cost savings and reduced over 600 bed days!

In this financial year, we have rebranded ourselves as the Office of Value Based Healthcare (OVBH) to encompass work beyond VDC conditions. Beyond our two main functions of working on VDC conditions and Coordinated Care Pathways (CCPs), exciting new projects in the pipeline include incorporating Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) data collection and introducing the Choosing Wisely campaign in SGH.

Are there VDC conditions in DSSO?

Of course! There are currently 28 surgical VDC conditions in SGH, of which 11 are conditions selected by MOH. Some are even multidisciplinary collaborations with our medical or radiology counterparts, like blocked vascular access and diabetic foot ulcers. New exciting conditions that we have just started include looking at patients with serious illness going for surgery.

How do CCPs help in VBHC?

CCPs are standardised, evidence-based multidisciplinary care plans with an appropriate sequence of clinical interventions to be carried out for a homogenous patient group. This allows for standardisation of care, reduction of variation in practices and guardrail against adverse outcomes, which naturally builds towards optimising patient outcomes in a cost-efficient manner.

What are PROMs?

Historically, many of our outcome measures are from a provider's perspective, such as reduction of length of stay and complication rates. PROMs are tools that gather reports from patients about their own health, quality of life, or functional status associated with their health condition or treatment. Patients' input gives us a new dimension of

data to analyse our outcomes, and we plan to eventually incorporate PROMs as a routine component of measuring patient outcomes in our VDC conditions.

Tell me more about the Choosing Wisely campaign!

The Choosing Wisely campaign is an initiative that aims to promote patient-physician conversations about the appropriate use of medical tests, treatments, and procedures, with the goal of reducing unnecessary interventions and improving overall patient care. It started in America in 2012 and has since been adopted by more than 25 countries worldwide. However, it is still limited to ad-hoc projects in Singapore, with no coordinated movement yet.

It uses high quality, evidence-based guidelines as the cornerstone to guide appropriateness of medical care. It not only promotes making cost-effective decisions, but also encourages shared decision-making and enhances patient engagement.

We are rolling out our educational campaign and our pilot project in June. In fact, our pilot to reduce unnecessary pre-operative Chest X Rays will be greatly relevant to practice in the DSSO department!

We are happy to support DSSO in the Value Based Healthcare journey, so please do not hesitate to reach out at any time!



CATEGORY: CLINICAL

SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre Retreat 2023 – Glancing Back, Looking Forward

by Clin Assoc Prof Veronique Tan Kiak Mien



Head & Senior Consultant
SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre
Department of Breast Surgery, SGH-NCCS

Our second Breast Centre retreat on 25 February 2023 had a distinctly celebratory feel. Perhaps it was the shared euphoria of having emerged from the pandemic stronger; or the simple delight in meeting one another again after four years to chat and share about the progress of our projects, showcase new surgical skills, and highlight advances in clinical care. Maybe it was the liveliness of the “speed dating” segment where we dissected project proposals, brainstormed, and explored ideas. In any case, it was certainly a morning abuzz with energy, chatter, and laughter!



We're an interprofessional, multidisciplinary team, all gathered to advance breast cancer care!

First established in 2014, we reached our current form by end 2018 with CGH and SKH breast units coming on board. Our first Breast Centre Retreat in March 2019 was both introductory and exploratory. Back then, we identified ourselves as a unique tribe that cared for patients with breast cancer. We had common aspirations and similar concerns, and we recognised the benefits of coming together as a whole. Our common purpose took form from then, to:

- Provide world class, comprehensive breast cancer care, sustainably
- Enable every staff to attain her/his highest professional potential
- Lead breast cancer research that impacts care.

Best People

As a multi-professional, multidisciplinary group comprising individuals who care and strive to be excellent, we cultivated an ecosystem where we could exchange ideas, collaborate, inspire one another, and thrive together. Today, breast cancer surgery has never been sexier – our patients now have access to the full suite of oncoplastic and reconstructive techniques, and minimally-invasive breast surgery is being developed at a breath-taking pace. These advancements were powered by teamwork, investments, and dedicated individuals who passionately believe in delivering the very best breast cancer care!



