

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **INTRODUCING A DEDICATED ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC FOR ADDICTIONS**

1. The National Addictions Management Service (NAMS) has introduced an acupuncture clinic to complement its existing psychiatric and psychological treatment programmes for addictions. The acupuncture clinic is co-located with the NAMS Clinic.
2. This is a pilot service supported by the Ministry of Health under the Health Services Development Programme to study the benefits of acupuncture as an adjunct treatment to the existing treatment programmes that NAMS offers. This new acupuncture service will cater only for persons with a primary diagnosis of an addiction disorder. It aims to promote recovery by reducing the severity of withdrawal symptoms, pain and cravings, as well as the symptoms of some comorbid disorders such as mood disorder and anxiety.
3. It was only in recent years that acupuncture, one of the key components of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), was developed outside of China as part of an integrated treatment programme to curb addiction disorders. For example, there are institutes in the US and Hong Kong that provide acupuncture treatment for substance dependence.
4. This acupuncture clinic will combine the theories on addiction disorders from both Western medicine and acupuncture in treating patients. The treatment will focus on improving physical health to change addiction-related behavioural problems.
5. Aside from internal referrals, the service will also accept referrals from polyclinics, other restructured hospitals and private specialist clinics where cases of addiction disorders may be picked up. A NAMS psychiatrist will assess the individual for addiction disorders and advise if NAMS' acupuncture treatment is suitable for the patient.

6. A typical patient with addiction may require a minimum of 10 sessions over six weeks. Each session may last for about 30 minutes.
7. Associate Professor Wong Kim Eng, Clinical Director of NAMS commented, "Given our Asian context, acupuncture offers a culturally appropriate adjunct therapy to the existing treatment programmes provided at NAMS. Some patients may be inclined towards acupuncture as a drug-free, reasonably-priced supplementary treatment with possible benefits and low side-effects. Hence, it may increase their engagement in treatment and also enhance their recovery."
8. This acupuncture treatment is meant to complement and enhance existing medical or psychological treatment programmes for patients with addictions. It is not meant to substitute primary treatment programmes which are the mainstay of treatment. At NAMS, these include medical evaluation, individual counselling, family therapy, and psychoeducation and support groups for patients and their families. NAMS also has an inpatient facility called Serenity Centre for patients who need to undergo detoxification and rehabilitation.
9. Over the last four financial years (FYs) from FY\*09 to FY12, NAMS has seen an average of 1,200 new cases of addictions per year. The top three conditions seen were drug addiction, followed by alcohol and gambling addiction. It is important to note that our numbers are representative of only one treatment centre.

*\* IMH Financial Year (FY) runs from April to March i.e. FY12 refers to the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.*

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## ANNEX A: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

Institute of Mental Health (IMH)	心理卫生学院
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
NAMS Acupuncture Clinic	成瘾针灸治疗诊所
Addiction Medicine Department	戒瘾部
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National Problem Gambling Helpline	全国预防嗜赌援助热线
All Addictions Helpline	戒瘾援助热线
Recovery Support Group	康复帮扶小组
Counsellor	辅导员