

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Date of Issue: 26 May 2016**

### **Asian Congress on ADHD Held in Singapore for the First Time**

1. Ten-year-old Joshua Jeremiah Tan has difficulties concentrating and takes longer than his peers to complete tasks, but that hasn't stopped him from accomplishing great things. With commitment, self-discipline and support from his family and teachers, he has done well in school and won many awards in Wushu. He also completed 252 laps over three days at the "Swim for Hope" charity marathon organised by SAFRA in 2015, an amazing feat for someone his age.

2 Joshua is one of the ten recipients of the ACE Awards this year, which recognise children and teens with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who have overcome challenges to realise their potential, as well as mentors who have made a difference in the lives of children with ADHD. The awards will be presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Congress on ADHD, which will be held in Singapore for the first time on 26 and 27 May 2016 at the Singapore Expo with Dr Janil Puthuchery, Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Communications and Information, as the guest of honour. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Asian Congress on ADHD took place in Seoul, Korea and Tokyo, Japan in 2012 and 2014 respectively. The congress is held in conjunction with the Singapore Mental Health Conference 2016.

3. Themed "Optimizing Care Along Life Trajectory", the congress is organised by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) with the following partners: the Health Promotion Board, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social and Family Development, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, National University Hospital and the Society for the Promotion of ADHD Research and Knowledge (SPARK). It has attracted some 350 local and international delegates.

4. “ADHD is perhaps one of the most studied mental health conditions among the young. With early detection, intervention and support, children and teenagers with ADHD can manage their condition and achieve their goals. This requires greater interaction between healthcare institutions, schools, community partners, parents and caregivers. The congress provides a valuable platform for professionals in the various areas and caregivers to come together to share best practices and form collaborative networks to provide more holistic and effective management of ADHD,” said Adj A/Prof Ong Say How, Chief and Senior Consultant, Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, IMH, and Chairman, Organising Committee, 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Congress on ADHD.

5. Affecting close to five per cent of school-going children worldwide, ADHD is a universal disorder that is highly treatable with positive results. In Singapore, ADHD is the top mental health condition seen among children at IMH’s Child Guidance Clinic (CGC), one located within the hospital and the other in the Health Promotion Board building. The CGC has seen an average of 645 new cases with ADHD a year from CY 2012 to 2015. The figure may be higher as children affected by ADHD could also be seeking treatment at other hospitals.

6. ADHD is also the most common mental health condition picked up in school-going children aged six to 19 under the community mental health programme REACH (Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health). REACH works closely with schools, voluntary welfare organisations and general practitioners to improve the mental wellbeing of students and identify any emotional, behavioural and developmental disorders early. The pick-up rate for ADHD across all four REACH zones (north, south, east, west) covering all schools in Singapore has reached 242 from a rate of just five from one zone when REACH first started in 2007. REACH works with school counsellors to provide interventions in the school setting to help these students. Further assessment or treatment may be necessary for more severe cases and these children may be referred to the CGC.

### **Highlights of the Congress**

7. The congress features plenary lectures, symposiums, poster sessions and presentations from international and local experts in the field of ADHD. The topics explored cover a breadth of issues ranging from the use of technology in care delivery for ADHD to managing co-morbid problems in ADHD and collaborative efforts in place to manage the condition in schools. On the second day of the congress, there is also a special track for parents and caregivers of children and teenagers with ADHD.

**“ADHD: Are We Using Acute Treatment Approaches for a Chronic Condition?”  
(Keynote Lecture)**

8. The symptoms of ADHD often persist from childhood to adulthood. The keynote lecture by Professor Rosemary Tannock, Professor Emerita, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto; and Senior Scientist, Neurosciences & Mental Health Research Program, Research Institute of the Hospital for Sick Children, highlights the developmental changes in the manifestation of ADHD and its associated impairments across the lifespan when untreated. She explains the need to engage in proactive planning for continuity of treatment, with an emphasis on planning for key lifespan transitions, using a chronic care paradigm.

**Technology in Care Delivery for ADHD (Plenary 4)**

9. This presentation by Adj A/Prof Daniel Fung, Chairman, Medical Board, IMH, covers technology-based learning and training in the management of ADHD. He will discuss IMH's efforts to leverage technology to develop interventions for children with ADHD. These include a brain-computer interface (BCI) training programme to test and improve focus in children with ADHD and a mobile app that helps with anger issues, which is common in those with ADHD.

**Addictions in Youth with ADHD (Track 6)**

10. Addictive behaviours, ranging from computer gaming to internet addiction, are commonly seen among those with ADHD. The presentation will focus on the neurobiology of addiction and how persons with ADHD may be more susceptible to addictive behaviours. It will also cover how parents and peers can support them, as well as avenues to get help in Singapore.

11. IMH has produced a new guide on Internet addiction for parents, educators and counsellors, titled *Navigating the Cyberworld With Your Child*, which will be available on sale at the congress. Bringing together 12 researchers and practitioners from the fields of child psychology and psychiatry, the book highlights the different types of Internet-related addictions a child or teenager may face and discusses prevention and treatment approaches. The book is also available in major bookstores.