Best Care

Best breast care is comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and requires coordinated teamwork. Over the years, we have had the opportunity to collaborate with many partners to elevate the care we provide. The creation of the Pre-operative Systemic Therapy and Young Women Programmes; improvement in access to screening mammograms; quality improvement projects to streamline and raise awareness of our Well Women Programme, improve pre-op counselling and lymphedema services; advancing survivorship care and value-based care, are but a few examples of how we went beyond caring for our individual patients to caring enough to create sustainable workflows to provide timely, comprehensive care.

Best Research and Innovation

Our SingHealth Joint Breast Cancer Registry is the largest and most comprehensive breast cancer registry in Singapore. It is our pride and the keystone of our research efforts and collaborations, and testament to the immense foresight of our predecessors. Ongoing research efforts span the spectrum of breast cancer care – from prevention, diagnostics, health services delivery and therapy de-escalation, to devices and surgical innovation. It is the fervent belief that improvements and discoveries should continually be pursued, driven by a desire to advance research and innovation to positively impact breast cancer care.

Celebrating our role models

Apart from sharing and showcasing our work, we also celebrated the many role models in our midst who inspire us every day!

Recipient	SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre Award 2023
Dr Wong Chow Yin	The Champion
Ms Bernice Yong	The Rising Star
Dr Rose Fok	The Blooming Care
Ms Tan Meu King	The Secret Angel
Ms Sumathi Sagayamary	The Sensational Sengkang Breast Care Nurse
Ms Wu Liping	The Sensational Sengkang Breast Care Nurse
Dr Tan Su-Ming	The Visionary Leader
Ms Sophia Chua	APN Merit
Ms Cham Mui Tai	Caring Cham Superstar
Ms Teresa Ng	Moving Mountains Star

Looking Forward

Many pieces of the whole have come together, and that we made significant progress despite a pandemic has only made us more confident of our abilities and teamwork. The future is limitless, especially when fueled by the immense goodwill of our patients, partners, management, and donors. We will continue to dream and act daily, with a mission – to be our best selves, and to deliver the best breast cancer care, today and tomorrow.

2nd SingHealth Interdisciplinary Vascular Conference (SIVAC) 2023

The 2nd SingHealth Interdisciplinary Vascular Conference (SIVAC) 2023, organised by SingHealth Duke-NUS Vascular Centre, was held from 12 to 14 May 2023 in Academia on the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Campus, where over 200 participants attended over 60 plenary and symposium talks led by both international and local faculty members. The three-day programme comprised five sessions – Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD), Venous Disease, Vascular Anomalies, Dialysis Access Management for doctors, nursing & allied health staff, and Aortic Disease. The highlights of the session included a live stream of a PAD case, followed by a series of dialysis access management workshops conducted for doctors and nurses. The SingHealth Duke-NUS Vascular Centre hopes the discussions and connections made will bring multi-disciplinary vascular care to greater heights!



SOC Clinician Assistant Programme



From left to right
Front Row: Noelle Chu, Associate Professor John Yuen, Clinical Assistant Professor Lim Ee Jean, Nizrin
Back Row: Lai Yin, Natasha, Sabrina Wa, Grace Wong

What is the SOC Clinician Assistant Programme (SCAs)? Our pilot programme of SOC Clinician Assistants (SCA) is a valuable resource for enhancing efficiency and productivity in our bustling specialist outpatient clinics (SOC). Our trained medical scribes are talented and motivated individuals who undergo a training curriculum with the aim to work alongside our clinicians to assist in recording and transcribing a patient's consultation. They provide invaluable clinical administrative support for clinicians during these consultations.

Why are our SCAs essential?

Despite major advances in technology, clinical documentation remains enough of a burden. A significant number of clinicians have to spend disproportionate amounts of time during a patient's consultation, wrangling with clerical and administrative tasks. These tasks can detract them from the face-to-face interaction with the patient. With the assistance provided by the medical scribes documenting patient encounters and transcribing data into electronic health records (EHRs), the doctors' workflow is enhanced. They are then able to spend more time engaging with patients, conduct thorough examinations and develop comprehensive treatment plans, thus leading to improved clinician-patient consultation experiences. Moreover, by capturing information in real-time, scribes can ensure that all relevant details are accurately recorded, minimising any risk of important information being overlooked and reducing changes of medical errors due to incomplete or illegible records.

