

MEDIA RELEASE

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MULTI-AGENCY COLLABORATION FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT – PAEDIATRICS, PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROSCIENCE

1. Three facilities supporting children's mental health and development – REACH (Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health) East, the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences' (SICS) Neurocognitive Development Centre, and the Satellite Clinic of KKH Department of Child Development (DCD) – are now co-located on the 11th floor of St Andrew's Community Hospital (SACH) in Simei. Siting these facilities together will facilitate the collaborative efforts by psychiatrists, researchers and paediatricians in early intervention, research and programmes to treat and improve the mental health and development of children in Singapore.
2. REACH is a programme under the National Mental Health Blueprint for children of school-going age. It is led by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), and the National Council of Social Services (NCSS); and aims to develop a mental health community network for children and adolescents.
3. The REACH teams work primarily with MOE school counsellors and VWOs for early identification, support and intervention for children and adolescents in primary and secondary schools and junior colleges with emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as related mental health problems. The multidisciplinary REACH teams (staffed by psychologists, medical social workers, occupational therapists and nurses) provide training, support and helpline assistance to MOE school counsellors to identify and support these students aged 19 years and below. The teams also work with general practitioners in the community on the diagnoses and management of emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as related mental health problems. Since it was piloted in 12 schools in 2007, REACH has made significant progress and is currently serving 268

schools in three zones (North, South, and East). REACH East is the latest team and will be based at SACH to serve schools in the East Zone.

4. Through the helpline service, the REACH teams provide ongoing assistance to school counsellors to facilitate the early identification of students with emotional and behavioural problems. When required, schools can refer students to the REACH teams for assessment, intervention and treatment. Since the launch of REACH, more than 6,000 calls have been consulted with the REACH teams. With guidance provided to schools by REACH teams, 300 students were referred to the Child Guidance Clinic for assessment and follow-up intervention. These referred cases are typically students with severe emotional and behavioural problems, who would need specialised assessment or treatment. Such early intervention ensures that students with severe mental health concerns can receive timely support from the appropriate professionals. School counsellors also receive guidance from REACH teams in providing suitable school-based interventions for these students.
5. The DCD clinic at SACH provides intervention and treatment for pre-schoolers with developmental needs, including learning difficulties. REACH East's collaboration with KKH will cater for smooth transitional care for DCD patients to REACH when these children reach school-going age and require support for behavioural and mental health issues at schools.
6. Furthermore, DCD will work with the REACH East team to attend to those of their patients who also present with learning problems. This collaboration brings the merged clinical strengths of both paediatrics and psychiatry to the service of Singaporean school children.
7. Completing the picture is the Neurocognitive Development Centre of the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences (SICS), an institute under the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR). The Neurocognitive Development Centre drives key research in children's neurocognitive development and brings advances in A*STAR science to the community clinical setting. The research in this Centre focuses on factors that determine individual differences in mental health and cognitive function, and may have important implications on one's risk of developing Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Alzheimer's or other neurocognitive disorders.

8. This same research platform will be extended to children identified through the KKH and REACH programs as being at high risk for developmental and psychiatric problems that may influence a child's performance in school. For instance, REACH refers suitable students to take part in research studies conducted by the Research Unit of the Child Guidance Clinic. One of the Research Unit's current studies is a research collaboration with SICS, examining the link between metabolism and ADHD.
9. The sharing of the databases of REACH and DCD greatly facilitate the running of collaborative studies with SICS. This three-party collaboration will fulfil the longer-term goal of corroborating findings from the various studies by REACH or DCD, and of evaluating and refining various interventions for neurocognitive disorders. Thus, the positioning of the SICS research team within SACH offers internationally unique opportunities for the translation of research findings into clinical practice.
10. A/Prof Daniel Fung, Project Director of REACH commented, "The approach to children's mental health and development needs to be a holistic one that attends not just to the present – using clinical treatment and interventions – but also the future, via research and its application. In this light, the alliance between REACH, DCD, and SICS indeed has great potential and we look forward to the fruit that our collaboration will bear for the young generation."
11. Said Prof Michael Meaney, Adjunct Senior Investigator at SICS, "SICS is committed to improving the health and future well-being of our children via excellent R&D. The co-location of REACH, DCD and NDC creates an ideal scenario for collaborations in medical research, which are crucial to furthering our understanding of neurocognitive development and design of treatments for cognitive impairments."
12. "This partnership between the three agencies creates a synergy that will catalyse translational research to enhance intervention and long term outcomes for children with neurocognitive and learning disorders," said Prof Chay Oh Moh, Chairperson, Division of Medicine, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and Paediatric Program Leader of Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

ANNEX 1: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

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About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)

A*STAR is the lead agency for fostering world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based and innovation-driven Singapore. A*STAR oversees 14 biomedical sciences, and physical sciences and engineering research institutes, and nine consortia & centres, which are located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis, as well as their immediate vicinity.

A*STAR supports Singapore's key economic clusters by providing intellectual, human and industrial capital to its partners in industry. It also supports extramural research in the universities, hospitals, research centres, and with other local and international partners.

For more information on A*STAR, please visit www.a-star.edu.sg.

About the Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences (SICS)

Established in 2007, SICS is an institute within A*STAR. Its mission is to develop disease-oriented clinical and translational research programmes in focused disease areas. SICS is distinguished by its focus on clinical sciences and the use of innovative approaches and technologies that enable the efficient and effective study of human health and diseases. The clinical scientists in SICS conduct the full spectrum of “bench to bedside” research activities in genetic medicine, infectious diseases and metabolic diseases (including diabetes/ obesity/ insulin resistance). SICS aims to attract, train and nurture clinician scientists and serves as a critical bridge linking basic research undertaken by A*STAR Research Institutes and clinical research programmes in Singapore's public hospitals, disease centres and universities.

For more information on SICS, please visit: www.sics.a-star.edu.sg.

About the Institute of Mental Health

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 25-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and counseling services. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (age below 19 years), adults and the elderly. IMH also runs mental health education programmes for the general public. These programmes aim to promote mental wellness and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of prevention, early detection and treatment of mental disorders.

About KK Women's and Children's Hospital

KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) has evolved, since its founding in 1858, into a regional leader in Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Neonatology. Today, the 830-bed hospital is a referral centre providing tertiary services to handle high-risk conditions in women and children. More than 400 specialists adopt a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to treatment, and harness the latest innovations and technology for the best medical care possible.

As an academic healthcare institution, the Hospital has adopted a culture of innovation as it strives for world-class clinical leadership.

The KKH Department of Child Development (DCD) with its multi-disciplinary team of paediatricians, psychologists and therapists seeks to deliver integrated holistic services with compassion, to children with developmental needs, supported by clinical excellence, education and innovation. DCD sees about 1800 children annually through Ministry of Health's Child Development Programme.

ANNEX 1: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences (SICS)	新加坡临床科学研究院
Neurocognitive Development Centre	神经认知发展研究中心
Institute of Mental Health (IMH)	心理卫生学院
REACH	社区心理健康反应, 初期治疗 与评估计划
Associate Professor Daniel Fung	馮舜聖副教授
Vice Chairman, Medical Board (Quality)	医疗委员会 副主席 (临床 质量)
Chief, Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry	儿童及少年精神科主任
Senior Consultant	高级专科顾问
Project Director, REACH	项目总监, 社区心理健康反应, 初期治疗与评估计划
Professor Chay Oh Moh	崔夏梦教授
Chairperson, Division of Medicine	内科系主席
KK Women's & Children's Hospital	竹脚妇幼医院
Department of Child Development (DCD)	儿童发展部门
Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School	杜克新加坡国大医学研究生院