**Parents' Symposium**

12. This track aims to give parents and caregivers a better understanding of the disorder and their role in supporting their child. Among the topics covered are how parents can manage their child's behavioural issues; mindfulness-based interventions; and the

perspective of children and adolescents with ADHD on the core areas of difficulties faced due to the disorder.

### **ACE Awards Ceremony**

13. The ACE Awards will be presented to three categories of winners – ACE Kid Award; ACE Teen Award; and ACE Mentor Award. The ACE Awards was launched in 2012 to create awareness and raise the profile of children and youths with ADHD. A total of 96 nominations were received across the three categories from mainstream schools in Singapore this year. Each category has three winners (one Champion winner and two Merit winners). However, due to the high quality of nominations, ranging from teachers, allied educators and school counsellors, for the ACE Mentor Award this year, there will be four winners (One Champion winner and three Merit winners). *For more information on the ACE Awards, please see Annex B.*

14. “The ACE Awards is a wonderful way to create awareness for ADHD in the community and to show that those with ADHD can excel in different areas and in their way by channelling their boundless energy and utilising their strengths. The ACE Awards nominations also gave us a good insight of the commendable work that many school counsellors, allied educators and teachers are doing in their schools to help these students overcome their difficulties and achieve their potential,” said Mrs Bella Chin, President, SPARK, on the ACE Awards.

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***About the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore***

*The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, 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 therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit [www.imh.com.sg](http://www.imh.com.sg).*

## ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

## Annex A

Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
Adj A/Prof Ong Say How, Senior Consultant, Chief, Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, IMH, and Chairman, 3rd Asian Congress on ADHD	王仕豪助理教授 高级专科顾问 儿童及少年精神科主任 第三届亚洲多动症大会主席
3 <sup>rd</sup> Asian Congress on ADHD	2016年第三届亚洲多动症大会
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	注意缺陷与多动障碍
REACH (Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health)	社区心理健康反应, 初期治疗与评估计划
Child Guidance Clinic (CGC)	儿童指导门诊

The ACE Awards was launched in 2012 to create awareness and to raise the profile of children and youth in our community and schools who have ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). This is the third year the Awards are being presented. The first two runs were in 2012 and 2013.

**ACE** stands for **Active, Creative, Energetic**, attributes that describe the majority of ADHD children and youths, who with support and intervention are able to harness their strengths, manage their condition and achieve their goals. The word 'ACE' goes beyond excelling in the usual academic pursuits, but in areas where ADHD children and youths can showcase their strengths (their energy, creativity, spontaneity, leadership, single-minded pursuit of interests) and achievements.

The ACE Awards is a collaboration between:

- SPARK (Society for the Promotion of ADHD Research & Knowledge) - a self-help volunteer group that advocates for those with ADHD in the community and runs a parent support group since it was set up in 2000
- Child Guidance Clinic, IMH and
- Dept of Psychological Medicine, NUH

#### Objectives of ACE Awards

##### **Generate Positive Perception about ADHD**

- Celebrate the strengths and achievements of those with ADHD
- Provide visibility for talents and achievements of those with ADHD
- De-stigmatise ADHD, create acceptance and inclusiveness for those who distinguish themselves in other ways

##### **Recognise Role Models**

- Encourage and empower those with ADHD to realise their full potential
- Recognise the role of special education teachers/ counsellors/ community care partners of ADHD kids and youths, who have shown exemplary commitment to motivate and challenge those with ADHD

##### **Encourage a Comprehensive Approach to Managing ADHD**

- Promote a comprehensive approach to provide support for those with ADHD, their families, and the ADHD community

#### ACE Awards Categories

There are three categories of the ACE Awards (with a Champion winner and two Merit Winners in each category):

##### **ACE KID AWARD**

- Children 7-12 years of age in primary schools who have excelled in their own interest areas (e.g. in sports, CCA, creative arts etc.) in spite of ADHD.

### **ACE TEEN AWARD**

- Teens 13-20 years of age in secondary schools/ JCs / ITEs / Polytechnics who've attained achievements in their own way (e.g. in sports, CCA, creative arts, academic etc.) in spite of ADHD.

The ACE Kid and Teen Awards aim to raise the profile of those with ADHD, to remove stigma and showcase their uniqueness and potential contributions in Singapore's society. The awards would also help to lift the morale of those with ADHD by providing role models that they can identify with. For the champion winners, besides the recognition, they have a chance to be ACE Ambassadors to inspire others like themselves to achieve their dreams and fulfill their potential.

### **ACE MENTOR AWARD\*** (for Educators / Community Care Professionals)

- This special category is for those who have coached and mentored students with ADHD and who have made a significant difference to the support of ADHD in their schools. The nominees can be school counsellors, allied educators, teachers or community care partners serving the schools. The ACE Mentor Award aims to recognise these educators who made an impact by encouraging and supporting the personal growth and potential of those with ADHD.

\*Due to the high quality of nominations for the ACE Mentor Award this year, there will be four winners (One Champion winner and three Merit winners).