Our experience so far!

Our preliminary pilot programme has had encouraging and extremely positive reviews from both clinicians and patients alike. This has only been made possible with clear communication and understanding of our scribes' responsibilities and job scopes, whilst maintaining a good relationship with our team and ensuring compliance to policies regarding documentation vetting.

Onward growth!

We are looking forward to future expansion of our medical scribe programme beyond surgical SOC, with the aim to continue to enhancing the patient experience in SGH while empowering our physicians to focus on what they do best: delivering high-quality care to our patients.



Ultrasound-guided cannulation of arteriovenous accesses workshop for nursing and allied health staff



Live PAD case in action



Ultrasound-guided endovascular AVF creation workshop for doctors, conducted by Prof Chong Tze Tec & Assoc Prof Tan Chieh Suai



Presentation by external speaker, Dr Venkat Tummala, during the session on Venous Disease

My Global Surgery Journey

featuring Dr Ng Jia Lin

When the COVID-19 pandemic first made itself known in end-2019, nobody could have imagined the profound impact it would have on our hospitals, our patients, and our lives. Sparing no corners of the world, many SingHealth global health projects and humanitarian initiatives were shut down overnight.

When the travel borders re-opened, I had the privilege of visiting Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) in Lesotho, a landlocked country within South Africa. QMMH stands as the only tertiary government referral center in Lesotho, a 425-bed hospital serving a population of 2.25 million. In collaboration with two non-profit organisations – Global Clinic and Amitofo Care Center – we were invited by Lesotho's Ministry of Health to set up a medical/surgical camp for one week. The members of the team included two general surgeons (myself included), one obstetrician, two oral & maxillofacial surgeons, three anaesthetists, six dental surgeons, two medical doctors and other non-medical volunteers.

From the General Surgery (GS) point of view - in total, ten elective GS cases were performed over five days, including thyroidectomies, parotidectomies, cholecystectomies, ventral hernia repairs, split skin grafting and trans-anal excisions. Five emergency cases were done – this ranged from bowel resections to the more dramatic repair of full-thickness laryngeal slash injury. In all cases, we operated alongside local surgeons, nurses and anesthetists. It was a fantastic platform to exchange ideas, surgical skills and practices. We reviewed surgical admissions in the inpatient



wards and ran the outpatient clinics. We donated a pneumatic dermatome to replace their free-hand knife – which would widely expand their capability in managing the complex burns and trauma reconstructions they contend with.

The hospital has a small gastrointestinal endoscopy facility, but the service had been paused for the last four years due to a shortage of solutions for automated reprocessing of the scopes. We held a site visit and meeting with the relevant stakeholders, and together, we started discussions about sourcing for possible alternative endoscope reprocessing solutions and other methods of disinfection and maintenance.

We continue to exchange ideas about complex surgical cases, and Global Clinic intends to make a second trip in the second half of this year based on needs identified on this trip.

I am grateful to be supported by the Global Surgery Programme, which enhances capacity building in the form of overseas engagement, providing support for overseas delegates to attend local surgical conferences/workshops, as well as fellowships/exchange programmes.

Conferment of Goh Hak Su Professorship in Colorectal Surgery to Assoc Prof Iain Tan Bee Huat



We are delighted to announce the conferment of the Distinguished Goh Hak Su Professorship in Colorectal Surgery to Associate Professor Iain Tan Bee Huat, with effect from 1 April 2023.

A distinguished professorship is the highest honour that Duke-NUS can bestow upon a faculty member. The Distinguished Goh Hak Su Professorship in Colorectal

Surgery under Surgery ACP was established in honour of Professor Goh Hak Su for his contributions to the field of colorectal surgery in Singapore. Its purpose is to promote excellence in surgery, research and training in colorectal surgery in Singapore and beyond, as well as transform research and innovation in the field of colorectal diseases.

