

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICIAL OPENING OF NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE (NAMS) CLINIC, INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

1. The National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) clinic, located in the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), is officially opened by Professor K. Satku, Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health (MOH), today.
2. A national initiative funded by MOH, NAMS was set up to provide specialised treatment services for patients with behavioural and substance addictions. A holistic, multidisciplinary approach is used in treatment.
3. NAMS serves about 2,000 patients a year. For the past three years consistently, about half of all the patients were seen for drug addictions, followed by nearly 30% for alcohol addictions. Gambling addiction cases have increased over the years, from 5% of the total cohort seen in FY*07 to 17% in FY09. Behavioural addictions, like cyber addiction and sex addiction, account for less than 5% of all cases seen.
4. Correspondingly, the number of new cases of drug and alcohol addictions has remained stable over the past three years. New cases of behavioural addiction have hovered around an average of 5% from FY07 to FY09.
5. New cases of gambling addiction, however, have risen. Gambling addiction cases made up 9% of all new cases seen in FY07 and 24% in FY09. This trend is likely due to the increased awareness of NAMS and its available treatment programmes arising from various media stories on problem gambling and the active public education by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG).

6. Treatment outcomes for patients enrolled in programmes at NAMS have been promising. For example, for FY09, 69% of total patients with substance use disorder who remained in treatment for three months showed significant improvement in the severity of their addiction, while 57% showed improvement in their quality of life. Similarly, 77% of patients who suffered from problem gambling showed a 30% reduction in the GSAS (Gambling Symptom Assessment Scale), designed to assess gambling symptom severity and change during treatment. The outcomes reported above exceeded the targets set by NAMS for each of the above indicators.
7. NAMS has been operating from its dedicated outpatient clinic since June 2009. Outpatient services for addictions were previously provided at outpatient clinics at IMH which serve patients across a range of psychiatric disorders.
8. This new NAMS clinic boasts a comfortable and more private setting, aimed at providing an environment to encourage patients to come forward and seek help. The flow of movement in the clinic is designed to enhance seamless, safe and efficient patient care. The clinic is demarcated into three clusters – for adolescent, private and subsidised patients – to integrate all the addiction services under one roof and yet segregate the adolescent cases from the adult substance addiction cases, since the profile of these patients are very different.
9. The clinic has its own group therapy rooms for psychosocial programmes and aftercare support groups. Facilities that support public education and training are also available. Previously, such programmes and sessions were run in meeting rooms in IMH.
10. An inpatient ward, the Serenity Centre, provides a residential facility for patients who require detoxification and rehabilitation.
11. NAMS has its roots in the Community Addictions Management Programme (CAMP) at IMH, set up in 2001 (please see Annex 1 for details on NAMS' background and history). The evolution of NAMS from CAMP has been accompanied by expansion in various areas. Firstly, manpower size has grown. At the end of the 2001 financial year, there was just 11 staff including psychiatrists, counsellors, and administrative staff. Today, the number has grown to 66 staff (as of 30 June 2010) encompassing other allied health professionals, researchers, nurses, training personnel, and clinic operations staff.

12. Staff training is emphasised as a means of enhancing standards of care. NAMS' clinicians receive regular in-house training by overseas experts in new addictions management techniques and to fine-tune existing skills and knowledge. Some go on overseas attachments to learn the latest evidence-based techniques to incorporate into their own work here, and share new insights with their colleagues.
13. The increase in staff numbers and capabilities means a boost for the variety of services offered at NAMS. In addition to psychiatric assessment and services, treatment options for patients now include individual counselling by certified addictions counsellors, group psychoeducation and counselling programmes, support groups for patients and families, family therapy, and psychotherapy. Please see Annex 2 for details of the group counselling programmes run by NAMS.
14. NAMS counsellors also man the National Problem Gambling Helpline (with the support of the National Council on Problem Gambling) and the All Addictions Helpline during office hours, providing advice, emotional support and reference to treatment (if necessary) on a confidential basis. The National Problem Gambling Helpline number is 1800-6-668-668, whereas the All Addictions Helpline is 6-RECOVER (6-7326837).
15. Furthermore, NAMS has its own research unit. The unit focuses on addictions research in Asian populations and their unique experiences, and programme evaluation to ensure efficacy of treatment procedures. Such research initiatives are crucial in enhancing NAMS' treatment services as well as addressing the dearth of research on Asian populations. In FY09, nine research posters and oral presentations on addictions and its treatment in a local context were put forth, above the target set by NAMS.
16. As the national centre for addictions management, NAMS is uniquely positioned to empower community partners with the professional knowledge and skills to detect addiction cases, provide brief motivational interventions, and acquire the skills to conduct proper referrals. Nearly 50 training initiatives were conducted in FY09 alone impacting 2,100 staff from healthcare, social and community, and private sector organisations.
17. NAMS also engages in various public education initiatives. In April this year, NAMS collaborated with the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) to organise its first Problem Gambling Forum. The English and Mandarin sessions drew 300 people to learn more about problem gambling, how it affects families and where to seek help. The

advertisements for the National Problem Gambling Helpline also make up part of our joint initiatives with NCPG.

18. This year, NAMS published its first book in a series of books on addictions. This is the first local book on pathological gambling and is written for both professionals and laypersons. Titled "Don't Gamble Your Life Away!: Help for Pathological Gamblers", the book discusses various topics related to pathological gambling, including the current gambling landscape in Singapore, understanding pathological gambling and its etiology, treatment approaches, impact on families, community resources, and other useful information.