Assoc Prof Iain Tan Bee Huat is an accomplished medical oncologist who specialises in colorectal cancer. He is also a clinician scientist with outstanding research records, having published over 100 articles in prestigious journals, clinched numerous individual competitive grants and is the co-investigator of multiple national collaborative projects. Not only does Assoc Prof Tan hold multiple research leadership roles in SingHealth, he also holds platform lead positions nationally, including with the Singapore Translational Cancer Consortium (STCC) for Consortium for Clinical Research and Innovation, Singapore (CRIS).



Plaque Presentation for A/Prof Iain Tan.

Left: Prof Goh Hak Su, Prof Ivy Ng, A/Prof Iain Tan, Prof Thomas Coffman, A/Prof Henry Ho

Additionally, Assoc Prof Tan actively mentors clinician scientists who are enrolled under the AMC's Centre for Clinician-Scientist Development (CCSD) programme, and works across SingHealth to groom young surgeons and oncologists to become academic surgeons and clinician investigators in colorectal cancer research. He believes that personalised mentorship is critical to enabling his mentees' potential to flourish.

The conferment of the Goh Hak Su Professorship in Colorectal Surgery to Assoc Prof Tan is a testament to his outstanding research achievements and commitment to mentoring young talent. Please join us in extending our warm congratulations to Assoc Prof Iain Tan Bee Huat as our newly appointed Goh Hak Su Professor in Colorectal Surgery.



Acceptance Speech by A/Prof Iain Tan



Group Photo with SGH CEO, Donor, Division Chairman and Colorectal Surgeons
Left: A/Prof Henry Ho (Division Chairman), Prof Francis Seow, Prof Kenneth Kwek (CEO, SGH), A/Prof Iain Tan (Distinguished Professorship Awardee), Prof Goh Hak Su (Donor), A/Prof Emile Tan (Colorectal Surgery, Head, SGH, NCCS), Colorectal Surgeons

Joy at Surgical Services (J@SS) in DSSO

"Joy at work" has varied meanings to all of us in DSSO. Across the division, it remains still a nebulous concept tied into work life balance, working within a trusting and fulfilling environment, as well as feeling appreciated for all the hard work we do daily. The Joy at Surgical Services, or J@SS committee, was set up to address many of these issues that span seniorities, from HO to SC. The committee, led by Division Chair A/Prof Henry Ho, comprises members across all surgical disciplines and aims to provide, not just a forum for discussion of these important ideas, but also a platform for problem solving and deliverables that can benefit everyone in the division.

J@SS conducts two townhalls per year, addressing the current topics for discussion as well as providing a forum for celebrating those within our division who have garnered significant compliments from our patients through the Office of Patient Experience (OPE). Our second townhall was held in April 2023 and focused on the welfare of residents.



Presentation of Service Excellence Award to the Department of Breast Surgery, SGH-NCCS.

The Programme Directors (PDs) for the various surgical disciplines, Prof Alexander Chung, Prof Teo Jin Yan and Dr Neville Teo were able to articulate the specific welfare issues their residents faced. Issues brought up for discussion included:

1. The three C's of well-being (community, control, connected to meaning) and how they are at acute relevance to the resident group, rendering them at risk of burnout and fatigue
2. The potential issues that may occur in providing more welfare for certain groups, in turn leading to increased work for others, including residents. It is important to ensure residents are targeted in J@SS initiatives and these may include welfare for costs associated with purchasing meals, protected teaching time, overtime pay, teaching lists and access to journals and academic materials through Duke-NUS
3. Access for Surgery in General (SIG) residents to protected operating time and not just service work, including clinics



Programme Director of Otorhinolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery (SGH-NCCS), Dr Neville Teo presented on specific welfare issues involving their residents



Presentation of Service Excellence Award by Dr Valerie Gan, Programme Director for to Urology to Award Winner for Residents & Resident Physician Category.

The committee also presented awards to those across the division with the highest number of compliments obtained through the OPE. Certificates were awarded to multiple HO/MO's, Residents, RP's, AC's, C/SC who have made a positive difference to our patients. The department with the highest per capita compliments this round was the Breast Surgery Department. Congratulations to all winners!

We have only scratched the surface of what the J@SS committee aims to deliver for the improvement of work-life balance for all staff across DSSO. With nearly every DSSO department represented in the committee, we will continue to engage AC and C/SC to understand more of what can be achieved. Finally, the J@SS committee would like to sincerely thank DSSO Administrators, Junie Tan, Jane Pang, Rachel, Selina, and Zoe for their outstanding assistance to the committee.

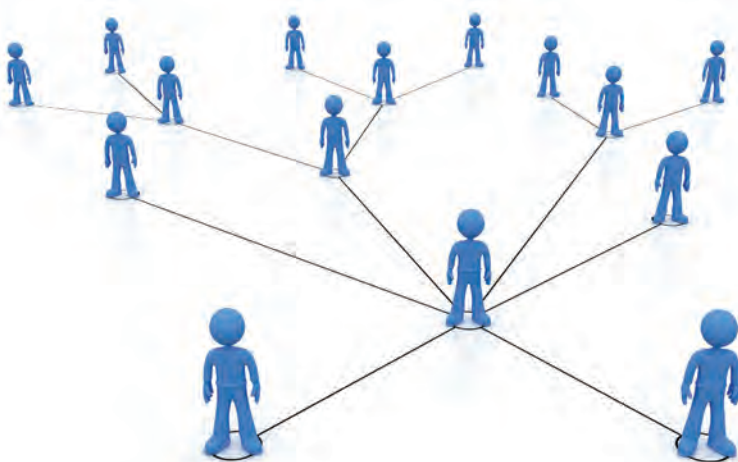
On behalf of the J@SS committee co-chairs – Sachin Mathur and Preetha Madhukumar



Urology Programme Engagement For Faculty and Residents



The SingHealth Urology Residency Programme organised our long-awaited programme engagement session with our faculty and residents across SingHealth institutions on 31 March this year. Our faculty and residents enjoyed the bonding time over great company and food, and we will be holding more of such enjoyable engagement and bonding sessions in the future. This will be part of our ongoing programme efforts toward Joy@Work for Urology Faculty and Residents.



General Surgery Residency Annual Retreat 2023



The annual General Surgery (GS) residency retreat is an important social event and highlight in the GS residency calendar. This event brings together over 40 residents and programme faculty across three hospitals for a night of good food, drinks, fun and laughter. Apart from being merry, the retreat also serves as a forum to discuss topics concerning our programme and potential areas of improvement.

This year's retreat took place on 24 March at Holiday Inn Atrium. This was the first time in over three years where everyone could dine together, catch-up and mingle freely. For the discussion segment, the attendees were divided into five groups, each focusing on the pre-selected topics suggested by residents.

Led by our energetic Programme Director (PD) Mr Teo Jin Yao, Assistant PDs Mr Gerald Tay, Lin Jin Lin and faculty, the discussions were vibrant, enthusiastic and insightful. Residents across all levels and faculties shared their unique perspectives and experiences. A consensus of points was collated for Mr Teo to share with Academic Chair subsequently.

All in all, judging by the many smiles, flushed faces, filled bellies and passionate discussions, it is safe to say that this year's retreat was a resounding success. Moving forward, we hope to continue to build a stronger, more cohesive and holistic residency for incoming and existing GS residents alike.

Surgical International Training Experience (SITE) Sharing Event, 12 May 2023

An Evening to Bond and Share



Our 3rd SITE Sharing Event was held at One Farrer Hotel on Friday, 12 May 2023. The evening opened with a warm welcome by Asst Prof Amos Loh, Deputy Division Chair, KKH. This year's fully-subscribed event was attended by 34 Surgery ACP members from 11 departments across SGH, SKH, CGH and KKH. Newly invited attendees included senior residents and respected mentors, Dr Chew Min Hoe and Assoc Prof Tay Sook Muay.

Dr Jeffrey Hing (CGH), Dr Vanessa Tan (SGH) and Dr Lester Ong (SKH), shared their experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic while planning for their HMDP, and their memorable fellowship experiences in South Korea, Australia and Hong Kong respectively. Assoc Prof Tan Su-Ming, Head of Division of Breast Surgery, Director of Breast Centre, CGH, moderated the session, encouraged interactions and brought out laughters from our colleagues. It was a great opportunity for us to mingle and interact across institutions and disciplines, and to build networks and grow relationships within the ACP.