19. A/Prof Wong Kim Eng, Clinical Director of NAMS, commented, "Although addiction is a chronic relapsing disease, it is treatable. Successful intervention can come about with the use of multi-pronged treatment modalities, and that is what we aim to provide at NAMS with our multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, and social workers. The combined yet varied expertise spanning medical and community realms ensure that each patient can be provided with an individualised programme."

20. More information on NAMS can be found online at <http://www.nams.sg>.

** IMH Financial Year (FY) runs from Apr – Mar. e.g. FY09 = 1 Apr 2009 - 31 Mar 2010.*

ANNEX 1: BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (CAMP) AND NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE (NAMS)

ANNEX 2: NAMS' GROUP COUNSELLING PROGRAMMES

ANNEX 3: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

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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.

ANNEX 1: BACKGROUND OF THE COMMUNITY ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (CAMP) AND NATIONAL ADDICTIONS MANAGEMENT SERVICE (NAMS)

The National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) has its roots in the Community Addictions Management Programme (CAMP), set up in 2001. A five-year pilot programme , the role of CAMP was to provide patients with behavioural and substance addictions cross-disciplinary treatment by a team consisting of psychiatrists and counsellors.

Common addictions seen since CAMP was set up include drug, alcohol, gambling, and behavioural addictions. NAMS was incorporated in August 2008 after we ascertained that there was a demand for specialised addiction treatment services, and that an expansion in the capacity and capability for patient care was necessary. NAMS started by building upon CAMP's existing infrastructure, and gradually added additional resources.

ANNEX 2: NAMS' GROUP COUNSELLING PROGRAMMES

NAMS conducts group counselling programmes for both patients and their family members. These programmes are run by NAMS' professional counsellors and held at the NAMS Clinic:

1. GAMBLING ADDICTION MANAGEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION (GAME)

When: Monday evenings

Conducted in: English

GAME is initiated to allow gamblers to learn about what is gambling addiction and its recovery processes through a series of psychoeducation and discussion groups. Its function is to create awareness, motivate a process of cognitive change and behavioral change through the following: understanding gambling addiction, learning about money management, dealing with urges to gamble, relapse prevention strategies, coping with families, and other healthy recovery skills.

2. CONTINUAL RECOVERY THROUGH EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING (CREST) PROGRAMME

When: Tuesday and Thursday evenings

Conducted in: English and Mandarin

CREST is a group programme for all types of addictions. It is designed to help patients understand the process of addiction, identify triggers and cravings, and learn how to avoid relapses, pick up new skills to manage difficult feelings and their problems better, and how 12 steps can help in their recovery.

A series of ten topics are covered over ten weeks. As CREST is an ongoing programme, the topics are repeated at the end of the series. As recovery is a lifelong process, continual participation in CREST is encouraged.

3. FAMILIES IN RECOVERY THRU EDUCATION, SUPPORT & HOPE (FRESH)

When: Thursday evenings

Conducted in: English

Studies show that addictions affect at least 4 to 5 other people close to the person with the problem, mainly family members. They often experience guilt, fear, shame, helplessness, weariness and other painful emotions as a result of the loved one's addiction or dependence to substances or behaviour.

It is important for family members to understand the process of addiction and how they can best help their loved one during the treatment and recovery. In addition, they should not neglect care for themselves and other family members, especially children.

In the FRESH (Families in Recovery Thru' Education, Support & Hope) programme, a series of 12 topics are covered over 6 months, which includes skills training and a support service for family members in the addiction recovery process. Topics covered include understanding the diseases and disorders, what healthy support is, modifying behaviour patterns within the family, identifying and discussing issues that have significantly impacted the family system, making sense of the confusion, hurt and misunderstanding, and ultimately, walk through the healing process together.

All family members involved in the treatment and recovery process of an addicted person are encouraged to attend.

4. RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS (RSGs)

When: Tuesday evenings

Conducted in: English

Recovery support groups (RSGs) are where patients come together to provide and receive peer support, and share practical information and tips on maintaining abstinence and managing life free from addictions day-to-day. A NAMS counsellor facilitates the process of sharing between regular and new members to enable them to learn about recovery and also support constructive change.

Two RSGs, one for substance addiction and one for gambling addiction, are run weekly.

ANNEX 3: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)	国立成瘾治疗服务
National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) Clinic	NAMS 成瘾专科门诊部
Institute of Mental Health (IMH)	心理卫生学院
Addiction Medicine Department	戒瘾部
Specialist Outpatient Clinic	专科门诊部
Associate Professor Wong Kim Eng	王金英副教授
Clinical Director, National Addictions Management Service	国立成瘾治疗服务临床总监
Senior Consultant	高级专科顾问
Dr Thomas Lee	李佳明医生
Acting Chief, Addiction Medicine Department, IMH	心理卫生学院戒瘾部代主任
Consultant, National Addictions Management Service	国立成瘾治疗服务专科顾问
National Problem Gambling Helpline	全国预防嗜赌援助热线
Dr Guo Song	郭松
Consultant & Head, Research	专科顾问兼研究部主任
Addiction Medicine Department	戒瘾部
National Addictions Management Service	国立成瘾治疗服务
Patrick Teo Wee Lin	张维凌
Senior Counsellor	资深辅导员
National Addictions Management Service	国立成瘾治疗服务
Lim Hui Khim	林惠琴
Senior Counsellor	资深辅导员
National Addictions Management Service	国立成瘾治疗服务
All Addictions Helpline	戒瘾援助热线
Recovery Support Group	康复帮扶小组
Counsellor	辅导员
Medical Social Worker	医疗社会工作者
Continual Recovery through Education and Skills Training (CREST) Programme	康复之桥：心理教育小组