We look forward to enhancing learning exchanges and strengthening our connectivity within the ACP with more of such events. We welcome all ideas and suggestions. Do join your fellow colleagues at the next sharing event!

Post-Event Survey Results (76% responded)

- 100% - Event was well-structured and met its objectives
- 100% - Happy with the venue and food
- 100% - Would recommend the event to others
- Among the written comments:
 - Captivating and reflective
 - Heartfelt sharing and engaging
 - Insightful, enriching and educational
 - Speakers were awesome

Highlights of Speakers' Presentations

Assistant Professor Hing Jun Xian Jeffrey



Consultant, Breast Surgery, CGH

Topic: Oncoplastic breast surgery, Chimaek and Sojubomb

Fellowship: Kyungpook National University Chilgok Hospital, South Korea, 2022

"... I drew references from the popular Korean food fad because they are not only combinations that work well together, but a team together can make magic happen consistently ... Multidisciplinary collaboration can continue to optimise care in screening, diagnosis, treatment and survivorship..."



Assistant Professor Tan Yee Jueen Vanessa

Consultant, Otorhinolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery, SGH

Topic: Lessons Down Under as a Surgeon, Mother, Wife

Fellowship: Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital, and Royal Children's Hospital, Australia, 2021

"... Although we went to different countries, we shared visa and language woes, returned with aspirations to bring our service to new heights, whilst treading mindfully in overlapping fields of expertise ..."

Assistant Professor Ong Wei Lin Lester



Consultant, Surgery, SKH

Topic: Advanced Therapeutic Endoscopy

Fellowship: Prince of Wales Hospital, Hong Kong, 2022

"... I had hoped that fellowship training will allow me to master my craft, instead, it taught me how little I knew. Completing fellowship and becoming a consultant is not the end of our learning journey. It is merely the end of the beginning..."

Surgery ACP New Appointment & Promotion 2023: Commemorating the Promotion to Clinical Professor & Long-Service Award of Prof Chong Tze Tec



Academic medicine is a lifelong journey

"We have many good people contributing to academic medicine, either as researchers or educators, programme developers or administrators, whose efforts may not be recognised. But we need all of them to help us improve our Surgery ACP so that we can ensure the next generation of surgeons is well-trained."



Prof Chong Tze Tec,
Head, Department of Vascular Surgery, SGH; Head, SingHealth Duke-NUS Vascular Centre; Vice-Chair, Education (Undergraduate), SingHealth Duke-NUS Surgery ACP; and Assistant Dean, Doctor of Medicine (MD) Programme, Duke-NUS Medical School

While I feel honoured to be promoted to Clinical Professor and to receive the 10-year Long Service Award from Duke-NUS, the recognition is not just for me as an individual but for the whole ecosystem that supports us. None of us can achieve what we do on our own.

We have many good people contributing to academic medicine, either as researchers or educators, programme developers or administrators, whose efforts may not be recognised. But we need all of them to help us improve our Surgery ACP so that we can ensure the next generation of surgeons is well-trained.

Transforming academic medicine

To me, the transformation of academic medicine in Singapore, particularly at SingHealth, has been amazing. Our journey started not so long ago but we are already recognised leaders in academic medicine. We have our leadership to thank for taking us in the right direction.

Academic medicine is a lifelong journey, with results seen not months, but years, later. Those who choose academic medicine were usually inspired early on by meaningful

projects that they were exposed to. Or they feel an innate drive to do research or education in addition to clinical work usually outside of working hours.

It is therefore vital that our system supports aspiring educators or researchers by offering administrative help, such as in grant-writing, training courses to gain the necessary expertise, or providing exposure to areas for further development.

Very often, junior clinicians prioritise clinical skills and knowledge over all else. This is understandable. However, if they do not balance the fulfilling of their professional needs with the pursuit of academic medicine, academic medicine will suffer. Our system must do more than just focus on junior surgeons' clinical achievements, and instead recognise, promote or reward efforts in academic medicine.

Becoming an educator

It also helps if one has a good mentor to work with. When I was doing my fellowship in vascular and endovascular surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, I was very fortunate to have a good mentor and teacher in the Programme Director.

Hence, when I returned to Singapore after spending 12 years in US, I wanted to contribute to education. I started by helping with residency training, giving evening tutorials to residents to improve their scores for the American Board of Surgery In-Training Examination (ABSITE)—an annual exam taken by general surgery residents. I went on to take on more education roles.

Growing awareness

Besides teaching juniors, I am focusing on public education as part of my work as Head of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Vascular Centre. With diabetes rates going up in Singapore, we need to increase patients' awareness of vascular care so that those with advanced diabetes can avoid amputation.

We are looking at developing videos using animation on who is at risk for vascular diseases and the early signs to look out for. This, along with forums and continuing medical education events, would also help our public-facing doctors taking care of patients with diabetes and vascular diseases.

Celebrating Surgery ACP Academic Appointment and Promotion (Jan to Jul 2023)

Promotion to Associate Professor Track IIB (Research), Non-Tenure

Johnny Ong

Senior Consultant, Sarcoma, Peritoneal and Rare Tumours (SPRinT), SGH-NCCS



The promotion to clinician scientist Associate Professor would not have been possible without the unwavering support from the community and village behind me. It has been a long journey, from my PhD training, to my early career as a researcher, and finally to key opinion leader in both the scientific and clinical fields. Through the years, there were numerous hurdles, unknowns and non-standard algorithms that I had to navigate with a group of likeminded people, which presented us opportunities to push the frontiers of translational research for our patients. This milestone and precedence is our way of paying forward the generosity that we have received from those who have helped us along the way, which we hope will, in turn, pave the way for future clinician scientists.

Promotion to Clinical Associate Professor



Frederick Koh
Consultant, Surgery, SKH

This academic milestone means a lot to me, having begun my journey of academic surgery from the time I was a Year 3 medical student, when I had the opportunities to be exposed to and participate in clinical research. Such participation, which included data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings at conferences and in manuscripts, allowed me to appreciate how rapidly the medical field changes in real life. I also grew more inquisitive and asked the question "why?" more often in my daily practice as a student, then resident, and even today as a consultant. The excitement of being able to witness and participate in shaping future clinical practice also drove me to pursue a PhD with Duke-NUS Clinical and Translational Sciences to gain a better understanding and appreciation of something we, as doctors, don't often get to do in our training - basic science. These experiences not only broadened my horizons, but also challenged me to widen my perspective to, not only focus on the singular patient, but also the wider community and preventive medicine. As the saying goes, "no man is an island", and this applies aptly to academic medicine today. We are in the era of collaborative practice and research, and I envision that with this added responsibility of being part of the senior faculty, I can play a bigger role to influence, inspire and inculcate these values in our future clinicians.

PROMOTION

Clinical Professor

CHONG Tze Tec

Associate Professor

ONG Chin-Ann Johnny

Clinical Associate Professor

KOH Hong Xiang Frederick, Preetha MADHUKUMAR, TAN Jianhong Winson, YAP Te-Lu

Clinical Assistant Professor

CHAN Kong Ngai Thomas, HING Jun Xian Jeffery, LIM Yong Wei, NG Zhi Peng Nick, ONG Han Lim, Szymon Andrzej MIKULSKI, TANG Zhi'En Joyce, XU Shuhui

NEW APPOINTMENT

Clinical Assistant Professor

CHUE Koy Min, Fazila Binte Abu Bakar Aloweni, KOH Fangju Beatrice, LIM Ee Jean, Lim Siew Hoon

Instructor

YONG Jin

Clinical Instructor

JANG Jia Hui Isabelle, LIN Wenjie, LOW Wei Xiang Alvin, LU Yadong, SEE Huimin Amanda, SEO Chin Jin Jane, YANG Shi-Hui Christina

Adjunct Research Fellow

CHEN Gao Bin, WEE Jun Yan Ian

Lead Education Associate

CHEAH Le Le, KOH Ee Ling Serena, Savitha Hosangadi Kamath, TEH Nguan Kheng Juriyah Bte Yatim

Senior Education Associate

CHENG Shu Hua, Siti Mariam Binti Mohamed Said, YONG Shi Ling Bernice